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Administration: admin@lituanus.org
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Lithuania.

Diuitiæ Lithuanorum.

LIthuania Poloniæ connexa, magna ſui parte paluſtris, plurimúmq; nemoroſa, & ob eam rem difficilis aditu ac quodámodo inacceſſa, aquis paluſtrib. cuncta obtinentibus: hyeme cõmertia cum Lithuanis habiliora, paludibus & ſtagnis alta glacie concretis, niue'que ſuperinfuſa, fiunt omnia mercatoribus peruia, ut uelut alto mari, quando nulla ſit certa uia aut ſemita, ſydera ſignent iter. Rara in Lithuania oppida, uillarũ incolatus infrequens: accolarũ diuitiæ pecora, pelles'que multigenum ferarũ, ut zobellinæ ſunt & harmelinæ, quibus regio inſigniter ſcatet, ceræ ac mellis abundans, uſus pecuniæ gen ti nullus, inter ſe matronæ palàm concubinos habent uirorũ permiſſu, quos connubij uocant adiutores: cõtra pellicatus uiris probro datur. Soluũtur facile matrimonia mutuo conſenſu, & iterum atque iterũ nubunt, adeo gens una cæteris mortalibus diuerſo uiuit ritu, ut non abſurdũ ſit illud Ariſtippi, Honeſtum nõ natura ſed conſuetudine cõſtare.

Honeſtũ conſuetudine conſtat.

Vini rariſſimus uſus, panis nigricans non cribratus, armenta uictum præbent, multo lacte utentibus. Sermo genti uti Polonis, Sclauonicus. Hic enim ſermo q̃ latiſſime patet, ac plurimis quidem gentibus cõmunis eſt. Caput regionis Vilna eſt, epiſcopalis ciuitas, & eſt tantæ magnitudinis quantæ Cracouia cũ omnibus ſuburbanis. Domus tamen cõtiguæ in ea non ſunt, ſed ueluti in rure horti intermixtæ & pomaria. Duo fortiſſima caſtra habet, unum in monte ſitum, alterũ inferius in plano Tartari quidam circa Vilnam in aſſignatis pagis habitant, qui agros noſtro more colentes, laborãt & merces uehunt. Vtitur lingua Tartarica, & profitentur Mahumeticã fidem. Lithuani primum condiderunt oppidum Vilua eleuationis poli 57. graduum, ex nomine ducis illud ſic nominantes, ſicut & flumina quædam præterfluentia ab ipſo Vilam & Vilnam appellarunt.

Magnitudo Vilnæ.

Fuit gens Lithuanorũ annis ſuperioribus tam contempta apud Ruthenos, ut principes Kyouienſes uilia quæque ob egeſtatẽ & ſoli ſterilitatem in ſignum ſubiectionis acceperint. Sed Lithuani tandem excuſſo iugo dominationis, Ruthenos ſibi ſubiecerunt. Colebant ab origine Lithuani numina, ignem, ſyluas, aſpides & ſerpẽtes, quos etiam in ſingulis domibus uelut deos penates nutriebant, ſacrificia faciebant & uenerabãtur. Coluerunt ſacrum ignem, eum'que perpetuò nutriebant. Sacerdotes templi materiam ne deficeret, miniſtrabant. Hos ſuper uita ægrotantiũ amici conſulebãt. Illi noctu ad ignem accedebãt, mane uero conſulentibus reſponſa dantes, umbram ægroti ſe apud ignem ſacrũ uidiſſe aiebant. Alij adhuc interiores ſolem coluerunt, alij uero ſyluã, & quæ arbor procerior fuit, huic digniorem cultum impenderunt. Cum autem illis uerbũ Chriſti prædicaretur, & populus uocatus fuiſſet ut arbores excinderẽt, nemo erat qui ſacrum lignum ferro contingere auderet, quouſque uerbi concionator eos ſuo exemplo animaſſet, alij autem eiulantes Vitoldũ principem adierunt, queruntur'q; ſacrum locum ſucciſum & domum Dei ademptam, in qua diuinã opem petere cõſueſſent, inde ſoles, inde pluuias abſtinuiſſe &c. Motus Vitoldus (alijs Vitonodus) ueritus'que populorũ tumultum, Chriſto potius quàm ſibi deeſſe plebẽ uoluit, reuocatis'que literis quas perfidiæ prouinciarum dederat, concionatorẽ ex prouincia decedere iuſſit, tam graue fuit falſam religionem pectoribus ſemel infixam radicitus exterminare. Suprà in deſcriptione Poloniæ uberiorem de hac re habes tractationem, quam obiter libuit hic repetere.

Idola Lithuanorum.

A facsimile of a page from
Sebastian Münster atlas "Cosmographia universalis."
First edition 1544.

Lietuvà, Lithuania, and Chaucer's *Lettow*

ALFRED BAMMESBERGER

1. *Lituanus,* our journal's name, is a Latin word in the masculine gender for an inhabitant of Lithuania: *Lituanus* is evidently built on Latin *Litua* by means of the productive suffix *-(a)nus.* The form *Litua* is first found in the *Annales Quedlinburgenses* under the year 1009. The Latin text reads as follows: *Sanctus Bruno, qui cognominatur Bonifacius, archepiscopus et monachus, xi. suae conversionis anno in confinio Rusciae et Lituae a paganis capite plexus cum suis xviii, vii. Id. Martii petiit coelas.* (The Holy Bruno, who has the byname Boniface, archbishop and monk, in the eleventh year of his conversion, in the border area of Russia and Lithuania, was killed by pagans and, together with his eighteen followers, strove to heaven on the seventh Ides of March.) *Lituae* is the Latin genitive of *Litua.* The form *Litua* is due to Slavic transmission and represents the first documentation of what ultimately appears in Lithuanian as *Lietuvà;* a suggestion about the etymology of *Lietuvà* will be submitted in Paragraph 12.

2. Within the morphological rules of Latin, *Lituanus* for an inhabitant of *Litua* is regularly shaped on the basis of the country's name. *Romanus (~ Roma), Abellanus (~ Abella), Nolanus (~ Nola), Spartanus (~ Sparta), Gallicanus (~ Gallicus),*

ALFRED BAMMESBERGER, Professor Emeritus of English Linguistics at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany, has a life-long interest in Baltic Studies, particularly Lithuanian.

and *Dominicanus (~ Dominicus)* are a few examples of formations in *-(a)nus* drawn from substantival stems.

3. *Lituanus,* in turn, is the basis for a further formation: *Lituania.* Corresponding nouns are: *Gallia (~ Gallus), Germania (~ Germanus), Graecia (~ Graecus).* Historically, the Latin formations are based on adjectives that describe qualities: *regius* (~ *rex,* king), *patrius* (~ *pater,* father), and so on. They were substantivized in the feminine and developed considerable productivity.

4. In French, *Lituanie* is quite regular in representing this Latin word. *Litauen* in German can also be accounted for on the basis of *Litua* (1); *Litauer,* as an inhabitant's name, has the same suffix as *Deutscher, Amerikaner, Engländer.* In English too, *Lituania could readily be expected, but the words Lithuania and Lithuanian exhibit a medial -th-; this unexpected feature will be dealt with in the following paragraphs.

5. Before going any further, it should be stressed that in Middle English a form corresponding to what we would expect on the basis of our historical documentation is, in fact, found. The poet Geoffrey Chaucer was active in the last decades of the fourteenth century and died in 1400. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* are a sequence of individual tales told by members of a pilgrimage from London to Canterbury. The work is unfinished. One narrator in the *Canterbury Tales* is the Knight, who is described in the prologue to the famous frame tale as a very distinguished person. He has excellent manners and has been active in numerous battles. In this context, we find the following line: "In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce," which clearly means "He had made military expeditions in Lithuania and in Russia."

6. Whether Chaucer had more than a very murky idea about where Lettow was is not our issue. The point is that he was evidently familiar with a form of the country's name that is quite similar to the Lithuanian *Letuva* (with long /e:/), the precursor of modern *Lietuvà* (See Paragraph 12). There is no linear and phonologically regular continuation of Chaucer's Lettow in English, which would probably have led to *Lettaw.

7. The medial -th- in "Lithuania" (instead of -t-, as in *Lituania) clearly requires an explanation. Within the system of English phonology, the word Lithuania is noteworthy because the -th- is voiceless. We observe otherwise that intervocalic -th-, in words like either, clothing, soothing, teething, mother, father, breather and bather, is voiced. In initial position, th- is usually voiceless, e.g., think, thunder, thorn, thatch, thumb, thing, and thimble. We can deduce a rule according to which *th* was originally voiceless, remained so in initial position, but was voiced in intervocalic position. In function words, however, *th* in initial position is voiced: *th*e, *th*en, *th*is, or *th*at. Further complications, like the opposition between (voiceless) *teeth* and (voiced) *teethe* ('to grow teeth'), are not immediately relevant in our context.

8. It is of interest, however, to point out that intervocalic voiceless -th- is by no means rare in Modern English. An incomplete list of examples, chosen more or less at random, includes the following: pa*th*os, pa*th*etic, e*th*er, I*th*aca, go*th*ic, sympa*th*y, me*th*od, paren*th*esis, ca*th*olic, Ca*th*erine, etc. Further observation leads to the conclusion that the pronunciation with voiceless intervocalic -th- is not very old. In the case of Lithuania's name in English, we can be certain that the pronunciation with voiceless intervocalic -th- arose in relatively recent times. Lithuania belongs to a group of words that share this development. A short discussion of some items may now be submitted.

9. Of particular interest in our context is the word au*th*or, because we have rather unambiguous information based on the word's history. "Author" is a word borrowed into English in medieval times. The immediate ancestor is Old French *autor*, which led to Modern French *auteur*. The noun goes back to Latin *auctor*, an agent-noun based on *augere*, to make to grow, originate, promote, increase. The spelling "author" was at first a scribal variant of *autor*, and ultimately, "author" led to the pronunciation with voiceless -th-.

10. The background of this development lies certainly in the Renaissance revival of learning and above all in the renewed interest in Classical Greek. It is well known that in Greek we

distinguish between tau (the regular letter for 't') and theta (the letter for the interdental spirant, 'th'). In borrowed words, both could be taken over by 't', and both could be pronounced as a regular 't'. A case in point is the word for throne. The word was borrowed in the thirteenth century; the immediate source is French *trone*, even nowadays pronounced with initial t-. At a much later period, the influence of the ultimately underlying Greek *thrónos* "seat" led to the learned spelling "throne," and ultimately, initial th- brought about the pronunciation with the interdental spirant. In most cases of the kind, 'th,' which either represented a Greek theta, or was assumed to do so, is voiceless. Relevant instances include:

English me*th*od as well as *th*esis, *th*eory, *th*eme and *th*eatre, with th- in initial position.

The secondarily inserted -h- is also found in "Gothic" (in contrast to German *Gotisch*) and influenced the pronunciation. The letter -h- was also inserted in "Thames" and "thyme," but in these cases, 't', not 'th', is still the regular pronunciation.

11. It is probable that the pronunciation Li*th*uania (with voiceless interdental spirant) does not go back much further than the year 1800. Chaucer's Lettow, on the other hand, clearly represents the form found for the first time in history in the *Annales Quedlinburgenses* one thousand years ago. The form "Lithuania" is probably learned; perhaps *Lituania* received an -h- on the theory that it was similar to such words as "throne" and "thesis."

12. With regard to the etymological derivation of *Lietuvà*, the following suggestion is mainly concerned with details of Lithuanian word formation. If we assume a basic element **li:-*, which may be found in Lithuanian *lýti* rain," then it is possible to posit a formation in **-tu-* in the shape **li:-tu-*. In its turn, this stem could function as the basis for the so-called vrddhi-formation, specific to Indo-European languages: **li:-e-tuw-a:* would regularly account for the form *Lietuvà* in Modern Lithuanian. If the basic meaning of **li:* was in the area of "moist" or "watery", then the derived substantive could signify a "watery place."

Litvak Art in the Context of the *École de Paris*

ANTANAS ANDRIJAUSKAS

Introduction

Some studies, like this one, begin as fragmentary thoughts recorded on various occasions: they are born naturally and imperceptibly when the time is right. In my childhood, while wandering with a fishing pole outside Veisiejai near Lake Ančia, I slipped, and my feet disturbed a thick layer of moss under which was buried a dark stone with strange characters in an unknown language. My elders later told me that these were vestiges of the Lithuanian Jewish culture that had once existed here. That was my first contact with the culture of Lithuanian Jews, the Litvaks. I learned that before World War II, in Veisiejai, a small town in Dzūkija, there had been a large Jewish community. The inventor of Esperanto, L. L. Zamenhof, had also lived here. When I moved there with my parents after the war, at the age of six, there were no Litvaks left in this town. The entire community was mercilessly annihilated.

Much later, in my travels, I continued to encounter, in various contexts, manifestations of Litvak culture – works in Parisian exhibition halls and galleries with the names of Jewish Litvak artists who represented the third generation residing abroad. Next to their names I often saw the words *litvak* or *juif d'origine lituanienne*. It greatly intrigued me that in Paris so many people identified themselves with – and had roots in –

ANTANAS ANDRIJAUSKAS is Head of the Department of Comparative Cultural Studies at the Institute for Culture, Philosophy, and Art, and President of the Lithuanian Aesthetic Association. He is the author of *Litvak Art in the Context of the École de Paris* (Vilnius, 2008) and numerous studies and articles in various languages.

my native Lithuania. When teaching in Japan, I noticed that my Japanese colleagues saw no difference between Lithuanian and Jewish names, whether written in Japanese characters or in Latin letters. For them, the Lithuanian contribution to world culture is often associated not only with ethnic Lithuanians like Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, Jurgis Mačiūnas, Jonas Mekas, Jurgis Baltrušaitis (son), Algirdas Julius Greimas, or Marija Gimbutas but also with famous Jews born in Lithuania like Chaïm Soutine, Jacques Lipchitz, Jascha Heifetz, Bernard Berenson, Meyer Schapiro, Emmanuel Lévinas, Arbit Blatas and others.

When I was an intern at the Sorbonne and the Collège de France, the original paintings and sculptures that I saw at various museums in Paris stimulated my interest in the works of these Litvaks who had been students at art schools in Vilnius, Kaunas, and Vitebsk. Subsequently, for a quarter of a century, I studied the works of many masters of the *École de Paris*. I reflected not only on the aesthetic value of their works but also on the reasons that impelled such a large group of Litvaks to become a part of the artistic life of Paris, the leading center of Western civilization in the early 20th century.

This fact forced me to reflect upon the history of Lithuanian culture and art in general and the narrowly nationalistic vision of historiography drilled into my head during childhood and at the Kaunas School of Art, where I studied. When I began to transcend ethnocentric attitudes and cast a wider glance at the richness and diversity of the multi-ethnic, polyconfessional culture of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, it became clear to me that Lithuania and her capital Vilnius occupy a singular place in the history of European civilization. In this broader vision of Lithuania, ethnically Lithuanian culture does not stand isolated. It includes the unique heritage of the many other peoples who enriched the polyphonous diversity of the historic Grand Duchy of Lithuania – Jews, Poles, Belarussians, Russians, Tartars, Karaites, and others, without whose contributions we cannot adequately understand the changing historical processes in the centers of this vast cultural space.

Recently, we have begun to take a different, broader, more sensitive look at the complex cultural history of our country.

We have sensed that it is vitally important to integrate the heritage of these peoples into Lithuanian cultural history. In this respect, the history of Litvak culture is of special interest. This ethnic group formed during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, in the territory of present-day Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus, and Ukraine. Its members followed the precepts and cultural traditions of Judaism more strictly than other Jewish groups, and they devoted great attention to education and learning. For centuries, the dominant atmosphere in multicultural Lithuania was far more tolerant than in other Western European countries: the coexistence of different peoples and religions was legally established by the Lithuanian statutes, which were unique in Europe, and through various privileges granted by the rulers. At that time in history, the tolerance found in Lithuania for the religions of other peoples did not exist in any other European state. Thus, Jewish arrivals quickly put down roots and regarded Lithuania as their second fatherland, where for centuries their rapidly growing communities were able to cultivate their cultural and religious traditions. In the Jewish world, the cultural space of the original Grand Duchy of Lithuania was traditionally called *Lite* (in Yiddish) or *Lita* (in Hebrew), i.e. Lithuania, and the Jews who lived here were Lithuanian Jews, or *Litvaks* – people who spoke a Lithuanian dialect of Yiddish. In the huge multicultural and poly-confessional territory, they zealously sought to preserve the centuries-old traditions of Judaism and of their own Litvak culture. Among Eastern and Central European Jews, the Litvaks had perhaps the greatest national consciousness and were tenacious in observing their cultural traditions and religious precepts. This is probably the answer to why even third-generation descendants of these Jews, when reflecting on their cultural identity, invoke the concepts *Lita, litvak, juif d'origine lituanienne.*

In the early 20th century, Litvak artists invaded the main center of Western modern art as the so-called second wave of the *École de Paris*. Their long-suppressed creative energy exploded in the fine arts and extended to the main cultural centers of Western Europe, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and Munich, where these emigrants became an active part of the artistic avant-garde. They also laid the foundation for professional

national Jewish painting and sculpture in the twentieth century. Thus, the story of Litvak art and its contribution to Lithuanian and world culture is one of many narratives flowing from the depths of our history.

In Lithuania, in recent years, more and more research is appearing by authors who seek to look at our cultural history more expansively, without ethnocentric stereotypes, and to acknowledge that other peoples have also made important contributions to the history of our art. This belated interest has painful repercussions for scholars eager to work in this field because so much valuable archival material has disappeared during times of upheaval, war, occupation, and changes in national borders. Persons who could provide authentic information have already departed from this world.

When I began to delve into the question of the role of Litvaks in French modern art, I was amazed to learn that most of the famous Jewish artists came from the famous Vilnius School of Drawing, from Yehuda Pen's School of Painting and Drawing in Vitebsk, and from the Kaunas School of Art. Yet this topic has remained largely unexplored by Lithuania scholars. To date we have only one doctoral dissertation in 2005 by Vilma Gradinskaitė[1] dealing with this subject.

Litvaks in the Pale of Settlement

After the dissolution of the Republic of the Two Nations through the three partitions of Poland and Lithuania in 1772, 1793, and 1795, the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania became part of the Russian Empire, and the Russian tsars issued many discriminatory edicts that changed the status of one of the world's largest Jewish communities. Most devastating were the edicts of 1772 and 1779, which forbade Jews in the former GDL and Poland to leave their native lands, thus establishing strictly demarcated boundaries for what became known as the Pale of Settlement. In 1791, there were about 1.5 million Jews living in the Pale of Settlement, of whom around 95-97 percent spoke Yiddish and considered themselves a separate ethnocultural group – Litvaks; on the eve of the Russian Revolution there

[1] Gradinskaitė.

were about seven million. A distinctive Jewish culture developed where Yiddish was spoken – a culture whose main center was the territory of Lita and whose spiritual nucleus was Vilnius. This territory was often referred to as Yiddishland, a cultural concept that took shape under the influence of Yiddish.[2] Yiddishland had a winged proverb: To earn a living, go to Łódź, Warsaw, or Odessa, but to gain wisdom, go to Vilnius.

The growing external oppression and discriminatory laws and edicts made the Jews in the Pale more inward-looking than in western Europe, which was experiencing rapid democratization. Favorable to the inwardness was the well-established conservative system of Jewish religious education in cheders and yeshivas. Education, culture, and art were the areas in which Litvaks achieved substantial success. Children living in Vilnius and other Litvak communities began early to study the Torah and, later on, the Talmud. They learned about the history of the Jewish people but also about civilization in general. Their studies included principles of ethics and interaction with other people. The respect for scholarship and their own cultural, religious, and artistic traditions became an inseparable part of the Litvak identity.

Vilnius: Center of Litvak Culture, Religion, and Art

After the uprising of 1831, the closing of Vilnius University in 1832 was a severe blow to the culture of the Lithuanian capital, but artistic life with its old traditions did not disappear from the city. In the early 19th century, when the Romantic Movement blossomed, Vilnius with its creative cultural energy even overshadowed Warsaw. Jews played a very important role in the cultural life of Vilnius. By the 18th century, the old capital of Lithuania had, in comparison to other cities in Eastern and Central Europe, the most vibrant intellectual and cultural life. It was the seat of the Vilna Gaon (1720-1797), a repository of Jewish books, unique manuscripts in Hebrew and Yiddish, the center of rabbinical scholarship and home of famous publishers and libraries, including the Strashun Library, one of the most famous in the Jewish world. In the eyes of Litvaks and

[2] Silvain; Minczeles, 7.

worldwide Jewry in general, Vilnius was the Jerusalem of the North.

At the turn of the 19th century, as control by tsarist institutions weakened, educated Litvaks of various ideologies exerted their powerful cultural influence on the creation of secular cultural organizations and numerous artists' groups and movements. Two of the most influential modern movements among Eastern and Central European Jews were born in Vilnius: Zionism and the Bund. Art exhibits were organized. In 1912, the Society of Lovers of Jewish Antiquities was formed and a Jewish museum established. A branch of the Culture League was active here, and *Jung Vilne* (Young Vil-nius), a society for writers and artists, was founded. In 1925, the Institute for Jewish Research opened – the largest and most important institute of this kind in the world.

The first famous pre-modern artists who trod the path from Russia to the main artistic centers in the West began to emerge in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They had received an excellent education at the Saint Petersburg Academy of Art or at prestigious art academies in the West, and many of them worked as teachers and trained, or in other ways influenced the new wave of Litvak artists which was to become such an important part of the *École de Paris*. They also shared a commitment to a national Jewish art and formed the strategy for Jewish art schools in Vilnius, Vitebsk, and Jerusalem's Bezalel.

A Litvak artist with widespread international recognition and the first to advocate the establishment of a Jewish art school in Vilnius was the sculptor Mark Antokolsky from Vilnius (1843-1902). Born into a poor Litvak family, this extraordinarily talented youth grew up in the Jewish cultural environment of Vilnius and succeeded in gaining acceptance to the Saint Petersburg Academy of Art. Quickly emerging as a uniquely gifted sculptor, he associated closely with Ilya Repin and other prominent Russian artists, yet Antokolsky did not forget his roots. His works *A Jewish Tailor* (1864), *Poverty* (1864), *The Miser* (1865), and *The Head of a Jew* (1869) reflected the impoverished reality of everyday Litvak life. He also created other important works with Jewish themes: two sculptural busts entitled *Talmud Dispute* (1867) and a bas-relief – *The Spanish*

Inquisition Attacking the Jews During Passover (1868-1869). Provoking fierce criticism from the Saint Petersburg faculty, Antokolsky moved to Italy and Paris, where he won many awards for his work and continued to promote a national orientation in the work of local Jewish artists.

Antokolsky's idea of establishing a Jewish art school was realized by two of his followers: Yehuda Pen and the sculptor Ilya Ginzburg. In 1897, Yehuda Pen founded a new private school of painting and drawing in Vitebsk. In 1905, at the facilities of the Vilnius Jewish Trade School, the M. Antokolsky School of Industrial Art opened its doors and eventually developed various forms of Litvak folk art. Alongside the Józef Montwiłł Trade School for Drawing and Painting, which was founded in 1893, this was the third important art school in Vilnius.

The main reason why Vilnius did not have a Jewish art school until then is probably because it already had an excellent art school: The Vilnius School of Drawing. Moreover, this rebellious region, with its influential cultural tradition centered in Vilnius, was under the constant and increased surveillance of repressive imperial structures of control.

The Vilnius School of Drawing

In the Russian Empire, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there were several basic schools of drawing and art (in Vilnius, Warsaw, Kiev, Odessa, and Moscow), all of which provided contingents of graduates for the only art academy in Saint Petersburg. Warsaw suffered much less from the waves of tsarist repression following the two insurrections, but Vilnius had in professional terms a better art school, acknowledged by Polish art historians too:

> At that time, Warsaw did not have a great art school. The state drawing school had long since lost in prestige, even though around 1900 Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, Eli Nadelman, and Witold Wojtkiewicz studied there. The city's art life was dominated by the conservative attitudes of the Society to Promote the Fine Arts.[3]

[3] Malinowski; Brus-Malinowska, 45.

The Vilnius School of Drawing was founded in 1866 in the buildings of the former Vilnius University by Ivan Trutnev (1827-1912), a graduate of the Saint Petersburg Academy of Art and an academician. Trutnev quickly revealed himself to be an excellent organizer and teacher, and ran this school from its foundation to his death. Under his guidance, the Vilnius School of Drawing became one of the strongest artistic institutions in this part of the Empire, with a well-planned coherent methodology of instruction and levels of professional training. His school acquired a good name at the Saint Petersburg Academy of Art, which accepted the most talented graduates from the various art schools in the Empire.

Trutnev had traveled much in Western European countries and was well acquainted with their educational systems. In 1866, after returning to Russia from Europe, he was appointed teacher of drawing and calligraphy at the Vitebsk School for Boys, which belonged to the Vilnius Educational District, and from there he was invited to Vilnius to establish a school of drawing. Trutnev's appearance in Vilnius was not accidental. The initial impulse for establishing this school was connected with the wide-scale Russian tsarist policy, developed after the insurrections, of Russifying Lithuania. After two insurrections and the closing of Vilnius University, the Russian Empire had many repressive regulations, one of which permitted only reliable people from the *guberniyas* of central Russia to teach in Lithuania. Trutnev, however, did not yield to imperial chauvinism but primarily concerned himself with the material facilities and programs of the school, and with the training and recruitment of professional teachers. The faculty included recent graduates with progressive views from the Saint Petersburg Academy of Art. Their aesthetic attitudes were oriented toward the new Western European and especially French artistic processes, and toward the progressive art journals of the time that supported them, such as *Mir iskusstva*, *Apollon*, and *Zolotoye runo*. Contrary to the stereotypes found in Western art-historical literature, after 1905 the Vilnius School of Drawing was clearly oriented to French impressionist and post-impressionist art. These attitudes were also characteristic of the most popular instructors – Ivan Rybakov and Sergei Yuzhanin,

who started working there in 1899 immediately after graduating from the Academy, and another excellent teacher, Nikolai Sergeyev-Korobov, who started there in 1912.

In the Jewish community, the cultural status of this school was so high that graduates who had emigrated to the West occasionally emphasized its importance in their recollections by referring to it as the Vilnius Academy of Art. Moreover, it was famous for its democratic attitude. In the words of the Polish art historian Jerzy Malinowski:

> In the history of Jewish and European art this school is phenomenal; therefore, researchers sometimes call it the Art Academy. Young Jews, mainly from the eastern lands of the former rzeczpospolita, for whom schools were often inaccessible because of various government quotas, came to Vilnius to study under Trutnev. They became the most eminent graduates of this school and occupied high positions in art in France, Germany, and America.[4]

Thus Vilnius was like a magnet to Jewish artists from Belarus and Ukraine, the cultural space of the old Grand Duchy of Lithuania. At the Vilnius School of Drawing, Jews comprised, along with Catholics of noble backgrounds, the greatest part of the student body.

The number of students (which varies greatly in the sources – for example, 60 to 100 during the first year) grew together with this school's material facilities and influence. According to various sources, more than 4,500 people attended this school throughout its existence, but diplomas were awarded to only 193 of the best students who had completed the entire compulsory program. (We do not have any other detailed documented information about the number of students at this school). Of these, about 50 enrolled in the Saint Petersburg Academy of Art, and others – in academies in Berlin and Munich, the Stroganov School in Moscow, and various advanced schools of art in Paris. Still others undertook private study.

With anti-Semitism widespread in the Russian Empire, a great stream of Jews, educated as well as uneducated, flowed westward from the territory of Lita – seeking refuge

[4] Malinowski, 59.

from pogroms and repressions in the democratic countries in the West. This process of emigration lasted for many years and assumed various forms, from the legal and voluntary to the forcible. Some consciously severed their ties with their homeland forever; others were torn for a long time between a new and an old home; still others, tormented by nostalgia, later returned. On a hitherto unseen scale, involving about two million people, this was an exodus of biblical proportion. A significant number of the emigrants consisted of well-educated and socially and culturally organized Litvaks, among them artists with long-suppressed creative energies that exploded in the fine arts.

In the early 20th century, the Vilnius School of Drawing was attended by Chaïm Soutine, Michel Kikoïne, Pinchus Krémègne, Emmanuel Mané-Katz, Jacques Lipchitz, Léon Indenbaum, Lasar Segall, Jehudo Epstein, and others who became famous in Paris and occupied high positions in art in France, Germany, and America.[5] After the 1905 Revolution, young Litvak artists at the Vilnius School of Drawing flowed to Paris, the most liberal, cosmopolitan center for art at the time. According to Jolanta Širkaitė, who has studied the archival records, the exact number is difficult to establish, but at least 200 names have been verified.[6] In Paris, the Litvak artists comprised the nucleus of highly talented and nationally committed Jewish artists, and their dominance was obvious in practically all fields of artistic expression. Their original contribution left deep traces not only in the history of French art but also in the entire history of 20th century art.

The École de Paris and the École juive

The *École de Paris* can hardly be called a school in the conventional sense. The term was coined in 1925 to give a name to the great number of avant-garde artists who were working in Paris during the period from 1900 to World War II and belonged to different aesthetic positions, together creating one of the most significant movements in Western art. The school is named

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5 Ibid.

6 Širkaitė, 196.

after the city of Paris, but the great majority of the artists who contributed to its fame were immigrants from various corners of the world and primarily from Central and Eastern Europe. Most art historians set the lifespan of the Paris School to the period between 1900 and 1930. In French art history, and later in that of other countries, there eventually appeared another term: the *École juive* (Jewish School). It denoted the second wave of the *École de Paris*, emerging around 1912, one of the most important phenomena in 20th-century modern art.

During the early 20th century, Paris was the greatest manifestation of a new regrouping of the forces of international modern art. In the talent-rich international art scene, the first wave of the *École de Paris* began around 1900 and was dominated by Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse. The young Picasso evolved through his Blue and Rose periods into cubism, which was marked by the strong influence of Paul Cézanne's analytical and synthetic tendencies, while Matisse, by revealing the importance of color, formed the principles of fauvist aesthetics. The most significant contribution to the second (post-1912) wave of the *École de Paris* was made by the Litvak artists from various art schools of Vilnius, Kaunas and Vitebsk. In the world history of art we will find very few examples in which the interaction of the center and the periphery was as fruitful as in the School of Paris.

The young Litvaks plunged into the international Parisian artistic community and like sponges absorbed the diversity of cultural and artistic trends. Upon arrival, they discovered the impact of the Spaniards Picasso and Juan Gris, the Mexican Diego Rivera, the Italian Amadeo Modigliani, the Russians Mikhail Larionov and Natalia Goncharova, Tsuguharu Foujita from Japan, and many others. This international artistic diversity did not destroy their individuality but, on the contrary, helped them understand the importance of local traditions and styles, so that they too could emphasize their own individuality and promising creative features. What was progressive but less perceptible in one's own artistic field often revealed itself in the language of another art form. And finally, we must not forget the more or less constant opportunity to develop, systematize, and transmit aesthetic and creative principles – an

important factor in the formation of many movements, trends, groups, and schools in modern art, and in the growth of individual artists.

The Litvak artists arrived in Paris at a time when the creative powers of modern art were being consolidated. French artists were beginning to lose their dominant position to immigrants arriving from the far corners of Europe and filled with incredible creative energy. Litvak painters were taking some significant new steps in their competition with neo-romanticism, symbolism, naturalism, neo-and-post impressionism, pointillism, and various other movements that had already exhausted their creative potential, and whose influence the followers of fauvism, cubism, futurism, and many other movements in modern art were seeking to limit. The new arrivals studied works by great masters of the past and by their contemporaries, and interpreted their own relevance and place in a new hierarchy of values. They participated in the development of various schools and trends in modern art, and created their own vision of a new, modern art.

Montparnasse and the Immigrants of la Ruche

In Paris at the beginning of the century, one of the most important centers for independent avant-garde artists whose programmatic attitudes were closely related to the aesthetics of classical modernism was in the colorful Montmartre, which surrounds a huge hill. Here began the reaction of independent artists against stagnant academism.

On the other side of the Seine from Montmartre, on the Left Bank, there is another center that was popular with the artistic avant-garde: Montparnasse. Its heart consisted of a huge artists' colony called *la Ruche* (the Hive). This round building was originally designed as the Wine Pavilion of the 1900 Paris World's Fair. Later, in 1902, the patron, sculptor, and philanthropist Alfred Boucher set up about eighty art studios here, for which he charged a nominal annual rent of fifty francs. Located at the center of this colony, the three-story *la Ruche* was surrounded by one-story buildings. Along the corridor that encircled each floor were small studios that narrowed toward the center of the building, and were each equipped with a cupboard

for pictures, a bed, and a stove to keep warm. The round shape of this building and its honeycomb-like studios inspired its name – the Hive. Artists and critics ironically called it the *Villa Médicis de la misère* (Médici Villa of Destitution) or the Second Babylon – because so many artists of various nationalities and from different lands, as well as poor artists from the provinces of France, lived and worked under one roof there. From here emerged many of this wave's great masters, who overshadowed other groups of artists with the force of their talent and the suggestiveness of their canvases.

As Suzanne Pourchier aptly observes in her study "De Vilna à Montparnasse":

> ...in Paris between the two world wars there was such a significant concentration of Litvaks there that it was the art capital for them. Here they sought new ways of expressing their individuality drawing on other art forms.[7]

About the atmosphere at the Hive, Marc Chagall wrote:

> That was the name given to a hundred or so studios surrounded by a little garden and very close to the Vaugirard slaughterhouses. In those studios lived the artistic Bohemia of every land. ...I sat alone in my studio before my kerosene lamp. A studio jammed with pictures, with canvases which, moreover, were not really canvases but my table napkins, my bed sheets, my nightshirts torn into pieces.[8]

Most Jewish immigrant artists at that time lived and worked in la Ruche. As immigrants, they lived humbly in their communes, in a closed circle of other émigrés. Robert Falk writes:

> In Paris, artists live in their studios. A room with one window, a cupboard for bedding, and a stove that was heated with coal or anthracite.[9]

Most of these artists who came to Paris from the Jewish ghettos in the Pale of Settlement, from Vilnius or Vitebsk, spoke the Lithuanian dialect of Yiddish among themselves and had a

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7 Pourchier, 217.
8 Chagall, 102-103.
9 Falk, 12.

poor command of any other language. Chagall, who had spent three years in Saint Petersburg, was ahead of Soutine, who learned some Russian only at the age of twelve, and never perfected his knowledge of that language. As a result, even though they lived in Paris for a long time, the Litvaks were not able to fully adapt there. They came into direct contact with many of the leading figures in modern art, but they stayed away from noisy groups and remained secluded in a world of their own inner experiences. Paris enchanted them with the signs, symbols, and values of culture and art. Parisian life – rich, colorful, carefree – unfolded before them, but the door to it was locked. When examining the factors that determine the specific nature of Litvak art, we should not forget that during their early years in Paris, the new arrivals lived in poverty and isolation and encountered indifference, insensitivity, and lack of communication with their surrounding world. An important link between them and spiritually allied groups of artists in Montparnasse and la Ruche was provided by Amadeo Modigliani, who befriended the Litvaks and was at that time already an exceptional figure in the Parisian modern art community, greatly admired for his originality and aesthetic refinement.

The influences the newcomers absorbed were many and various and had a tremendous impact on their creative potential, means of expression, and aesthetic priorities. At night they gathered at the nearby Café du Dôme where they passionately discussed art and their impressions from museums and galleries, where new ideas were born, and where they found their idols in painting. Arbit Blatas remembers:

> This café was like a synagogue for us, something similar to a gathering place for Talmudists, for Jews from the ghettos of such countries as Romania, Poland, Lithuania, Russia, who came together after a hard day's work in Paris, because artists did not live as well then as they do now; at that time, collectors did not yet buy pictures in order to speculate in them.[10]

The Litvak artists arrived in Paris at a time when the creative powers of modern art were being consolidated. French artists were beginning to lose their dominant position to im-

[10] Blatas, 42.

migrants arriving from far corners of Europe and filled with incredible creative energy. Jewish artists had to find a place for themselves in the centers of modern art. Their unique contribution to the history of French modern art during the first half of the 20th century is best revealed when comparing their style, poetic imagery, and the particularities of plastic language to the earlier expressionist art of French and Scandinavian countries. Some tendencies close to Litvak expressionism can be observed in the works of Vincent van Gogh, Kokoschka and the group *Die Brücke* (The Bridge), in Picasso's Blue Period (1901 – 1904), and in paintings by Valadon, Utrillo, Rouault, and others. However, the artists from Lita introduced many distinctly new aspects not present in earlier French painting, such as, for example, in the works of van Gogh or Toulouse-Lautrec. They expanded and enriched the stylistic panorama of French art with their own unique experience: their original sense of color and form and many new dramatic and tragic motifs that had not been seen in earlier traditions of French art. The Litvak artists brought elements of the Judaic tradition to the expressionist tendencies in French art. Hence followed the maximalism of their artistic goals, their longing for true, authentic art, and their endless devotion to creative work.

Many of the Litvak artists, seeking to join the process of Western modernist art, consciously distanced themselves from the Judaic religious tradition and broke away from its influence. However, another group – Michel Kikoïne, Indenbaum, Lipchitz, Segall, Band, and Arbit Blatas – looked at their cultural tradition from inside, expanded its limits, and enriched it with universal contents. Foremost to contribute their own original ideas and concepts of color and form to the cosmopolitan Parisian art scene were Chaim Soutine and Marc Chagall. The power of their talent belongs to the most significant events not only in modern painting but also in the Western artistic tradition as a whole.

Chaïm Soutine (1893-1943) came to Paris from Vilnius and remained until the end of his life an outsider, a unique introvert whom his colleagues referred to as a *juif lituanien* and *juif maudit*. "Indifferent to everything except painting, everywhere

a stranger, Soutine," wrote Jean-Paul Crespelle.[11] Soutine developed a highly personal vision and painting technique. He painted incessantly, spontaneously, to the point of exhaustion, driven by an obsessive energy, without preliminary studies, using broad brushstrokes and pure vibrant colors. Disregarding established concepts of beauty and harmony, he painted jumbled elements of a landscape, bloody carcasses of butchered animals, grim faces and bodies deformed by a life of hardship and disappointment.

Until his first exhibition in Paris in 1924, Soutine lived in extreme poverty and survived only with the help of close friends who understood and admired his unique talent. Soutine's worldview remained tragic and pessimistic throughout his life. At the outset of World War II, Soutine was in constant hiding from the Gestapo and died of a bleeding ulcer in Paris in 1943. Soutine, in my opinion, was a true genius – one who quickly burned up his talent.

Marc Chagall (1887-1985) is the very opposite of Soutine. Born in Vitebsk, he grew up in poverty but surrounded by the mystical worldview of the Litvak Hassidism dominant in his native town. He took his first steps into art in 1906 at the Yehuda Pen School of Painting and continued in St. Petersburg, where he was greatly influenced by Mstislav Dobuzhinsky. After arriving in Paris in 1910, he began to take a nostalgic look at the Hassidic culture that became his main source of inspiration. Hassidism arose in reaction to Talmudic legalism, teaching a joyful, mystical, personal relationship with God. Chagall's work, likewise, is marked by a childlike and dreamlike mood. Abandoning rules of gravity, Chagal depicted floating images of people and farm animals of everyday village life as filtered through the prism of his fantasy and intertwined with folkloric themes. His work is characterized by vivid color and a special lightness and musicality.

Chagall was a universal master of various forms; he participated in many cultural movements and traveled to many countries. In the 1930s, Chagall's interest turned to the Holy Land, and his subject matter became biblical themes and images from

[11] Crespelle, 40-41.

the Old Testament. In the latter half of his life, he did large-scale paintings for the Paris Opera and stained-glass windows for cathedrals, the United Nations, and in Israel. He lived most of his life in France, except for the war years 1941–1948, when he sought refuge in the United States. The first book illustrated by Chagall – I. L. Peretz's *The Magician* – was published in Vilnius in 1917 by Boris Kletzkin, and in 1924 he had a successful exhibition in Kaunas, Lithuania. He stands out for his unbelievable productivity. Chagall has been called the most Jewish of Jewish painters.

Litvaks and the Search for National Art

The problem of national identity, which spread throughout Europe in the early 20th century, was characteristic not only of the Central and Eastern European peoples. Seeing the disintegration of old empires and the formation of new states, Jews of various ideological persuasions more and more often confronted the problem of their own nationhood and their own national art. Influenced by Mark Antokolsky's ideas, many Jewish artists were interested in the creation of a national art even before World War I, collecting and systematizing examples of Jewish sacred and folk art in the Pale of Settlement. El Lissitzky and Naum Aronson often used ethnographic material in their work.

In Paris, the Litvaks in the la Ruche environment understood profoundly the importance of giving artistic form to their own culture, and sought to explain the relationship between their work and the artistic traditions of France, Germany, Russia, and other countries. They constantly disputed how much the works of Rembrandt, the father and son Ismael Israel, Anton Raphael Mengs, Joseph Israels, Moritz Daniel Oppenheim, Max Liebermann, and other artists could justifiably be considered sources of Jewish national painting. On the other hand, if some Jewish artists of the *École de Paris* (Modigliani, Kisling, Pascin, Zadkine, Pevsner) employed few or no themes, motifs, or stylistic features specific to Jewish art, by what criteria – apart from ethnic origin – could they be identified as Jewish? The question arises: why did a special role in the appearance of professional Jewish art fall to Litvak immigrants from huge

Jewish communities held together by conservative Judaism? How can we explain why artists from the periphery and traditional Eastern Europe massively invaded and dominated Paris, the unquestionable center of modern Western art?

The reasons were many and various. This dominance by Jewish immigrants in the second wave of the *École de Paris* was probably determined by the creative and largely unspent energy of a people liberated from their ghettos through the processes of democratization, and by the passionate desire of Jewish artists to find a place for themselves in the centers of modern art. Modern Jewish art could not fully develop under the powerful influence of Orthodox Jewish traditions. In the cultural space of Lita, sacred architecture and all applied arts achieved great heights, but all art forms preserved their traditional sacred characteristics and observed the Second Commandment, which prohibits the depiction of living creatures and human forms. Litvak artists who had grown up in an Orthodox environment and had chosen the "sinful calling" of a painter or sculptor could not freely develop secular fine arts. Artists who decided to pursue artistic careers were forced to sever their ties with the Jewish community and convert to other religions. However, the processes of democratization in the Russian Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century forced Litvaks from the Pale of Settlement into increasing mobility, and resulted in a breakdown of the traditional way of life that had taken centuries to form. In Paris, Jewish artists from closed communities with traditional views regarding the fine arts found a cultural environment and a freedom of expression that they could barely imagine in their native land. Paris – rich in liberal traditions and cultural values, open to innovation and to various artistic styles and trends, became fertile ground for these talented artists from the periphery of Europe to release their pent-up creative energy and understand the aesthetic value of their work.

Arbit Blatas, who was born in Kaunas, often wrote with pride about the contribution of the immigrants from the cultural space of Lita to the history of Western art, connecting his Litvak roots with his "Lithuanian nationalism," as he called it. Discussing the role of Litvak artists in Parisian artistic life

during the early decades of the 20th century, Blatas wrote in his article "Montparnasse, capitale de la Lituanie des Arts":

> At the beginning of this history there was Lithuania. It is impossible to forget her landscapes, her lights, her climates...[12]

An obvious duality manifested itself in their work since Litvaks joined the School of Paris movement and painfully experienced the problematic relationship between tradition and modernity in the variegated context of the École de Paris. Their work is inseparable from their heritage and the baggage of tragic existential experience that they brought with them. Despite their efforts to break free, the Litvaks could not escape their childhood memories or their dependence on their tradition, whose social, mystical, and poetic influence inspired their works. A dramatic worldview filled with nostalgia for a homeland left behind, a sense of tragedy, a choice of distinctive subjects, and an unusual perspective that determined the unique palette and imagery of the Litvak style of painting – all these things flowed from their early life experience in the closed Orthodox community of Lita and from elements of Jewish mysticism acquired through the study of the Talmud. They were tormented by an inner conflict with the restrictions of Orthodox Judaism, and subconscious guilt of being under a curse for violating the Second Commandment. These were surely some of the reasons that determined their aggressive challenge to earlier traditions of realistic art and the adoption of the most radical forms of modern art: abstraction, cosmopolitanism, intellectuality, psychologizing, and emphasis on temporal structures.

The paradox is that the Litvaks, with their well-preserved national identity, were able to fully realize their talents only in the rich cultural and artistic environment of Paris. In the opinion of this writer, if the great Litvak masters of the *École de Paris* had remained in their native country, their talent would probably never have blossomed so powerfully as in this international cauldron, to which immigrants brought their colors

[12] Blatas, 33.

and artistic traditions and fused them with the latest trends in modern art. This unbelievably strange encounter between the center of Europe and tendencies from the fringes turned out to be the most fruitful and important phenomenom in twentieth century art.

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Andrew Miksys: White Russia in Color

LAIMONAS BRIEDIS

There is no great mystery behind the meaning of the name Belarus, which in every Slavic language can easily be deciphered as White Rus. The evocation of the color white in the title of the country might bring to mind a picture of an achromatic landscape with unstained, seamless nature. There is a certain degree of truth in this perception, since Belarus, for the most part, is a country as flat as a sheet of paper. The country is extensively covered by vast forests and swamps, only occasionally broken up by rivers lazily flowing to the Black or Baltic Seas. In spring, which usually arrives late in Belarus, the rivers swell into the forest, spilling into the marshes and bogs, submerging the countryside in a pitch-grey sludge of murky water and earthy elements. The flooding can last for months: the smooth topography and rainy weather of Belarus encourages stagnation, with no routes of escape for either the water or the trapped inhabitants of the countryside. Indeed, ancient cartographers drew parts of the contemporary territory of Belarus as if it were a geological relic of the Biblical deluge, a grand inland lagoon – *terra acqua*, a waterland – sloughing across Europe like a monstrous beaver pond. The maps gave Belarus the impression of a Nordic Amazon: an empty, untamed, and somewhat dangerous and mysterious wilderness with only a

LAIMONAS BRIEDIS, the author of *Vilnius: City of Strangers* and the guest editor of this issue, is currently working on a project to create a literary map of Vilnius and the cultural cartography of the Lithuanian diaspora. He divides his time between Vancouver and Vilnius.

few scarcely populated towns or villages. Seasonal overflows are still a yearly episode in Belarus and in spring, the countryside acquires a brownish-green tone. Overall, though, grey hues govern Belarus, especially its history.

Browsing through old cosmographies of the world, it is easy to notice that White Russia has no fixed history. For centuries, Belarus has been a country in motion, a fluid concept with a predisposition to move westwards. Until the seventeenth century, White Rus – *Ruthenia Alba* in Latin – denoted the territories of the Russian principality of Moscow. The albescent Rus was in opposition to Black and Red Ruthenia, its westerly and southerly cousins, modern-day western Belarus and Ukraine. This color contrast made perfect sense considering the icy climate and long winters of the northerly latitudes of Muscovy. (Fittingly, the White Sea – the Baltic – shouldered the region of *Ruthenia Alba*.) Yet, as often happens in the areas of great distances, shifting loyalties in subsequent centuries moved the geographical location of White Russia closer to Lithuania, Muscovy's rival for the lands and title of Ruthenia. It took another century for White Russia to jump across the historical frontier separating Lithuania from Moscow and become more closely associated with the easterly provinces of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. From the fifteenth up until the early part of the nineteenth century, most of the contemporary territory of the Republic of Belarus was referred to and known as *Litva*, or Lithuania. The final split between Lithuania and Belarus only occurred with the emergence of national – linguistic and ethnic – consciousness among Lithuanians and Belarussians some hundred years ago. The current (political) border between Belarus and Lithuania has no trace of historical legitimacy, except for the fact that it was penciled in by the Soviet regime.

Puzzling as it is, the cartographical move of Belarus westwards imbued the meaning of white in the title of the country with new connotations. In the historiography of Russia, the color white came to be associated with purity, that is, an unadulterated form of the early Slavic (and Christian) society saved

from the despondency of the Mongol suzerainty. In essence, the existence of White Russia exemplified the continuity of the early Kiev Rus traditions, if not in political life, then at least in its religious spirit and population stock. Ancient Rus – the cultural prototype of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus – was initially built as a Viking (Nordic) community, greatly expanded across vast stretches of Eastern Europe by conquering and uniting different pagan Slavic societies. Modern ethnographers have been quick to point to the flaxen complexion of the natives of the country and/or their unadorned – colorless, whitish – traditional linen garment as the evidence of the northern (and white) origins of the Belarus. This observation suggests a certain degree of "genetic isolation" and the "cultural innocence" of the Belorussian population. Such a claim, of course, is a far cry from true, for Belarus has been probably one of the most war-ravaged provinces of Europe, continually crisscrossed by foreign powers. In its recorded history, the population of Belarus has never been ethnically, linguistically, racially, or religiously homogeneous. For centuries, White Russia was home to Slavs, Balts, Jews, Tartars, and Roma. Here, as much or more than anywhere else on the continent, different religions – several denominations of Christianity, different groups of Judaism and Islam – took root.

Belarus had always been a colorful amalgamation of languages, customs, traditions, and histories, a "divided" place where east and west meant more than just geographical direction. The fatal curses of the modern age, World War II in particular, united White Russia. War dyed Belarus in monochrome: a bare, unacknowledged territory on the conscience of Europe. The blood of the Stalinist and Nazi terrors washed Belarus with mass exterminations and total annihilation of its cities and villages. It made the country a lonely, emptied place where the dead sought to outnumber the living. Afterwards, the Soviets painted White Russia grey, forging out from the ashes of war ruins an exemplary landscape of socialist banality.

The geographical elasticity and historical perforation of White Russia is a good indication of the country's post-Soviet

present. On the political map of Europe, Belarus is a fresh state, albeit with a tendency to reassign itself a great tradition of ancient pedigree. The newly established Belarussian state is not unlike a tabula rasa, a canvas ready to be painted over. Most states start this way, but in Belarus, the past has been so unkind to its people that it often makes historical facts unbearably hard to grasp. As a result, history in the Republic of Belarus is a creative act, an aesthetic and very often phantasmagorical pastiche of known and imagined, horrible and idyllic. It is a fascinating, but at the same time, alarming terrain, an icy landscape of colorful deceptions.

On the other hand, driven by personal experiences, local people are far more resilient to the official whitewashing of history. In Belarus, though, memory is vague, oblique, and unreliable – people with tragic histories usually do not go deep into memories, for to outlive a past of terror, destruction, and humiliation, one needs to erase a lot of pain. Hence, for the people of Belarus, memory is something to forget. To look forward, anticipating the warmth of the coming summer, promises a possibility of escape, a brief respite from the unwelcome bleakness of the long winters of history. Hence, in White Russia, memory is a country of improvisation: a personal patch of the motherland.

History and memory, unlike winter and summer, are not worlds apart; and in Belarus, the state and people come together by welcoming the invariably late arrival of spring. It is a brief, reserved, and somewhat mistrustful embrace, verging on effortless banality with a predictably fruitless conclusion. But just the same, spring celebration opens space to people, a treat in a country of grey expectations.

Photographer Andrew Miksys, a seasoned traveler, ventures into the spring of Belarus with the eye of a magician. He knows the local terrain well: the distant officialdom and intimate circles, public and private, open and secret, cynical and welcoming, recorded and discarded, winter and summer, the

risky future and the scarcity of hope. In search of the space in between, he builds his itinerary as a conceptual trick, following the ideological formulas in expectation of finding the human landscape. Thus, his photographs are not so much a record of Belarus in bloom – an archive of an official jubilation – but a diorama of the solitude of the celebration. Elegiac in color, this marvelous exposé registers Belarus in disjunction. In his photographs of national holidays, however, Miksys enters not only the fractured nature of Belarus or its inherently split personality, but also the twofold reality of the country.

Spring slips into Belarus with the advent of May Day, confusingly rebaptized as Work Day. It is a national holiday, with most people having the day off. The holiday, during Soviet rule known as the International Workers Day, has changed not just its name, but also its ideological meaning and festive character. Of course, May Day is a foreign – international – affair, because it commemorates the Haymarket massacre of protesting workers in Chicago on May 1, 1886. May Day has anarchist origins, but was eventually taken by the Second International as a day of protest, displaying the unity and strength of the proletariat of the world. It quickly spread throughout Europe, including the Russian Empire, which at the time was the governing power of White Russia. The hallmark of the May Day celebration was a street confrontation between authorities and working-class demonstrators. In general, though, the majority of the Belarus population – overwhelmingly peasants – was ignorant of the holiday and its ideological associations. Nonetheless, shortly after the October Revolution, during the first spring season of the Soviet regime, May Day, as the rite dearest to the Bolshevik theory of world revolution, became an official holiday. In subsequent decades, it ballooned into a proletarian gala, with the Communist oligarchy on pedestals and the working class streaming by in an ocean of red banners, flags, and plastic flowers. Depending on the momentary flavor of the party, upraised islands of millions of reproduced pictures of Lenin, Stalin, Marx, Khrushchev, Engels, and/or Brezhnev

paraded past. Nowadays, May Day is still a holiday, but a lethargic one. Marching orders and forced jubilation are things of the past, replaced by cheerless outdoor performances and lifeless street markets. Work Day became an idle affair, even to those tattered old souls who still wave red as the color of their Soviet dreams.

Radunitsa, the primordial Slavic holiday commemorating the inevitable power of death, is something from another planet. It is a buzzing, almost jovial day, gathering crowds of people in cemeteries. Locally know as Easter for the Dead, *Radunitsa* follows the Russian Orthodox liturgical calendar and is always celebrated on Tuesday, nine days after Easter Sunday. The origins of the holiday are unclear, but since time immemorial it has been a social and religious fixture in White Russia. Incidentally, Belarus is one of the few countries in the world officially celebrating both the Catholic All Souls Day, known as *Dziady,* and the Russian Orthodox *Radunitsa.* The difference between the two is striking. *Dziady* is the forewarning of winter and darkness; *Radunitsa* is all about spring expectations. A Byelorussian proverb states that, on *Radunitsa,* the morning is the time to be toiling, the afternoon weeping, and the evening carousing. The old wisdom still holds true in post-Soviet Belarus, where *Radunitsa* is acknowledged and, to a different degree, celebrated by almost everyone: Christians, Jews, nonbelievers, old Communists, and especially Roma. Often, it is a colorful, crowded holiday, a pageant of family reunions and public displays of mortuary grandeur. Picnicking at the grave sites of the dearly departed is a must, and no one dead can be recalled without a shot of vodka. The more spirits one greets, the merrier one gets... *Radunitsa,* meaning "a joyful affair," outlasted Soviet censorship and has sprung back to life as a reminder of the passing order of everything earthly. It is a day of memory, an antidote to history.

Victory Day, celebrated on May 9, is a day for evoking the Great Patriotic War, the grave maker of modern-day Belarus. Undoubtedly, it is the most bombastic and ritualized holiday of

the country. Celebratory preparations for Victory Day last for weeks; indeed, it extends to every day of the year, for the history and geography of the war have made the greatest imprint on the soil and soul of White Russia. Proportionally more people died in Belarus during WWII than in any region of Europe. Death was random and capricious, but mass killings were a policy: Jews, partisans, and the villagers accused of supporting them. In the Soviet Union, Victory Day as a commemoration of the capitulation of Nazi Germany became a national holiday only in 1965, when a new generation without experience or memory of the war was entering adulthood. Immediately, it came to be recognized as an anniversary honoring the sacrifices of their parents' generation. It was a celebration of living memory, the only day in the year when war veterans were allowed not to be ashamed of their mutilated bodies, and when men alongside women could cry in public. With time, however, with the memory of the victory fading away and the number of WWII front veterans dwindling, the celebration lost its sense of intimacy, emotional charge, and freshness.

But Victory Day was never just about commemorating the war dead or remembering the sacrifice of the (Soviet) nation, and Moscow has always been the august stage for the celebration. The primary ideological goal of Victory Day was to flaunt the military strength of the Soviet state, to demonstrate to the citizens of the country and the rest of the world the perpetuity of communist power. The disintegration of the Soviet Union robbed the holiday of its solidifying effect, making it a souvenir from the thundering days of the past. Yet in post-Soviet Belarus, Victory Day is still greeted with a military parade, a distant cannon of totalitarian ideology. But with few living witnesses to the war (and even fewer veteran soldiers) mingling around, the carefully orchestrated and monitored celebratory mood of the holiday camouflages the loneliness and isolation of memory. Tinted with nostalgia, Victory Day is an edifice of the expired Soviet history, a skeleton keeping Belarus a separate nation.

In contrast, the Day of the Republic is a novel and hurried invention: a gift from the president of Belarus to the nation. Also known as Independence Day, it became an official holiday some fifteen years ago as a commemoration of the liberation of Minsk by the Red Army on July 3, 1944. Predictably, Independence Day is saluted with a grandiose display of armament, the corroding surplus of the Soviet mind.

Modern White Russia can be summarized with a single world: bilocation, that is, the ability to appear in two places at the same time. Bilocation is usually encountered in religious, especially Christian, mysticism, where it usually signals saintly behavior. But it is also a marker of black magic: witches have traditionally been charged with being seen in two places at once as a proof of their satanic power. In brief, bilocation is an extraordinary condition, always demanding a double verification of an appearance. No single witness can reliably testify in a case of bilocation. Miksys, however, was able to capture the dual reality of Belarus by simply focusing on the commonplace in the celebratory.

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ANDREW MIKSYS is the author of *BAXT* (FATE), a book of photographs about the Roma (Gypsies) of Lithuania. He was a Guggenheim Fellow in 2000 and was twice awarded Fulbright grants. His work has been shown internationally, including exhibitions at the Seattle Art Museum, Kominek Gallery (Berlin), and the Vilnius Contemporary Art Centre. He currently divides his time between Seattle and Vilnius.

Veteran, Victory Day, Minsk, 2010.

Lenin Statue, October Revolution Day, Minsk, 2010.

"I Support the USSR," Victory Day, Minsk, 2009.

Man with USSR Flag, May Day, Minsk, 2010.

Girl with Flowers, Belarussian Independence Day, Minsk, 2010.

Romani Girl in Cemetery, Radunitsa Holiday, Gomel, 2011.

Chaika automobile, Radunitsa, Gomel, 2011.

Grave Offerings, Radunitsa, Gomel, 2011.

A Drink for the Dead, Radunitsa, Gomel, 2011.

Finding Paulius Norvila

RIMAS UŽGIRIS

Paulius Norvila is an unlikely poet. He studied economics at Vytautas Magnus University. He works at a bank. He never aspired to be a writer. He was not part of the literary world at all. Even his friends did not take any special interest in poetry. So how, then, did I, browsing through a bookshelf in Vilnius one day, happen to find a slim volume of poems called *Septyni Metų Laikai* by Paulius Norvila?

"Magic," says Paulius, "it's magic."

As he describes it, one summer, not so long ago, he found himself with spare time and nothing to do. For some reason, unknown to us all, he started writing. Soon, notebooks began to fill with musical, metaphorical lines. They came to him without his wanting them. It was poetry. A gift. Now some might say the muse was speaking to him, or God. Others may claim that his unconscious mind needed to express itself. Who really knows where poetic inspiration comes from? What matters is that it came, and he listened, and he wrote.

As an American poet, I cannot help but think of Walt Whitman's sudden calling to his art, or of Wallace Stevens composing verses in his head as he walked home from work at an insurance company. But in terms of style, other Ameri-

RIMAS UŽGIRIS is a poet, translator, and critic. He received an MFA in creative writing from Rutgers-Newark University, and holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He lives in Brooklyn.

cans come to mind: the musical, densely metaphoric language of Hart Crane, the seemingly casual lyrics of everyday life by Frank O'Hara, and the surrealistic effects of John Ashberry's illogical associations. Is Norvila, then, the New York School poet of Lithuania? If so, he wouldn't have known it. Those writers are only vaguely familiar to him. Perhaps their muse, tired of New York's congested atmosphere, was seeking out the greener pastures of Lithuania? Anything is possible. But influences don't really matter for the poetry speaks for itself: it is both cosmopolitan and quotidian; musical, yet without stultified forms; metaphorical and associative, without losing touch with the realities of human experience. It is not for nothing that Tomas Venclova wrote of him: "Unarguable talent. Some of the lines simply made me gasp." So, standing by the bookshelf that fine summer day, entranced by the swift-moving song of his verse, by the startling leaps from image to image, I bought the book.

I have tried to convey in English the tone and pace of the original without sacrificing meaning—without changing the metaphors that often build into startling associative structures and touch us in unexpected and intriguing ways. It is not easy to translate inspiration, but I have listened, learned, and tried to render these poems into English so that others might listen and understand.

Poems by Paulius Norvila

Translated by Rimas Užgiris

sometimes it's like this

your name is a blank to me,
falling quietly as if it's the sky,
or Tolstoy poised with his pen,
or matches about to go out.

falling quietly, it lands with a crash
turning people around in the street,
and the cab driver lends you a coat
so you can cover up your loneliness.

he hasn't read you yet but knows,
oh, i'm ashamed of poisoning a friend,
and i listen as the final minute escapes
without purpose into a field.

let's say goodbye, back to back, gently,
i know you won't forget me.
maybe then i'll tell you my plan,
but for now, just coffee, no grounds.

kartais taip būna

tavo vardas man nieko nesako
krinta tyliai tarytum dangus,
lyg Tolstojus su plunksna prie lapo,
lyg degtukai, nespėję uždust.

krinta tyliai, bet nukrenta garsiai
ir atsisuka žmonės iš gatvės,
ir taksistas paskolina švarką,
kad pridengtumei savo vienatvę.

nors neskaitė tavęs, bet pažįsta,
o man gėda, nunuodiju draugą
ir klausau, kaip pabėga be tikslo
paskutinė minutė į lauką.

atsisveikinam nugarom švelniai,
aš žinau, tu manęs nepamirši.
gal kada ir atskleisiu tau planą,
o kol kas – tik kava čia. be tirščių.

pp. turning

i am the same as you, my enemy,
i am the same as you, my friend,
torn away from unborn revenge,
grown up from the grey snow,
come from the blackened street,
to sit down, reading and reading,
the same as you—having begun,
the same as you—having ended.

my dogs all look to the rain,
to spring, my travelers,
i'm so temporary—time's mock-up,
which darkening, doesn't always work.
o sleep, checkmate at the window,
i am stone or the casing of a bullet,
there are towns—pallid life,
there are people—without grounds.

things turn like that, sink, drown,
when my thoughts find me,
my accents cripple the rhymes,
and we share what there is to share
as ordained by the common sweeper,
as offered by the common question mark,
i am the same as you—begun,
i am the same as you—unbroken.

psl. atsivertimas

aš toks pats kaip ir tu, mano prieše,
aš toks pats kaip ir tu, mano drauge,
iš negimusio kerštо išplėštas,
iš pabalusio sniego užaugęs,
iš pajuodusios gatvės atėjęs,
atsisėdęs ir skaitęs, ir skaitęs,
aš toks pats kaip ir tu—prasidėjęs,
aš toks pats kaip ir tu—pasibaigęs.

mano šunys vis žiūri į lietų,
į pavasarį—mano keleiviai,
aš toks laikinas, laiko maketas,
kuris temstant ne visad suveikia.
o kai miegs, kai šachas į langą,
aš akmuo ar net kulkos paviršius,
būna miestas—gyvena nublankęs,
būna žmonės—gyvena be tirščių.

taip ir sukasi, skęsta, skandina,
kai atranda mane mano mintys,
mano kirčiai suluošina rimą,
ir dalinamės tai, ką dalintis
mums paskyrė eilinis šlavėjas,
mums pasiūlė eilinis klaustukas,
aš toks pats kaip ir tu—prasidėjęs,
aš toks pats kaip ir tu—nenutrūkęs.

yours

do you know it will rain tomorrow,
and spring will trip us up again?
meeting, we'll discuss what will be,
and we'll completely forget what there is.
we'll stop, and nothing more,
trains barely budging in the station,
and the whistle ordering us to come
will clog, telling us not to hurry.
and we'll huddle with a fire on the hill
or below, wherever we find calm.
a wisp of smoke and there is nothing,
a wisp of smoke and everything is one.
you won't feel it, but springtime
will rise with its hands up too high,
and God will speak with your lips
like then, like back then—you know?

tavo

ar žinai, kad rytoj lis lietus
ir pavasariai mėtys pėdas,
susitikę sakysim, kas bus,
ir pamiršim visai, kas yra.
ir sustosim, ir nieko už tai,
tik stoty traukiniai pajudės,
o švilpukas, paliepęs ateit,
užsikimš ir palieps neskubėt,
ir ugnim prisiglausim kalne
ar pakalnėj, ar ten, kur ramu,
vienas dūmas ir nieko nėra,
vienas dūmas ir viskas kartu.
ir nejausi, bet rankomis kils
tie pavasariai, kur per aukštai,
tavo lūpomis Dievas prabils
kaip tada, kaip tada, ar žinai?

my name

saturday
says it will rain

but

we won't burn candles
because bonfires get lit by them

if you are looking for medicine you know
to get better we can't get sick

write down my name
when your eyes are all wet
it doesn't mean that light is gone

when night unlocks the door
you are barefoot on the street again

alone

now why so much ballast
and so much hopelessness

saturday
says it will rain

only on your shoulder

mano vardas

šeštadienis
sako kad lis

bet

nedeginsim žvakių
nuo jų įliepsnoja laužai

jei ieškai vaistų tai žinai
pasveikti negalime sirgt

užrašyk mano vardą
kai blausiasi akys
nereiškia jog dingsta šviesa

kai duris atrakina naktis
ir tu vėl gatvėj basa

ir viena

na kodėl tiek balasto
ir tiek nevilties

šeštadienis
sako kad lis

tik ant tavo peties

Paulius Norvila, *Septyni metų laikai: eilėraščiai.*
Vilnius: Tyto alba, 2006.

The Curious Position of Antanas Tulys in the Canon of Lithuanian Literature

ELIZABETH NOVICKAS

A friend, whom I shall graciously leave unnamed, once told me a story about finding a single Lithuanian book in a Canadian library—a copy of one of Antanas Tulys's short story collections. With all of a nineteen-year-old's passion, she stole the book from the library as well as surreptitiously destroyed the card catalog entry, because, as she said, "If there was to be only one Lithuanian book in that library, I didn't want it to be that disgusting Tulys."

Although this act of canon revision may seem rather drastic (I am not blameless in regard to passionate hatreds myself, having organized with my roommates a ritual bonfire of several particularly unloved textbooks upon graduation), it is no more than what all of us do whenever we pick up a book, read it, and interact with it in some fashion, hopefully other than to throw it across the room in disgust. As Jerry Varsava has written, "... canon revision is most ably advanced through the individual reader's engagement with literary texts."[1] Allow me the liberty to call Tulys's work "literary" for a moment. Then Tulys presents us with an interesting case study of how works become, or fail to become, part of a literary canon. Using the other two elements of Varsava's proposition, i.e., "individual readers" and

[1] Varsava, *Contingent Meanings*, 68.

ELIZABETH NOVICKAS is the translator of Ričardas Gavelis's *Vilnius Poker* (Open Letter, 2009) and Kazys Boruta's *Whitehorn's Windmill* (CEU Press, 2010). She is currently translating Giedra Radvilavičiutė's essays for Dalkey Archive Press and Petras Cvirka's *Frank Kruk*.

"engagement," we should be able to define a fairly clear picture of exactly where Tulys fits in the canon of Lithuanian literature.

It cannot be said that Antanas Tulys (1898-1977) has completely escaped notice. He is mentioned in such standard works as *Lietuvių enciklopedija* (where he earns a photograph and a half column of text), *Lietuvių egzodo literatūra, 1945-1990,* and *Lietuvių literatūra svetur, 1945-1967.* In addition, Vladas Kulbokas wrote and published a detailed book of Tulys's life in 1984. Besides these works published in the United States, Tulys also earns an entry in the *Lietuvių literatūros enciklopedija* from the Lithuanian Institute of Folklore and Literature, and in earlier works, such as *Emigranto dalia: lietuvių beletristikos rinkinys,* published in Vilnius in 1973.

However, a group of Lithuanian graduate students at the University of Illinois (two of whom had received bachelor's degrees in literature at Lithuanian universities) had neither heard of nor read his works. When, after reading a selection of Tulys's stories, they were asked their opinion of it, they used these words to characterize it: *paprastas* (ordinary, common), *banalus* (banal), *nesubtilus* (not subtle), *primityvus* (primitive), *šlykštus* (disgusting, filthy), *vulgarus* (vulgar), *liūdnas* (dismal, gloomy). One student, a graduate of Vilnius University, upon learning that Tulys was born in the same village in Lithuania where he grew up, mentioned that he vaguely remembered that there was an exhibition in the local museum about some writer who had immigrated to the United States. From these remarks, one can assume that Tulys's standing in the canon is perhaps not so very secure. But surely one can suggest that "engagement," although in this case a unanimously negative one, is engagement nevertheless.[2]

[2] Evidence that Tulys nevertheless has his contemporary fans in Lithuania was this comment found on *Kauno diena's* Internet site to the story titled "Nauja investicijų banga iš JAV lietuvių - vargiai įmanoma" (http://kauno.diena.lt/dienrastis/kita/nauja-investicijubanga-is-jav-lietuviu-vargiai-imanoma-19463): "American-Lithuanian Antanas Tulys wrote *Frank Kruk*, but Cvirka stole the novel and released it under his own name." Unfortunately, the comment no longer exists on the site.

The Engagement of Literature

I once heard a Lithuanian say, *"Jaučiuosi kaip balta varna"* (I feel like a white crow). To my ears, the phrase was not only charming, but also remarkably apt, especially since I have actually had the startling experience of seeing a pure white albino sparrow amongst a flock of normal ones. But to Lithuanian ears, the phrase may seem banal, the same way that the English phrase "sticking out like a sore thumb," simply rolls off the tongue and into neighboring ears without exciting much comment or thought.

To an American ear, though, there is a volume about Lithuanian culture spoken in the phrase. Only in a culture accustomed to paying close attention to nature and specifically to agriculture, could such an apt saying, or banality, as the case may be, have come into being. In the same way, the sore thumb has its own tale to tell, of a culture perhaps given much to activity or to building.

Webster's Second Edition defines the word *banal* merely with a list of synonyms: commonplace, trivial, trite, hackneyed. Certainly, when we begin reading a work of literature, we are *not* doing so in hopes of finding something ordinary; quite the contrary, we are looking for something that will momentarily let us escape from the commonplace, for a chance to put ourselves in someone else's shoes, to be carried along by an experience outside of our own day-to-day routine.

Tulys's heroes frequently are quite ordinary people: a woman on vacation who fears her youth is past in "Trumpas moters žydėjimas" (A woman's brief blossoming); a prostitute whose fears that her daughter is now a competitor for business come true in "Mazgas" (The knot); a waitress in "Mergina, kuri visus mylėjo" (The girl everyone loved); or a coal miner and his wife in "Bankas užsidaro" (The bank has closed). These are not people who find success in life; their lives and experiences are invariably brutal and disappointing. Tulys does not so much take us out of the commonplace as quite thoroughly rub our noses in it. Most of the stories are set in out-of-the-way places, such as Florida or the coal-mining towns of Central Illinois,

where a large number of the first wave of Lithuanian immigrants settled, rather than in urban cultural centers. Even the stories set in Chicago ("Skatukas") paint it the way it was earlier in the twentieth century—a large but bleak industrial city.

Even the sexual encounters in these stories are presented as bleak. Pranas Naujokaitis defends them with the claim that, "Tulys does not exalt or admire pornographic things; rather he raises repugnance with them."[3]

In these several respects then, perhaps Tulys cannot be said to fulfill the requirements of entertainment. However, like the *balta varna*, much depends upon one's cultural and historical perspective. To this reader, having spent sixteen years of her life in Central Illinois and having grown up on the South Side of Chicago in the 1950s, when it was still far more of an industrial than a cultural center, and having heard the stories of various elders—American-, not Lithuanian-born—of what it was like to live through the Great Depression, the stories have more relevance, echoing events, places, and lives that seem entirely real, than for a Lithuanian growing up a half a continent away under completely different circumstances. Skatukas, the half-wit, could have occupied the corner seat in the bar across the alley from where I grew up.

As another example, this time of a tale set in Lithuania, the story "Varlės šermenys" (The frog's funeral) in the collection *Tūzų klubas*, (The aces' club) I find quite amusing—I, too, remember my sister and I recruiting our older cousin to help us bury a pet mouse with all of the proper ceremony, including white gloves, a coffin made from a cigar box, and a proper incantation over the grave site. The insistence of the young boy in the story that his pet frog *numirė* (died as a human does) rather than *nudvėsė* (died as an animal does) is a distinction that speaks of the traditions of an ancient agrarian language, quite striking to a native English speaker, obviously less forceful, or perhaps even banal, to a native Lithuanian speaker. Lithuanians

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[3] Naujokaitis, Pranas. *Lietuvių literatūros istorija*, 326, *"...pornografinių dalykų A. Tulys neegzaltuoja, jais nesigėri, greičiau sukelia jais pasišlykštėjimą."*

could probably find the behavior of the adults in this story, particularly the priests, morally offensive. But after all, the Church has been lampooned and criticized in many Lithuanian works of literature, from the lazy, superstitious Boniface Bobbin in Kazys Boruta's *Baltaragio malūnas* (*Whitehorn's Windmill*) to the hypocrisy rampant in Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas's *Altorių šešėlyje* (In the shadow of the altar).

However, entertainment is not the only reason why we value literature. Primary among the values of literature is what it teaches us about life. If the ancient Greeks saw a role for tragedy in representing a human life as a model for the pupil to improve his soul, then certainly we cannot view the characters in Tulys's stories as models to be emulated, although they most certainly can be viewed as models for what *not* to emulate. On the whole, these are not sympathetic characters; in a reversal of the tragic model (or perhaps in response to the Platonist objection to this model), in most cases their ill fortune is not based as much on chance as upon the very actions and motives that drive them. The surgeon who breaks his hand at the picnic ("Piknikas") is there solely for the purpose of advancing his career; Blondie's daughter's path into prostitution ("Mazgas") and dreams of becoming rich are no more than the mirror of her mother's path in life; the humiliation suffered by Veronika, who fears her youth is gone ("Trumpas moters žydėjimas"), is brought on by her own vain desire to remain sexually attractive.

But as Wayne Booth comments, "Even satiric fictions that present a snarling surface address us with what amounts to a friendly offer: 'I would like to give you something for your own good—a nasty medicine that may cure you.'"[4] For the most part, these are immigrants who have lost their anchor in life in pursuit of the American Dream. The poker players in the title story "Tūzų klubas" remember the words of a deceased partner, "We stuffed our pockets, left our heads empty and now

[4] Booth, *The Company We Keep*, 174.

we're pigs with paper horns."[5] Without anchor, these characters flounder in the New World: Veronika, for example, could be interpreted as a victim of the American idealization of and fixation with youth.

Friendship is indeed another reason why we value literature. While reading, we are in the company of the author, real or implied, and in that companionship we look for many of the same things that we look for in friends in real life. Booth discerns seven measures of literary friendship, which he characterizes as invitations to active experience (i.e., the act of reading), ranging from the sheer quantity of invitations offered to the range of kinds of offerings. He quite rightly points out, however, that these measures are actually "'spectrums of quality' on which every reader will discover some preferred mean."[6] It is not at all surprising that each individual reader, as in real life, will find that not all of his friends are equally interesting to other friends, since each of us brings to our friendships a different set of needs and a different set of expectations.

Of particular interest in this case is Booth's sixth criterion of literary friendship: the distance between the author's world and our own. Tulys's world isn't a pleasant one: the characters inhabiting his stories are often hypocritical, stingy, selfish, vain, and repugnant. We aren't invited to make friends with these people as much as to be repulsed by them. Frequently, as in the story "Trumpas moters žydėjimas," we don't find a single sympathetic character, not a single person with whom we feel a bond or can identify with.[7]

Tulys's world is indeed a harsh one, not one that many people can stomach. That does not necessarily make him a bad friend: I would merely call him a difficult one. What he offers, for example in a story like "Paskutinis pasimatymas" ("The last

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[5] Tulys, *Tūzų klubas*, 182, *"Kišenes prikimšome, galvas tuščias palikome ir dabar esame kiaulės su popieriniais ragais."*

[6] Booth, *The Company We Keep*, 181.

[7] A translation of this story follows this article. Other stories of Tulys's that have been translated into English include "The Three Knots," 1977, and "The Other Morning," 1979.

visit"), is the viewpoint of a bitter, disappointed, suspicious person who sees evil everywhere. The narrator, returning to his home in Lithuania after a twenty-year absence, suspects that his mother and brother (who perhaps is really only a half brother, the son of a gypsy) are plotting to kill him in order to prevent him from laying claim to the family homestead. However, the conflict and distrust between the narrator and the family he left behind in Lithuania plays out a scenario that foreshadows the same distrust and conflict that I have seen played out numerous times by a later generation of Lithuanian-Americans and the relatives whom they met, sometimes for the first time, after the fifty-year reign of the Iron Curtain came to an end, a conflict much more delicately described by Irene Guilford-Mačiulytė in *The Embrace*.

Tulys's Place in the Canon of Lithuanian Literature

In examining Tulys's place in the canon of Lithuanian literature, we must invariably turn to the entire question of how exactly a canon is created and the criteria by which works of literature are included (or not). According to Barbara Herrnstein Smith (1988), classics are not valued as much by unchanging criteria as by the effects of historical and cultural processes. Milhály Szegedy-Marzák takes it a step further by stating that: "Canons are inseparable from discourses of value based on ideology."[8]

Tulys, writing of a bygone period and place, namely, the immigrant experience in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century and, specifically, the first wave of emigration from Lithuania, is writing of a minority experience and, furthermore, of a group whose experiences remain largely unwritten. This first wave of immigration consisted, to a large degree, of uneducated illiterate peasants seeking a better life or escaping service in the tsar's army. Rimvydas Šilbajoris sees Tulys's work as representing not so much a specifically Lithuanian experience as a general one: "The characters in his collection of short stories [...] share the full measure

[8] Szegedy-Marzák, *Literary Canons*, 60.

of human vices and weaknesses with any stereotype Irishmen, Italians or whomever."[9] And if, as Szegedy-Marzák observes, national canons "were meant to provide a sense of security and belonging,"[10] then Tulys's work, based in a distant setting, written about a group that no longer has an identity (having long since dissipated into the great American melting pot) and written in a language foreign to the descendants of that group, is most surely doomed. His work has no relevance to contemporary Lithuanians, who, despite the last twenty years of immigration to the United States and their own share of hard times, still cling to their vision of America as the Promised Land. When the doctor's wife in "Piknikas" roundly condemns the other people at the picnic for arriving at the shores of the Promised Land thin and hungry and proceeding to eat "like pigs," Tulys is making an observation that a modern immigrant wouldn't find particularly comfortable, although given the statistical difference between the proportion of obesity in the United States and Lithuania, Tulys's point here is unarguable.[11] However, the doctor's and his shrewish wife's ambitions are no more to be admired than those of the people they condemn.

Tulys was of some ideological interest in Lithuania during the Soviet period: a collection of his stories was published in Vilnius in 1973. In the introduction to that collection, Vytautas Kazakevičius describes his stories:

> The writer, particularly in his first collection, mercilessly reveals the workingman's pain, debasement, and misfortune brought on by capitalism [...] A. Tulys in his own way adds to our knowledge of the Lithuanian way of life in the capitalist world...[12]

The critic nevertheless finds fault with Tulys's writing, in that it fails to fulfill the requirements of Socialist Realism:

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9 Šilbajoris, "Images of America,", 17.

10 Szegedy-Marzák, *Literary Canons*, 59.

11 According to a National Institutes of Health survey, obesity among 15-year-olds in the United States ranged from 13.9 percent (boys) to 15.1 percent (girls), while in Lithuania the comparable figures were 0.8 percent and 2.1 percent. (http://www.nih.gov/news/pr/jan2004/nichd-05.htm, accessed 12/17/2011).

12 Kazakevičius, *Emigranto dalia*, 10.

although it unmasks the dehumanization of capitalism, it fails to provide the reader with an alternative, i.e., a Soviet perspective. Tulys's heroes do not vanquish capitalism as much as succumb to it.

But it is perhaps Tulys's message that Lithuanians are not necessarily moral, upright, decent people, better somehow than all others, and his related message—that life in America doesn't necessarily do anything to improve them—that is probably the most galling to his critics, be they of a socialist slant or not, and the true reason why his work will never fit easily into the Lithuanian canon.

Of interest in examining the critical stance are the frequently completely conflicting statements about Tulys, a tendency which is revealing in the same way as the lady who did protest too much.

One obvious example is the commentary about Tulys's style of writing, a frequent topic of discussion (the students also mentioned the *menkas* (poor) quality of his writing style). I. A. Richards, writing about critical theory, argues that, although this criticism is an invalid one, critics are extremely apt to engage in it. Using the term "technical suppositions," he argues that it is a common "blunder of attempting to say how the poet shall work without regard for what he is doing."[13] Different critics alternately praise and condemn Tulys's style. According to Naujokaitis, "...his style is sufficiently picturesque and accurate; he competently wields a literary sentence..."[14] Šilbajoris, although otherwise among the mildest of Tulys's critics, writes: "The writing rarely reaches the level wherein the raw material of reality becomes art. Most frequently it is mere reportage; heartfelt, but unimproved speech."[15] None of the critics see the very real connection between the "unimproved speech" Tulys uses and the subject of his writings.

Naujokaitis, quoted above as denying that Tulys exalts pornography, on the very next page, contradicts himself with:

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[13] Richards, *Practical Criticism*, 278.

[14] Naujokaitis, *Lietuvių literatūros istorija*, 327.

[15] Šilbajoris, "Lietuviška novelė," 295.

"...the gentle lyricism is ruined by the vulgar, pornographic scenes at the end of the story," and "...in it there is a clear tendency to admire pornographic scenes."[16] Vytautas A. Jonynas also points out that other critics have described Tulys as pornographic, but denies this, though, in his opinion, that is due more to Tulys's general incompetence.[17] Of course, from the perspective of more modern times (and writers like Norman Mailer, Henry Miller, Ričardas Gavelis, et al.) the charge appears absurdly old-fashioned.

On the other hand, Naujokaitis is perceptive enough to point out inconsistencies in other critics' assessments of Tulys. He quotes from a review by the critic B. Pranskus, whom he labels as a "*tarybinis*" (Soviet) critic, "The author is able to reveal the characters' experiences and psychology..."[18] He then points out that the emigré critic Kęstutis Keblys was unable to find in him any deeper understanding of humanity: "Events and situations are more important to him than people. Tulys does almost no analysis of people, does not penetrate to their interiors."[19]

Jonynas admits that irony and even misanthropy are characteristic of many serious writers, but denies Tulys even this: "His irony reeks of pride, a drought of feelings and naked morality."[20] The accusation of "naked morality" is strangely at odds with the charges of pornography, anti-religious sentiment, and cynicism that other critics mention. His assessment is also at odds with Šilbajoris, for whom Tulys "...feels very injured by reality and for that reason 'punishes' it ... in [his own] manner."[21]

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[16] Naujokaitis, *Lietuvių literatūros istorija,* 327.

[17] Jonynas, "Kiti nepriklausomybės amžininkai beletristai," 300.

[18] Naujokaitis, *Lietuvių literatūros istorija,* 326: *"Autorius sugeba atskleisti veikėjų pergyvenimus, psichologiją..."* Nearly the exact words are used in Kazakevičius's introduction to Tulys's "Paskutinis pasimatymas," p. 9, where they are attributed to K. Korsakas: *"sugeba atskleisti veikėjų psichologiją, mokamai naudoja kalbines ir stilistines priemones."*

[19] Ibid.

[20] Jonynas, *Lietuvių egzodo literatūra,* 301.

[21] Šilbajoris, "Lietuviška novelė," 293.

The critics do seem to agree on one thing, however, and that is that Antanas Tulys is a stranger to Lithuania. Šilbajoris describes him as "a 'real' American, an emigrant of the older generation, looking at the nation's catastrophe only from afar."[22] Jonynas quotes Kęstas Reikalas (Algirdas Titus Antanaitis): "More than once, the impression arises that even now, after several decades and several books, Antanas Tulys feels more like a guest than a master of the house in Lithuanian literature."[23]

It is this aspect that appears to be the most important one contributing to Tulys's unpopularity. As Herrnstein Smith points out, "what may be spoken of as the 'properties' of a work—its 'structure,' 'features,' 'qualities,' and of course its 'meanings'—are not fixed, given, or inherent in the work 'itself' but are at every point the variable products of particular *subjects'* interaction with it."[24] Tulys's work is born of an experience and a culture that is no longer Lithuanian and thus fails to provide, for most of the quoted critics at least and for the students from Lithuania, an embodiment of Lithuanian values and ideals. Revealingly, when Tulys is compared to other writers, he is most often compared to foreign, not Lithuanian, authors. Šilbajoris remarks that the setting of Tulys's short stories is the same as that of "works of native American authors, particularly those in the twenties and thirties who wrote with a 'social conscience,' such as John Steinbeck, Upton Sinclair, Jack London, or even William Faulkner."[25] Jonynas compares his writing to American pulp fiction and furthermore maintains that Antanas Vaičulaitis, in his 1961 review of *Tūzų klubas*, was misinterpreted when he compared Tulys to Guy de Maupassant, thereby going so far as to attempt to revise the opinions of a respected critic and writer who was well-known as a friend and admirer of Tulys. I myself find some similarity to Flannery O'Connor (a suggestion that was met with a gasp of horror

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[22] Ibid., 292.
[23] Quoted in Jonynas, *Lietuvių egzodo literatūra*, 301.
[24] Smith, *Contingencies of Value*,, 48.
[25] Šilbajoris, "Images of America," 20.

from the canon-reviser mentioned at the beginning of this essay), who also specializes in drawing ugly, even revolting characters, although Tulys lacks O'Connor's deep sense of religion and redemption.

I hope the reader of this essay has not missed the particular prejudices of my own that I mention in this essay, which accounts for my own individual engagement with Tulys. My position, as an American of Lithuanian descent, puts me personally closer to Tulys than almost any reader competent enough in Lithuanian to read him. I, too, have seen my share of grasping, ambitious Lithuanians and remarkably impious priests, as well as spent a number of years in Downstate Illinois, listening closely for the echoes of the early coal-mining generation of Lithuanians. But the distance afforded by growing up somewhat outside the Lithuanian community allows me the luxury to not feel personally affronted by it, or perhaps the perspective to see that these people, after all, are *Americans*. I am perfectly willing to grant that my personal associations may be irrelevant to a 'true' reading of Tulys, whatever that may be. However, I suspect that a selection of Tulys's works translated into English would probably find a more receptive audience, if for no other reason than that his stories have what could be called an archeological or historical interest, since without the Lithuanian names, these stories could be told of any immigrant. Tulys might even had found himself a place of honor among such regional writers as Edgar Lee Masters, one of the few who touched upon life in the Central Illinois region. It is a curious position that Antanas Tulys occupies in the canon of Lithuanian literature. Had he written in English rather than Lithuanian, he possibly would have found himself an audience more willing to accept him as a friend.

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THE PICNIC*

ANTANAS TULYS

One Sunday at the end of July, when all the grass in the garden was already trampled and the ground had turned to dust, Doctor M. S. Abromaitis and his wife, Mrs. Stella Abromaitis, swept into the St. Bartholomew parish picnic in a long automobile, thinking to make a nice showing and then quickly disappear. The doctor parked the automobile by the gate so that no one would block it. He wanted to be the last to arrive and the first to leave. His wife Stella, or Stasytė, as the doctor called her, for whom the picnics were "the devil's doing," had already gotten into a fury on the way because the doctor was taking her there, and, jumping out of the car, sneezed angrily. Then she screamed:

"You're nuts! You're nuts and a fool, to think you'll make a nice showing here with all these drunken people!"

It occurred to the doctor that his Stasytė's sneezing, swearing, and contempt for the picnickers resounded throughout the grounds, reverberating against the trunks of the oaks.

"Not so loud! Stasytė!"

"Stasytė, Stasytė... but you take me out to places I don't want to go," she shouted.

"Be quiet! Or don't talk so loud, so people won't hear. We'll make a quick showing—one, two, three—and we'll tear out of here, we'll be off in the fresh air again."

The woman frowned again, stuck out her tongue, bent over and, a few seconds later, sneezed even harder. Then she spat and wiped her nose and mouth.

* Translated from *Tūzų klubas* (The aces' club), an anthology of short stories by Antanas Tulys, published by Terra Press, Chicago, 1960.

"Now, understand the situation I'm in—put a smile on your face, look happy, and don't make such a sour face..."

"Make a sour face?!"

"A doctor's success is based on and maintained by all sorts of supports, one of which is his wife. Do you want us to become rich, respected and an honor to God, or not? That's what we'll be, Stasytė, if you'll help me."

The doctor, sticking his cane under his arm, fixed his necktie and the collar of his jacket so that everything would be in its proper place. He stuck a fat cigar between his lips, lit it, and took his wife by the elbow.

"Let's go. Keep your head high and smile," the doctor asked gently.

The picnic was already in full swing. The air reeked of beer, vodka, sourness, and a dry, unfamiliar smell that arose from the parched earth. The grounds were packed full; men, women, and children were everywhere. It seemed to Stasytė that all these people were drunk. The children, too.

"They're all drunk. The children, too. The children are drunk on this stale air," Stasytė said loudly.

"Quieter, slower, calmer, Stasytė, so they won't hear you."

The men's and women's large bellies, particularly the women's, and the fat hanging on their chins and arms irritated Stasytė even more.

"Just look at them! Look anywhere you want. Is this the place for us?"

"We make our living from them. People see you, and when they need a doctor, they remember you."

"It's really awful that a doctor needs to fall to these people's level. Even for a minute. These people came to this country thin and hungry. Here they eat like pigs all the time, they turn into barrels of lard, they lose the character they came with, leaving a mess... And here we are with them, with these people?" Here she sneezed and spat again.

Because she had to sneeze again and was trying not to, she stood in the starting pose of a sneeze for a rather long

time. Bent over, her tiny face puckered up, her eyes closed, her tongue stuck out. A tiny little woman in a white dress.

"What's the matter with you now?"

The doctor's words, like a smack on the back, straightened up the tiny woman.

"Dust, dust! Dust, stink, and nerves. That dry dirt gets into my nose, my mouth, and my eyes. How am I supposed to not sneeze?" she shouted aloud.

"Quieter, slower, calmer, Stasytė."

He took her by the elbow again. This time he angrily pulled her arm and said:

"You stop sneezing!"

And she yelled:

"You stop shoving!"

"You're making me lose my patience."

"I can't stand people with stomachs like cows."

"What can you do, if we need them to support us? Let them eat, grow stomachs, and stuff themselves. When they stuff themselves and they need castor oil, they call a doctor. I pour castor oil, dyed red, into their stomachs. The next time—cascarilla, so they won't realize that it's the same illness again—overeating." The doctor hoped to make his wife laugh by talking this way.

The two of them walked on.

The men, their shirts hanging out of their pants, the women, the children and the empty bottles of beer got in their way. People at the long tables piled high with food and drink were singing; at one table, "Stasys," at another "When I Was Young," at still another, "Why Shouldn't I Drink and be Merry?"

The doctor smiled at this table, waved his cane, and said a few words. He sang:

"Why, oh why; why, oh why?"

"Let's go," yelled Stasytė.

Now she yanked at the doctor.

Going further, they happened on a long table, twice as long as the others, where quiet ruled. Here a young priest and some nuns were selling holy relics of an unimaginable variety. Stasytė bought a bone of St. Francis, or maybe it was St. Jerome;

the doctor bought a St. Christopher's medal, which he called a talisman. He stuck the amulet into the upper pocket of his jacket, the one closest to his heart.

Accordions wailed from all sides, penetrating like a needle into the ears of those nearby.

Dr. M. S. Abromaitis and his Stasytė passed by a large circle of people where middle-aged people and their children squatted, turned around, and sang: "And that's the way we sow the poppy."

They went by a man stretched out under the oak trees and snoring like Anupras's accordion in the distance. From here, they could already see and hear the dance pavilion and, a bit further on, the bar.

Doctor Motiejus Abromaitis attached great importance to this picnic. To him, this wasn't just any St. Bartholomew parish picnic, but Father Raibutis's picnic. The day before, the doctor had purchased a white flannel suit, a white hard straw hat, white shoes, a blue shirt, and a yellow tie for this showing. Today he was dressed in new clothes from head to toe. The long, fat cigar was still smoldering between his lips when they got to the stairs of the pavilion. At that moment, the young folks were dancing the Big Apple, which had showed up the year before. The dance was complicated. In one part, you needed to gather into small circles with your body and feet matching the rhythm and one after the other, in turn, go out into the center circle, to "show" yourself, supposedly displaying an original step or a graceful pose, and then return to your spot. In other words, express yourself with something during your moment and hurry back.

"Let's go dance," doctor Abromaitis led his wife. Apparently, he had gotten the idea that it could be useful to make a showing here, to make some acquaintances. Up until now, no acquaintance at the picnic had noticed them. He guessed that no one knew yet that Doctor Abromaitis was at Father Raibutis's picnic.

"Where's your sense? Do you know how to dance the Big Apple? You don't know how, but you still want to dance. Besides, where will you put your cane and cigar? What a laugh!" Stasytė warbled.

Stasytė was no longer tormented by convulsions of sneezing. She didn't need to sneeze—so she didn't any more. However, another misfortune turned up—an old itching on her bosom, just under her right breast, returned. A few years before, a little red circle had appeared there, something similar to herpes. A really terrible spot. When she got angry, the fierce itching would immediately attack her. It itched so badly that even in front of people she had to stick her fingers under her breast and scratch the herpes. She couldn't resist. True, after a few years she got used to this discomfort. The matter became almost automatic. Frequently in company, leading a conversation with someone about what was or was not proper behavior in good company, without realizing it she'd stick her fingers into the front of her dress, scratch under her breast, and say that in elegant circles Mrs. Elena Zilis acts like a pig. Sometimes it took her a long time to realize that her hand was in a not very pretty spot. Now she stuck her hand down the front of her dress, which was low-cut, and scratched the herpes under her breast for quite some time.

The doctor poked her in the side.

"People," he said quietly.

"Let's go home!" she yelled, pulling her hand out of her dress.

The doctor didn't answer. Without a word, he stuck the cane and hat into one of Stasytė's hands, into the other the smoldering cigar, and then, with a single leap, he bounded up the three steps into the pavilion, grabbed a young girl standing nearby, and went to dance the Big Apple.

Doctor Motiejus Abromaitis was tall, handsome, sturdily built, and young. He was also an unusually good dancer. Although he was somewhat older than the young people were, it suited him. The three spins he managed to turn, clasping the uncommon girl, were excellent and graceful, like someone who knew how to dance the Big Apple well. Seeing the expression of pleasure and satisfaction, signs of flirtation, on the girl's face, he felt a quiet happiness within himself. As he was dreaming, he thought about how his wife sneezed and stuck her hand

under her dress on to her breast. She did the same thing whether she was alone or whether she was in front of people. And he wanted everyone to look at him now. However, it was only three spins in practically the same spot, barely a moment. Then they needed to form circles. He and his partner merged into one such circle, where, managing to glance at the young, pleasant faces, he, the third in line, had to go out into the middle of the circle and make some kind of original gesture. He didn't have time to think about it, or to imagine how to "show" himself here in front of these young people. When he had trained in boxing, he sometimes had to do all sorts of gymnastic exercises, which at times would turn out gracefully. He attempted to do some extremely quick crossings of the legs, which has some kind of name. And it would have been an excellent "show" if it had succeeded. However, the doctor's leg slipped, and his bum sounded as it hit the floor. Hurrying to stand up, his leg slipped again, he fell with his bum again on the slick floor. One young man took him by the underarms and set him on his feet. Stasytė ran up, grabbed him by the arm and yelled:

"Doctor Abromaitis, stop rolling around the pavilion!"

The doctor left his partner without managing to say goodbye to her.

Such a mishap can happen to anyone. Even to a star ballerina. The doctor nevertheless tormented himself over it terribly. He threw away the unfinished cigar that his wife had only just returned to his fingers. A bit farther on, he took another cigar, angrily ripped off the cellophane, and lit it. In the meantime, his wife grumbled:

"You showed yourself! Now you really showed yourself. There's your picnic for you."

"You just watch where you put your hand!" cried the doctor.

"You brought this illness on me. It's nerves. You're a doctor, but you don't even know how to cure herpes."

Stasytė would have said still more, but she was caught by a convulsion of sneezing. She sneezed three times. One after the other. Like this—one, two, three. This time softly. However, a gust of wind that rose from who knows where caught her black hat and pulled it over her face.

Three drunken men going by cheerfully sang: "I've grown a gut, I've got a little Ford. Why not drink and be merry..."

That same moment, an annoying woman beset the doctor. Refusing to give up, she offered the doctor tickets to another picnic that was to be held the coming Sunday. As that one went off, another woman, who had been waiting behind the first one, latched on to him. She pressed the doctor and Stasytė to buy lottery tickets.

Stasytė, resolving to govern her nerves and hide her anger, overflowed with impatience and exploded like an abscess. She started sneezing and scratching herself under her breast at the same time.

"Doctor, let's go home! I can't stand it anymore! Let's go!"

The woman retreated, and the doctor said to Stasytė:

"We'll go by the bar, then we'll leave. Keep your spirits up."

"I've had it up to here," she said, drawing her finger across her chin. "I'm going to go into hysterics; I'm going to be sick. I'm already sick."

"Calm down. Take a look, how is my jacket in the back?"

"Your jacket's OK, but there's two gray spots on your bum. That's your Big Apple diploma." She was already in a better mood.

The doctor straightened his hat, felt his tie and his bum, grabbed the cane higher up, shoved the cigar from the side of his mouth to the middle of his teeth and said firmly:

"Let's go to the bar."

At the bar, at last, there were many people who noticed and recognized Doctor Motiejus Abromaitis. Including Father Raibutis himself. The priest was the first to give him his hand. Then he was greeted by the parish committee, a reporter, the organ player, two young priests, three funeral directors and a few other men and women whose importance he didn't know.

Then Father Raibutis raised doctor Abromaitis's hand up high by the bar and shouted:

"Gentlemen! Look here—this is Doctor Motiejus Abromaitis, our best doctor. He cures people even by mail. No one

gets by without a priest, a doctor and a funeral director. When you need a doctor, you know who to call. Ladies and gentlemen, our doctor is Doctor Motiejus Abromaitis! Motiejus Abromaitis!"

The doctor took the cigar, the cane, and his hat in his left hand, raised his right high and waved to everyone at the bar. His head was raised high, his face smiled widely; he was handsome, pleasant, and looked like he was a good doctor.

While the doctor's name was still echoing around the bar, the priest nudged the reporter Žvirblius with his thumb and loudly, so the doctor would hear, ordered:

"Vince, you put it in the paper, that Doctor Abromaitis was at our parish picnic. You know how."

Father Raibutis then went over to the cash register, into which the dollars flowed like people into church on feast days.

The doctor pulled a ten-spot out of his pocket and threw it on the bar.

"A round for everyone," he said.

"Please wait—Gabrėnas is treating," interrupted the priest, whose keen eye guarded both the cash register and what was going on around the bar.

At the same time, two bottles of beer came up on the bar. One for the doctor, one for his wife.

The priest jumped up on a chair next to the cash register and shouted:

"Gabrėnas is treating everyone! Drink up! Gabrėnas never regrets a dollar for the honor of God and the church, and never will. If all of my parishioners had such a heart, today we'd have a cathedral, not a church. Gabrėnas knows that at a bar you need to drink, not waste time. Gabrėnas has put up fifty dollars for everyone. Drink up! Quickly!"

Everyone around the bar laughed loudly and applauded the priest for speaking such frank words. They applauded the priest and raised their glasses to Gabrėnas.

The bar quieting down, the priest jumped up on the chair again. This time he explained where Gabrėnas's saloon was and said:

"When you come to Gabrėnas's, you don't need to fear, even if it's from far way. Gabrėnas will take care that no one picks on you."

The priest went to the other end of the bar and gave Gabrėnas his hand. The saloonkeeper Gabrėnas wore a shirt with the tails out, his stomach hung to his knees, and he had already drunk a great deal. He was a man about forty years old, but he already had a belly like a cow. He felt like a big man in the midst of those drinking with his money. He also felt that he made a good showing. Like in the Big Apple Dance, the time had come for Gabrėnas to show himself, and so he did. Glasses were raised to Gabrėnas's health and fortune, Gabrėnas's name echoed; all eyes were fixed only on Gabrėnas.

Doctor Motiejus Abromaitis felt forgotten and left to himself. He began to get restless, feeling like this wasn't the place for him. When the priest returned to the cash register, the doctor started telling the priest, in surgical terms, about an operation he had done the day before, and about another dangerous operation, requiring a great specialist, that he had to do the next morning. The priest didn't know a thing about surgery or what the doctor was talking about. Besides, he was worried about business; perhaps for that reason he kept his eyes turned more on the cash register and on Gabrėnas.

Stasytė was quiet, but by now she really was furious. The men's large bellies pushed her around and ground her, little thing, like grain in a mill.

The doctor had to drink three glasses treated by the saloonkeeper Gabrėnas. Only then did he get an opportunity to show himself. Now a ten-spot seemed too little. The doctor threw a twenty on the bar.

"For all of it," he said, looking at the priest.

The priest again jumped up on a chair by the cash register and shouted:

"Doctor Motiejus Abromaitis is treating for twenty dollars! Drink to the doctor's health!"

To Gabrėnas it seemed like the doctor was competing with him.

"Doc Ambra, Ambramatis, eh? Ambramatis? I know him. But he doesn't know me yet," shouted Gabrėnas loudly.

He pulled a handful of straggling banknotes out of his pocket, raised them up and yelled even louder:

"Doctor Ambramatis and all of you are pigs next to me! I could buy and sell all of you."

Gabrėnas, shoving men out of his way with both hands and stumbling, went over to the doctor.

"Cheers, Doc!" the saloonkeeper yelled, grabbing the doctor's right hand and smacking the doctor's shoulder with his left.

That "Doc," his right hand being squeezed as if with a pair of pliers, and the palm on his shoulder, were the same to the doctor as if someone he didn't know had spit in his face. Besides, the sweaty saloonkeeper's palm left a spot on the doctor's white jacket. The surgeon valued his new suit. He immediately noticed Gabrėnas's palm and finger prints on his shoulder.

"What are you doing? I don't know you and don't want to know you. Take your belly somewhere else," said the doctor angrily, pulling his right hand roughly away from Gabrėnas's hand.

"Maybe the doctor's not doing well, maybe business is poor, since his belly's as lean as a hound's and his little wife's sickly, with her hand sticking under her boobs," Gabrėnas merrily rattled on.

The doctor took his wife by the elbow. He wanted to leave the bar. However, Gabrėnas grabbed him by the shoulder and turned him to face him.

"Wait, Doc, what's the hurry?" Gabrėnas laughed.

"Leave off! I'll give it to you in the snout," the doctor threatened.

"You? You—give it to me in the snout?" the tavern keeper wondered. He swung the back of his hand under the doctor's stomach.

Doctor Abromaitis suddenly bent over. His white hat rolled off under a stranger's feet. Moving backwards, people trampled on his hat. He recovered his breath, straightened up,

and glared at Gabrėnas. The trampled hat, the dirtied shoulder of his jacket, and the blow under his stomach enflamed him.

Stasytė, seeing her husband's eyes, understood that there would be a fight. She got in between the doctor and Gabrėnas and shoved at Gabrėnas.

"You leave him alone! Go on!" she shouted.

Gabrėnas picked up the tiny woman under her arms and set her on the bar. Then he turned to the doctor again.

"Now I'll give it to you in the ear. But I'm a good sport. I'll let you give it to me first. You punch me with all your might, and then I'll punch you."

Doctor Abromaitis, when he was in high school, had studied boxing for three years and had a mean right hand. Until then, he hadn't had an opportunity to use that branch of knowledge, but he felt that he hadn't forgotten it yet. He glanced at the men standing around and saw that Gabrėnas had a lot of friends who could attack him. He wasn't afraid of them, either. He could lay them out flat or drive them off.

"Guys, take this animal away. Otherwise I'll knock his teeth out and break his jaw and ribs," the doctor said.

"Punch me, punch me! What are you waiting for? Then I'll punch you," Gabrėnas shouted.

The knuckles of Doctor Abromaitis's fist went smack!—like hitting a drum, straight at Gabrėnas's chin. Breaking bones crunched. Martynas Gabrėnas, a three-hundred-pound man, stretched out on the floor like a pancake and passed out.

It was just as he had expected—Gabrėnas's friends attacked the doctor. He defended himself with his left, since his right hand was numb. The priest ran out with a raised stick. He screamed:

"No fighting! I'll give it to all of you! Godless people showing up to ruin my picnic."

The bartenders, the organist, the reporter, and a few more men ran up. They surrounded the doctor.

Things calming down a bit, Stasytė shoved her way over to the doctor. She gave a horrible shriek:

"Doctor! Your hand is bloody!"

Doctor Motiejus Abromaitis lifted his hand and went pale. All of the bones behind his knuckles were shattered. Shards stuck out from the skin. The same with the left one. The doctor worried that perhaps in the future in the future he would no longer be able to operate. For that you need dexterous fingers and hands that don't shake.

"Take me to a hospital, quickly," he asked.

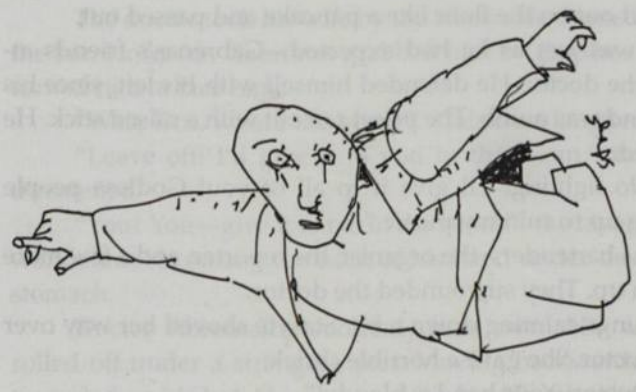
At last, Martynas Gabrėnas came to, and stood up. His face was twisted, his chin hanging. Apparently, his jaw was broken. Maybe both of them.

"And take him to the hospital quickly, too," doctor Abromaitis advised.

Mrs. Stella Abromaitis was now behaving like a real madwoman. She cried, screamed, charged around, and got in the way of those hurrying to help. Somewhere the shiny feather on her hat broke off and now hung on the webbing and stuck to the woman's left cheek.

At the bar, the cheerful mood had already returned. The organist led a song and Father Raibutis took up his position at the cash register. Somebody was already treating "everyone at the bar."

Translated by Elizabeth Novickas



BOOK REVIEWS

Janušauskienė, Daina. *Post-Communist Democratisation in Lithuania: Elites, Parties, and Youth Political Organisations, 1988–2001.* Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011. 173 pages. ISBN 978-90-420-3249-1.

Based on her dissertation written in Warsaw, this work of political science is not a casual read. A scholarly work meant for social scientists, Daina Janušauskienė adapted her research to various theories about elites and democratization. She contends that Lithuania is undergoing a "Western type" of democratic development, in which elites and nationalism are the major forces of modernization, making elite theory more useful than class theory for studying Lithuanian democratization. Often having to introduce the reader to these theories, she also spends much time explaining her methodologies. Using numerous interviews, seventy-nine tables, and four appendixes in one hundred and sixteen pages of text within three chapters, Janušauskienė's data and statistical evidence will be demanding for the nonprofessional. In spite of the claim made on the back cover, Janušauskienė does not use a transnational approach in this work. One wonders how Lithuania's "transformation" compares with other post-Communist countries.

Chapter One is almost solely devoted to the theoretical frameworks and methodologies of the study of elites and democratization. Steeped in the theories of Phillipe C. Schmitter, Terry L. Karl, Vilfredo Pareto, and a host of other social scientists, Janušauskienė believes the changes "from above" implemented by elites augers well for the future development of democracy in Lithuania. The next two chapters also rely on the paradigms of social scientists such as Michael Burton, Richard Gunther, and John Higley. To be sure, Perestroika begat Sąjūdis, which were made up of elites, but could these elites sustain what some have termed the Baltic Revolutions? Janušauskienė rejects the term revolution because of its class-

based character (p. 3), but her definition of revolution seems overly narrow. She contends that old and new political institutions have merged into a consolidated democracy that she and other social scientists have termed "transformational." She also links this transformation with the development of a market economy. Janušauskienė's second assumption, "that elites and nationalism are the major forces of modernisation" (p. 1), seems reasonable, but she does not explain how "nationalism accelerated the formation of the Lithuanian political elite" (p. 7).

Janušauskienė proceeds to explain the role of the Lithuanian Communist Party (LCP) in Lithuania's transformation from authoritarian rule to democracy. Primarily made up of native Lithuanians, the LCP played a mediating role in this transformation. However, Janušauskienė makes several contradictory observations. Lithuanians learned to conform to Communism and did not see it in ideological terms. Janušauskienė then summarizes the love-hate relationship of Sąjūdis and the LCP of the late eighties and early nineties, in which these parties split and morphed into other parties. She then concludes that neither the electorate nor the party system have stabilized, owing in part to a low level of trust in political parties. For all of her empirical data, Janušauskienė falls back on homespun assumptions that "Lithuanians are a nation of pessimists... and look backward for 'stability'" (p. 45). Herein lies Janušauskienė's ambiguity. She admits that the low level of trust in political parties is a sign of immaturity, but then does an about-face and declares that "it may indicate the critical thinking of the citizen" (p. 49). Much has changed since 2001, including political party alignments, leadership, and the electorate. Having delineated her framework, the analysis has historical value, but one has to question the optimistic conclusions that Janušauskienė draws. The issue becomes how predictive of the future are conclusions based on data from only ten years ago.

Undoubtedly, Lithuania is a democracy today, but the electorate still seeks simplistic political solutions to complicated problems. In various surveys, the Lithuanian parliament often comes in last place as an institution worthy of trust. Factors

unrelated to elites or political youth organizations, such as the economic recession and mass emigrations, may have more to do with the further development of a "Western type" of democracy in Lithuania.

Chapter Three deals with "Rising New Elites: A Case of Youth Political Organisations," where Janušauskienė examines the attitudes and perceptions of members of youth organizations and their roles in the political process. Some of the author's observations about political youth seem rather obvious: "Young people bring vitality and new ideas when they enter politics" (p. 59). Obviously, sons and daughters will replace their parents, and the experiences of today's youth will differ from those born and raised under Communism. Janušauskienė's heavily documented empirical data, however, can be summarized in Section Ten of Chapter Three. She points out that political youth groups often have similar goals, such as spreading their ideology, organizing social events, or affording a stepping-stone toward a political career. Janušauskienė then goes on to differentiate these organizations along party lines and analyzes six youth groups. However, in 2008 the Christian Democrats, the Home Union, the Union of Political Exiles and Prisoners, and the Nationalist parties merged into the Home Union-Lithuanian Christian Democratic party, thus shifting the political landscape. Coalition governments shift and come and go, but it seems that, increasingly, the political parties drift towards two alternatives: Conservative or Social Democratic. Political youth groups still seem to conform to these trends, yet Janušauskienė's research reflects only the period from 1988 to 2001.

The series "On the Boundary of Two Worlds: Identity, Freedom, and Moral Imagination in the Baltics," of which *Post-Communist Democratisation in Lithuania* is volume twenty eight, is the most serious and scholarly body of works ever produced in the English language about the Baltic States. However, this series of books, much like Janušauskienė's, are often marred with writing errors that go beyond spelling differences between British and American English.

Virgil Krapauskas

Keys, Kerry Shawn. *Transporting, A Cloak of Rhapsodies.* Rockford, Michigan: Presa Press, 2010. 112 Pages. ISBN 978-0-9800081-8-0. $15.95.

If one thing might be said about the poetry of Kerry Shawn Keys, it would be that he is a poet who is not afraid to play. His latest collection, *Transporting, a cloak of rhapsodies*, eschews the fear of poetic restriction. He is not afraid to rhyme, not afraid to sing his songs on the edge of the reader's comprehension, not afraid to dive into vertiginous shifts between clusters of classical mythology within single poems (I will admit that I kept Google and Wikipedia at hand while reading the book). Most importantly, the book seems to be obsessed with questioning or challenging the sedentary nature of ideals and reality—along with the purity of everything.

"[I]nside the pure being of pure rhythm is death's fairyland," says Keys's narrator in the poem "Prolonging a Contiguous Moment in a Galaxy of Gravity." Whether this reoccurring narrator is Keys or merely a fragment of Keys's personality that we could call his muse, this narrator guides us through past and present, at times looking for a refurbished sense of identity that wants "to be nothing, a player in the rhythm / of another carpe diem." But swathed in darkness at the cusp of day, the narrator finds himself locked in the nightmarish unrest that is the transitional space of a reality in which "the earth wants to suck us in." The narrator sings out the knowledge of his existence in such moments:

> I am lost I am lost I am lost, until the sun
> in a peacock burnoose
> accosts the scene as my saviour
>
> I am nothing, I am a grasshopper,
> I am the incredible shrinking man

"Prolonging," like other poems in this collection, plays with the idea(s) of our many day-to-day encounters with elements of reality (both physical and psychological), elements that, at the very least, have one or more diametrical companions.

For all the purity of existence, there is the "chaos [that] comes in little Nothings and space is a terrible monad," in which we must be conscious of the fact that "one word and one word only and we all will explode."

Realism is always pushing against the edge of surrealism, light against the edge of dark. Throughout this collection, Keys playfully and unabashedly presents to the reader a love poem, "While the World Shines," followed by a poem on ancient and modern imperialism, "*from the* Fatigue-Script Chronicles (2)," then one discussing philosophical inquiry, "Egg as in Egg." Subsequently, any mixture of these subjects may be found within a poem. *Transporting* is at once a chaotic landscape of lament, joy, and anger, while at the same time, a conscious amalgamation of the same elements.

Like all poets, Keys attempts to grapple with the real world (or at least that of the poem) in his own way. However, Keys (or his narrator, we might say) approaches the world, both ancient and modern, from a retrospective position. Keys, who lives in Vilnius and is now in his mid-sixties, states very forwardly in his preamble to *Transporting* that the poems are from a new place in his life: "They reflect the departure from my bardic-bucolic lifestyle to a self-imposed [relegation] in the Baltics brought on by a bad back, and a meniscus and ligaments hamstrung by the Roman legions of America's pathetic healthcare system. Once again I found myself engaging the urban jungle." It is from the transitional space between rural and urban, between youthful mind and aged learnedness that this collection moves toward being its own anthology of a life of knowledge and an exploration of dealing with what is now known.

These transitional themes are most notable in Keys's "Litany of a Collaborator," a poem that very openly echoes Alan Ginsberg's "Howl": "and the best of my friends have laced their brains / with the spirits and escapist visions I poured into them / and then watched their skin flake away like leprous cellophane." But where Ginsberg's is a bomb newly exploding out into the world with proclamations about a generation from the

perspective of a more recessed narrator, Keys's narrator is the focus of the poem as a man dissecting the aged self to impart the results of his introspection. In the end, Keys's narrator reasserts the idea that the world is elemental, that the parts are as spectral as love poetry and deeply philosophical poetry, and it is collaboration between such differing parts of the whole that accounts for the "answer to all existence."

If anything might be added to my initial assessment of Keys's poetry as playful, it's that his poetry is playful in its wisdom. How does one empty the mind of its contents, of the baggage imparted to it from the centuries that predate its coming into the world? *Transporting* is an exhibition of Keys's attempts to do so with a flexibility of mind and form fit for a yoga class. As his narrator in "Purging Purgatory" might suggest, Keys has been stretching his mind for years under the influences of "the polarities of Heaven and Hell."

Mike Krutel

ABSTRACTS

Litvak Art in the Context of the École de Paris
Antanas Andrijauskas

In the early part of the 20th century, Litvak artists from the Vilnius School of Drawing invaded Paris as the so-called second wave of the École de Paris, and left deep traces in the history of Western modern art. The author points out that Lithuania's contribution to world culture is often associated not only with ethnic Lithuanians but also with famous Jews like Marc Chagall, Chaïm Soutine, Jacques Lipchitz, Jascha Heifetz, Bernard Berenson, Meyer Schapiro, Emmanuel Lévinas, Arbit Blatas, and many other Litvaks. In Paris, these artists from closed communities with Orthodox views regarding the fine arts were anxious to join the process of modern Western art and experienced a painful conflict between modernity and the influence of their tradition. This painful duality, according to the author, is reflected in their works.

Lietuvà, Lithuania, and Chaucer's Lettow
Alfred Bammesberger

The medial consonant -th- in the word Lithuania requires an explanation. In Middle English, we find the form Lettow in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The word used in Modern English is based on Latin *Lituania*. It is therefore most likely that -th- in Lithuania is due to a secondary development. The replacement of -t- by -th- may be seen in the context of learned spellings: words written with 'th' acquired an appearance of higher learning, and in many cases the spelling 'th' led to a change in pronunciation because 'th' in English orthography regularly represents an interdental spirant. Lithuania belongs to the, by no means small, number of words exhibiting this kind of learned influence in their pronunciation.

The Curious Position of Antanas Tulys in the Canon of Lithuanian Literature
Elizabeth Novickas

This essay examines some of the works of the Lithuanian-American writer Antanas Tulys (1898-1977), and attempts to determine why his work has not become a part of the canon of Lithuanian literature. The author concludes that there are a number of reasons, including in part his failure to glorify the immigrant experience and the snarling, cynical surface he presents to the reader. Curiously, his works may have more relevance to Americans, but because Tulys wrote in Lithuanian, these individual readers either never had or no longer have the language skills to read him.

The Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies (AABS)
will hold the 23rd bi-annual Conference
at the University of Illinois at Chicago on April 26-28, 2012.
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Conference Chair is UIC professor, Giedrius Subačius
Website: http://depts.washington.edu/aabs/chicago-conf-2012.html
For further information: aabsconfinfochicago@gmail.com

ERRATA
Lituanus, Volume 57:3 (2011).
Ingė Lukšaitė, *The Reformation in Lithuania: A New Look.*
p. 10, paragraph 2, line 9 should be: in the 1540s
p. 13, paragraph 1, line 11 complete title reads: *Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche Ostpreußens*
p. 15, corrected spelling: Wiiuk-Kojalowicz; M. J. A. Rychcicski
p. 25, paragraph 2, line 6 should be: Volanus
p. 26, last paragraph, line 3 should be: 1542.

Lituanus, Volume 57:4 (2011) p. 79.
We regret the omission of Kerry Shawn Keys as translator of Laurynas Katkus's poetry.

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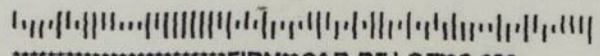

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