LITUANUS

THE LITHUANIAN QUARTERLY VOLUME 60:4 (2014)

IN THIS ISSUE:

LITUANUS

THE LITHUANIAN QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
VOLUME 60:4, Winter 2014

Lituanus: The Lithuanian Quarterly (published since 1954) is a multi-disciplinary academic journal presenting and examining various aspects of Lithuanian culture and history. Authors are invited to submit scholarly articles, *belles lettres*, and art work. Manuscripts will be reviewed. Books are accepted for review purposes.

Opinions expressed in signed articles represent the views of their authors and do not necessarily reflect agreement on the part of the editors or the publisher.

For submission guidelines and editorial matters please contact the editors. For subscriptions, donations and other business matters contact the administration.

Editorial Office: editor@lituanus.org
Administration: admin@lituanus.org
Publisher: Lituanus Foundation, Inc., A. Tamulis, President
Address: 47 West Polk Street, Suite 100–300,
Chicago, IL 60605–2000 Phone/Fax 312/945-0697

Articles are archived and accessible at **www.lituanus.org** and in microform from University Microfilms (www.proquest.com/brand/umi.shtml) They are indexed in: MLA International Bibliography; PAIS International; International Political Science Abstracts; Historical Abstracts (EBSCO); Linguistic Bibliography (Netherlands); Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts; RILM Abstracts of Music Literature; Bibliography of the History of Art; OCLC Article First.

Worldwide circulation per issue – 2,000 copies.
Individual subscriptions $30.00. Seniors/students $20.00.
Institutional print subscriptions $40.00. Electronic copy only $20.00.

Printed by Kingery Printing Company, Henry Division, Henry, IL
Cover Design by Vincas Lukas.

Periodical non-profit postage paid at Chicago, IL and other locations.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to LITUANUS, 47 West Polk Street, Suite 100-300, Chicago, IL 60605-2000

Editor of this issue
Vida Savoniakaitė

CONTENTS

Readers will find the annual index
for 2014 on our website,
lituanus.org.

This issue explores issues of identity, including what it means "to be a Lithuanian."

Defining Lithuanians

VIDA SAVONIAKAITĖ

Conceptualizing "self" and "other" is important, and sometimes problematic. According to government policy, an entry in a passport clearly defines Lithuanian citizenship. In history, language and culture, in the broadest sense of the word, undoubtedly separates Lithuanians and other national groups living in Lithuania; the range of citizenship rules, social, and cultural values changes through time. The "other" exists side-by-side with the "self." More than ten years of studies have shown that Lithuanians in particular often remember their *gimtinė* (homeland), *žemė* (land), and *namai* (home); in many cases, *giminystė* (kinship) and features of other connections and social organizations are also important. Definitions of ethnicity, self and other reveal various social and cultural values. The ties to a place where a person was born and grew up, most often in smaller villages and towns, are important to the elderly; younger people reveal varying attitudes. Surprising opinions about what it means to be Lithuanian appear. Instead of a single identity, people choose different situational identities. In today's Europe and in a wider area, affiliation with a group and conceptions of ethnicity and nationality are rapidly changing. Many Lithuanians all over the world try not to forget their language and take an interest in genealogy, family history, and

VIDA SAVONIAKAITĖ is a senior research fellow at the Lithuanian Institute of History and head of the Department of Ethnology. Her scholarly interests include the history of anthropology and ethnology; ethnicity and nationalism; economic anthropology; cultural history and heritage; and the anthropology of art.

relationships. Lithuanians who do not speak Lithuanian remember the symbols and signs of Lithuania. To be Lithuanian is important or dear to them.

The I and self integrate into separate social roles. Many modern individuals, as Thomas Hylland Eriksen asserts, think they are "integrated persons" or, in other words, "actors," and various social ties require expanding surroundings for it to be possible to adapt to various situations. Comparative studies show that all human beings have a changing concept of themselves as individuals and as a group. In European societies, self is most often associated with the undivided individual, integrated and sovereign as an independent agent. In non-Western societies, self is most often understood as "the sum total of the social relationships of the individual," based on studies of kinship, societies, individuals' socialization, their concept of self and other, and the "shared customs and knowledge of society."[1] Many scholars distinguish between self in the public and private sphere, i.e., public and private personas.

The concept of people belonging to a group, a nation, their concept of identity, has become one of the most important problems in today's world. Notions of exceptional historical and contemporary experiences of nations, individuals, and groups distinguishing and revealing cultural identities are urgent problems in scholarly discourse.[2] The connections between personal and cultural notions dominate; individual and collective cultural identities and people's viewpoints and interpretations of cultural historical layers are analyzed. How is Lithuanian identity defined in theory, and what is its future?

In Lithuania, the shared similarity of cultural objects was more important in ethnography, ethnology, and histography than personal identification, aspects of social identities, or other particulars of cultural definition. There are many ethnological and anthropological studies, impossible to enumerate here, devoted to revealing cultural identity, symbols, and stereotypes.

---

1 Eriksen, *Small Places*, 54–55.

2 Edgar and Jonuks, "The edgy Northern European imaginaries," 79–80.

Language, ethnic customs, and heraldry are considered important identity symbols in specific historical surroundings. Like many other European states, when Lithuania regained its independence, the questions of what significance ethnic culture has to self-consciousness and identity came to the fore.

In their theoretical approach to the evolution of ethnic culture, the discourses of ethnological studies were closely related to the comparative studies of historical scholarship. The dominant historical studies on ethnic culture eventually linked to social problems. To disclose culture, man's attitude toward "self" and "other," or toward the other's culture, became essential, and the grounds for improvisation appeared. Together with the spread of democratic society, self and other were discussed more widely at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Democratic consciousness opened the possibility of numerous pluralistic attitudes. The word "freedom" raised controversial opinions.

This article seeks to reveal which theoretical and practical aspects are foremost in the study of Lithuanian identity and how the concept of "to be Lithuanian" is critically evaluated. I will analyze the concepts of self and other in history, identity/alterity and belonging to a group, collectivity and nation.

Johannes Fabian's Orientalism had a great influence on the contemporary attitude, asserting that too much attention is paid in anthropology to hierarchical determinations of time and place when researching the particulars of distant others.[3] Criticism of "other" and "othering" opened the way to today's anthropological alternatives; in Andre Gingrich's words, studies were chosen on the subject of identity/alterity. This was dependent on a growing cultural relativism; a neo-Marxist viewpoint promulgated the determination of the boundaries of identity, and the modality of othering in anthropology was decided by self-reflection. It was asserted that there is no pure concept of othering when speaking of an anti-essentialist multidimentional "soft" approach to identity/alterity.[4]

---

3 Fabian, *Time and the Other.*

4 Gingrich, "Conceptualising Identities," 10–15.

According to Vered Amit, one of the most important aspects is the feeling of belonging to a collective.[5] The concept of home in anthropology is associated with the growth in migration processes, the movement from the village to the city, the search for work and better living conditions, etc. The growing mobility of people's lifestyles has changed attitudes toward home. Homes became ever more individual and private. Everyone selects his or her own, and "one's choice might remain invisible (and irrelevant) to others."[6] Lithuanians frequently define their identity laconically but then begin a lively description of where and what their homes are, or sometimes remain silent.

My ethnographic research experience allow for the assertion that to be Lithuanian, that is, to be a member of the nation, a citizen of Lithuania, in whatever place in the world, means to cherish nationality, kinship, language, home, the land, and the national and ethnic culture or collective and individual memory.

The theoretical approaches, concepts and research insights into Lithuanian identity mentioned in this article are further explored in this issue of *Lituanus* by Auksuolė Čepaitienė, Darius Daukšas, and Vytautas Tumėnas.

Self in an Ethnic Group and a Nation

In *The Seasons*, Kristijonas Donelaitis wrote of the Germans and French who arrived: "They learn to speak our tongue, as they enjoy our food,/And even wear our clothes as gladly as we do."[7] Many authors highlight ethnic group differences in ethnographic, historical, and literary texts that reflect comparisons between self and other. Until the end of the nineteenth century, reasons such as dress and language were used to purify the concept of one's self and the other's nationality "from the inside," as Paulius Subačius states.[8] As the ideas of nationalism matured, people turned to their own nation.

---

5 Amit and Rapport, *Community*, 9.

6 Rapport and Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 173-177.

7 Donelaitis, *The Seasons*, 112.

8 Subačius, *Lietuvių tapatybės kalvė*, 65–67.

Self is associated with origin. In the words of Darius Staliūnas, Mečislovas Davainis-Silvestraitis taught that giving up one's national language is one of the greatest sins, equated to perversion. According to Jonas Basanavičius, repudiating one's native language is identical with not fulfilling one of God's precepts. Jonas Šliūpas warned that Lithuanians, creating a nation, must cherish language, education, and society's standard of living. Ethnonationalists believe a person's affiliation with a nation is determined by his origin; a nation is not made up of just those living at a given moment, but their ancestors as well, and all the members of a nation are connected by ties of kinship or blood. One of the clearest examples of this is Jurgis Zauerveinas's lines: "Lithuanians we are born,/Lithuanians we must be."[9] Self is connected to language, religion, and the nation's values.

The feeling "we" always seems to hide its opposite, "them," defined or undefined. In histories written at the beginning of the nineteenth century, more attention was paid to the particularities of self rather than of the other. The opposition of self and other was not enough to reveal the relationship between the nation and the individual. The history of nationalism in Eastern and Central Europe attests that the first step in identifying "self vs. the enemy" is usually done with a caricature of the ethnic other. As the area of reflexive consciousness spread during the nineteenth century, people turned inwardly to refine their ideas of "I" as a member of a national community.[10] Staliūnas states that Lithuanian historians first built Lithuanianness on Lithuanian's ethnocultural values, apparently as a counterweight to Polishness. Lithuanianness, a national or ethnic identity, was, in an ethnocentric point of view, "purified," and Lithuania's history was conceived as the history of ethnic Lithuanians. To developing Lithuanian nationalism, language was the most important national criterion. However, due to so-called "exterior" requirements (the goal of establishing Vilnius as the capital and the "return" of the nobility to the Lithuanian

[9] Staliūnas, "Lietuvos idėja Aušroje," 274–276.
[10] Subačius, *Lietuvių tapatybės kalvė*, 65–73, 107–108.

nation), the nationalist arsenal of criteria had to be expanded, so the arguments of origin or ethnography were added.[11]

In the ethnographic works of authors who wrote in the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth, we will find descriptions of the other seemingly fortifying the image of the self among those investigating cultural assimilation and other topics.[12] Povilas Višinskis described the traits of the Samogitian character, cultural assimilation, and the influence of German, Polish, Latvian, and Russian culture on Lithuania; in his words, "when you want to put together a clear picture and understanding of a group of people, you should first come to know some other group, and only then, by comparing them, do the ones you want to research become clear and understandable..."[13] Anthropologist's studies of their own culture are associated with nationalist movements and are valued critically for "possible" or obvious ethnocentric elements.

In the twentieth century in Lithuania, as in neighboring countries, the study of peoples, their national character, and their culture expanded. Ruth Benedict's analysis of "national character," well-known at that time, widened into stable collective-identity studies. In 1968, a wave of neo-Marxism arose, based on the German concept of identity, from unity (*Einheit*) to identity (*Identität*). Unity encompassed a possible identity as well as a common identity. During the Soviet period, attention turned to ethnos and ethnic culture. As early as 1968, in *Pabaltijo istorinės etnografijos atlasas*, the scholars who prepared the atlas observed that the typological areas of clothing and farming implements did not correspond with ethnic ones, and so the cherished hypothesis about nations and their traditional culture's self-contained homogeny collapsed.[14] In the same decade as this hypothesis's refutation, in social anthropology, Fredrick Barth's concept of the boundaries of ethnic identity arose; the notion of "strong" identity (which criticized constrictive

[11] Staliūnas, "From Ethnocentric to Civic History," 312–325.
[12] Savoniakaitė, *Lietuvos etnologijos ir antropologijos enciklopedija*, 8–14.
[13] Višinskis, *Raštai*, 129.
[14] Merkienė, "Pratarmė," 11.

ethnic identities)[15] and later the concept of orientalism[16] were also criticized.

Eventually, the influence of growing instrumental and constructive factors can be seen. In *Modernity and Self Identity,* Anthony Giddens's concept of self is based on strong psychological rules of the ego. He associates self-reflexivity in modernity with decreasing social knowledge and trust between people when comparing traditional and modern societies. Life becomes manageable not via traditions, but rather through new social slogans and rituals.[17]

The "self" in Lithuanian ethnography is associated in its widest aspects with the self's ethnic group, culture, religion, society, and territory. Lithuania's scholars are interested in their own ethnic culture's particularities as various social strata (nobility, peasants, town dwellers, political prisoners, exiles, and others); ethnic and civil aspirations in history; the influence of the educated on the development of ethnic culture, nationality, and the formation of a national culture; and state public and community organizations,[18] in other words, agents' actions and influence on changes in ethnic culture. The term ethnic culture was based on a viewpoint toward people as much as their cultural particularities and the historical social surroundings that had formed these particularities. Numerous scholars emphasize the connections between the Revival and the Enlightenment era's ideas, which encouraged interest in one and other nations' cultures, in forming a national culture, fostering nationality, interpreting ethnic and national cultural elements, and creating new national symbols. Latvian scholars linked the development of a nation with cultural traditions.[19] Latvian identity is revealed through their studies of national culture. In the meantime, for the Czechs, whose discourses are closer

---

15 Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries.*

16 Said, *Orientalism.*

17 Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity,* 18, 79.

18 Merkienė, *Etninė kultūra ir tautinis atgimimas.*

19 Dumpe, "Entwicklung der lettischen Ethnographienwissenschaft," 42–54.

to German ethnologists, national self-identity,[20] associated with Herder's romantic ideas and the processes of constructing a political nation, is crucial.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, studies of the other intensified through the influence of the social sciences. As the paradigm of conflict became prominent in social theory, its importance acquired new incentives in constructing identity.[21] The spread of democracy invited a deeper investigation of the other, not just the self. Studies of national minorities are particularly widespread in contemporary historians' works;[22] interesting viewpoints on historical and contemporary pluralistic society are revealed.

For Lithuanians, the other belongs to a mythological world: it is people of other faiths, other social groups or ethnographic areas, villages, kin, or families.[23] In studies of contemporary society, the opposition of self and other, and according to Jolanta Kuznecovienė, specifically these antifeatures are used as a differential criteria to draw the boundaries between these oppositions; it supplements and clarifies the features of national identity.[24] Today's increasing migration encourages new approaches to the problem of identity. The contours of the displaced Lithuanian identity are transformed into a specific configuration of traits affected by adaption, acculturation, and other processes at work on the formation of identity.[25] In Neringa Klumbytė's studies, the other appears as a person who has landed beyond the boundaries of a democratic society, expressing a nation's variety of communities and its changing identities,[26] which we will investigate further.

In analyzing the terms and viewpoints of the concepts of self and other, the field of problems widens considerably.

---

[20] Uherek, "Constructing the National Identity," 32–34.
[21] Savukynas, "Kito buvimas visuomenėje," 12–13.
[22] Potašenko, *Daugiatautė Lietuva* and others.
[23] Anglickienė, *Kitataučių įvaizdis*, 60–64.
[24] Kuznecovienė, "Nelietuviškumo dėmenys," 90.
[25] Čiubrinskas, "Transnacionalinė migracija," 8.
[26] Klumbytė, "Post-Socialist Sensations," 93–116.

Several aspects with influence on contemporary pluralistic interpretations of self and other in anthropology and ethnology will be highlighted. These include the historical and interdisciplinary viewpoints of scholarship, which intriguingly influence the concepts of identity, from nation to individual alterities in civil society, revealing national and other urgent contemporary issues.

"Hard" and "Soft" Identity, and Alterity

Multicultural societies' issues encourage humanitarian and social science representatives to take an interest in identity. According to Gringrich, at the turn of the century scholarly discourse in anthropology on identity/alterity (or differences) became controversial. This encouraged the spread of interdisciplinary discourses in anthropological works. The generation of younger scholars stepped beyond the boundaries of anthropological scholarship and offered interdisciplinary viewpoints. The older generation of anthropologists relied on classical anthropology works, extensively investigating Fredrik Barth's, Abner Cohen's, and Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of identity; they researched phenomena "inside anthropology" and seem isolated from wider debates.[27]

"Hard" and "soft" identities are recognized. Some investigate identity in terms of difference; identity is seen essentially as difference. This tendency is known as the hard identity concept. Others study difference/alterity/other. If it is assumed that otherness and belonging are the constitutive parts of identity, then the second tendency is inclined to ignore alterity. It is considered the soft identity concept, understood together with the concept of alterity.[28] Gringich emphasizes that identity/alterity are from interdisciplinary discourses, which could be called a concept adopted from "others."

The concept of identity/alterity or difference came to anthropology from philosophy, literary criticism, and culture studies. Lawrence Grossberg's work from the 1990s is known

[27] Gingrich, "Conceptualising Identities," 3.
[28] Ibid., 4.

in cultural studies. He criticized the notion of a pure identity and raised the idea of the soft concept of difference, based on philosophical discourses of identity/alterity; he also claimed that a singular identity doesn't exist, because in specific contexts it can become just a part of identity.[29]

Personal similarities are associated with belonging to a group, while the self's differentiation is associated with other people. Your membership in a group can be expressed via different means. Many of the most important contemporary social and political problems of the world involve the ties between different social groups: of race, sex, and age, as well as economic, religious, ethnic, and national groups. These ties define social identity. Social identity is a common concept involving three different questions: first, the origin of identity categories; second, what it means to belong to a social group, or how this membership is defined via biological, social, or cultural interpretations, or all three simultaneously; third, what the contents of these categories are, and how people themselves define the significance of this. This reveals the cultural significance of people's social identities and shows how people adopt their identities and associate them with other identities.[30]

In many cases, in defining difference, the philosophical discourses on identity experience influences from postmodernism and culture studies, and draw on Martin Heidegger's criticism.[31] Heidegger's view of identity primarily singles out the self. He purifies difference, and he holds to the hard concept of difference scholars associate with Nazi ideology. This ideology was opposed by postcolonial ideas, among many others, the works of Jacque Lacan, which differentiated the other like the self, and asserted that the difference is only a part of identity. This and other assertions had great influence on anthropology's theoretical viewpoints, and the concept of hard identity

---

[29] Ibid., 4–5.

[30] Grossberg, et. al, *Media Making*, 218–219; Amit and Rapport, *Community*.

[31] Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz*.

and difference changed into the concept of soft identity and many multidimentional conceptions of identity/alterity.

The concept of alterity assists in understanding the concepts of self and other. This notion has recently achieved prominence in anthropology. The concept of alterity is held to be broader than otherness, which, like evolutionism, functionalism, structuralism, and Marxism, in other words, Western civilization's imperialistic and capitalist past, is criticized in modern thought.[32] A broader, more relevant interdisciplinary viewpoint, more suitable to contemporary society's aspirations, arises together with this concept's spread in anthropological theory.

The contemporary concept of alterity is associated with the growing criticism in postcolonial anthropology, considered an academic discipline that discusses foreign countries' otherness. The appearance of these concepts and self-reflection in anthropology provoked criticism of the "grand narratives of modernity,"[33] reflecting rising questions about the discipline's past and the study of otherness as a central vision of modernity, and discussion of anthropology as a discipline that is no longer what it once was. Careful anthropologists frequently avoid global definitions; this requirement of the discourse was inspired by philosophers' works.

All otherness systems are structures of identity and difference that have a close connection to the formation of self, rather than an empirical reality revealing the alternative world of the other – a neighbor, peddler, enemy, or other individual. However, this still does not mean that we must "always consider all ethnocentrism, or concepts of difference as the same." For example, conceptions of monsters differ, because the self can understand them or interact with them differently;[34] clearly, the boundaries of otherness are particularly varied. The otherness revealed in Eurocentrism was a political and colonial discourse, born out of a hierarchical system in which the self

[32] Rapport and Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 11.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid., 14–17.

opposes the other. We find different notions of identity/alterity in concepts concerning what it means to be Lithuanian. The people of contemporary Lithuania define themselves by nationality, while some, considering nationality a given, according to their citizenship and language, indicate their belonging to an ethnic group, an ethnographic regional community, as well as their alterity.

The ethnographic research presented in this article was carried out in all of Lithuania's small towns and villages from 2002 to 2008. These were unstructured interviews and observations done according to the research/polling program "Local Communities." The questions asked were dictated by the conversation's theme, which sought to variously reveal people's definition of their identities, local social interactions, local community particulars, and the local culture's dependency on economic changes, politics, information, migration, and new global structures. This research also revealed contemporary integration and communication processes, priorities, and effects. All of these show the lifestyle of traditional village and town communities and the fate of values, a topic that would make up a separate history about the nation's cultural priorities. Inhabitants of various nationalities, faith, age, education, sex and social position were interviewed; their attitudes toward people's relationships, the influence of religion on local cultural traditions and customs, people's opinions about culture politics and cultural assimilation, as well as elements of the social integration processes in the local community were revealed.[35]

According to my research, we can conclude that, in communities made up of various ethnic groups, people most often indicate belonging to a nationality or an ethnic group and, at the same time, indicate the "other," or belonging to a minority. The residents of Lithuania Minor are most likely to associate their

[35] Data from this study is stored in the manuscript section's Ethnology collection (LIIBR F–75) at the Lithuanian History Institute's library. The narration of 329 people (157 in Aukštaitija, 44 in Dzūkija, 29 in Suvalkija, 22 in Lithuania Minor, and 77 in Samogitia) made up a major part of the research.

nationality with their identity; few locals there call themselves *lietuvininkas* (a Lithuanian), *prūselis* (a Prussian), or *šisioniskis* (a local), because after World War II many new inhabitants settled in the area, when the previous residents were repatriated to Germany. From an ethnic viewpoint, consolidated and settled Lithuanian communities more often mention belonging to an ethnographic territory.[36] "I wanted to be a *dzūkė* (female inhabitant of Dzūkija); they wrote Lithuanian... I don't know Lithuanian, I only speak Dzūkian."[37] The narratives indicate a view of oneself as an ethnic Lithuanian, but also indicate the other nationalities of one's town: Poles, Russians, and Jews. In the eastern Lithuanian boundary territory, the former Vilnius territory, and places on the edges of Dzūkija and Aukštaitija, where various ethnic groups such as Poles, Lithuanians, Russians, and others live, people frequently mention their nationality first. The former Vilnius territory is marked by people's "instrumental" and various "situational" identities influenced by historical political events; many people consider themselves Poles, even though they speak Russian.[38]

The research reveals that people in eastern Lithuania define their identity more openly than in the west. For example, in Samogitia and Lithuania Minor people do not express their opinion as freely as they do in Aukštaitija; fewer wish to publicize their identity.[39] We met with people from families exiled to Siberia who would say nothing about either their nationality or homeland.[40] It must be observed that, in contemporary society, people's reservedness is changing; this fact is influenced by

---

[36] Many research subjects emphasized their regional identity. The positive results of Lithuania's regional culture policies can be seen here; on the other hand, this indicates that people value their culture.

[37] LIIBR F–75 b. 2317(9), l. 82–83.

[38] See Darius Daukšas's article in this issue.

[39] In Samogitia and Lithuania Minor, 29 percent gave only a first name. In Samogitia, 8 percent, and in Lithuania Minor, 14 percent would give neither a first nor last name. In Džūkija and particularly Suvalkija, this proportion reached as much as 40 percent.

[40] LIIBR F–75 b. 2333(42), l. 366.

information gotten at different times and psychological, social, and many other factors; we will further investigate people's tendencies towards alterity.

Narrative identity and belonging

Taking a wider look, for today's society, defining identity for its individuals, communities, and groups is closer to the concept of alterity, which had in part rebutted and transformed pure "hard" identity or essentialist viewpoints. According to representatives of cultural studies, the essentialist view of human identity maintains that every category exists naturally within itself and this category's significance belongs to itself; it is defined by time. To represent the means to accurately depict identity seems to contradict stereotypes. The question is how to reveal the authentic and original contents of identity. In place of the "other," a separate completely constructed chosen identity is offered. Another theory offers the impossibility of such a completely manufactured, separate, and exceptional identity. It denies the existence of an authentic identity. This theory asserts that the categories of identity are culturally constructed and can only be understood rationally; they are constantly changing and unfinished. In the anti-essentialist viewpoint, the existence of these categories, the distinctiveness of their means of functioning, the signs of their distinctiveness and the distinctive meaning they offer, are all culturally constructed.[41] Identity became soft and depended on the effects of various relations in different contexts; in other words, many situational identities could be seen.

These two opposing concepts can be examined using narrative identity, which reveals many aspects about people. According to Nigel Rapport, "we are all entangled in stories, from those told to us by others, from childhood on, to those we tell about ourselves – both to ourselves and to others." This telling and receiving of stories, forgetting and reviving of stories, mingling and denying of stories, produces significant narrative identities, according to Paul Ricoeur. Individuals know

[41] Grossberg, et. al, *Media Making*, 219–220.

themselves and are known by others, in important respects, by the stories they know and in which they figure; social groups may be represented by the stories shared in their collective traditions.[42]

When speaking of self and others, people mention many things that reveal their individual identities and relationships with others, and membership in groups or communities. Important religious aspects are distinguished; these are also heavily accented by representatives of ethnic minorities and people from mixed families. For example, in Lithuania Minor a devout woman mentioned that she is an Evangelist and added that, if a mother is Catholic and the father an Evangelist, their children must be Evangelists.[43] Many inhabitants of Samogita are Catholics, but that is emphasized only when speaking of family intercourse and holidays, as if remembering the saying that reveals the primordial concept: "Even if someone wanted to, they couldn't get rid of those customs very fast – an observant eye will immediately see where you came from and whose child you are."[44]

People tell stories and remember: "Running away from Samogitia, you won't turn into an Aukštaitian. A good dog returns to his barn to die. ... A Samogitian is harder working, tidier, gentler... He speaks the truth to your face."[45] "A Samogitian is stubborn. Aukštaitians are quicker. If a Samogitian does something faster, the Aukštaitian will teach someone else."[46] "The local people are unbelievably tidy and clean. Dzūkians are messier... the Prussians support the Samogitians... The Samogitian has a good character, they're slower."[47] "The Germans help one another more than Lithuanians do."[48] "Suvalkians are very

---

42 Rapport, *Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 116.
43 LIIBR F–75 b. 2333(18), l. 165.
44 Končius, *Žemaičio šnekos*, 32.
45 A Samogitian woman from Papilė who had lived in Aukštaitija, LIIBR F–75 b. 2342(5), l. 28, 30.
46 A folk artist from Viekšniai, LIIBR F–75 b. 2342(7), l. 42.
47 An inhabitant of Vilkyškiai, LIIBR F–75 b. 2333(8), l. 68.
48 A Samogitian woman living in Saugos, LIIBR F–75 b. 2333(15), l. 127.

hardworking..."[49] We can find many memoirs and narratives that reveal people's anti-essentialist viewpoints and alterity. It is possible, however, to discern essentialist elements – primordial viewpoints.

It must be emphasized that the people of Lithuania, particularly in western Lithuania, think very highly of their native land and home. Some think of their homeland as the place where they were born; others as the place where they were born and spent their youth; others, in a wider sense, as their country. Comparing research results, we noticed that people from Samogitia and Lithuania Minor speak warmly of their homeland; the Dzūkians only half as much.[50] *Žemė* (the land) is more important than homeland to the people of Suvalkija and Aukštaitija. Young people describe the boundaries of their identity associated with their homeland, residence, parents' roots, kinship, family interactions and traditions as warmly as the older ones do. People's strong attachment to "their" place remains: "Oh yes, home's special to everyone here. This is where we were born, grew up; this is where we'll grow old, where we'll be buried."[51] "How could it not be special? This is home; this is where we were born, grew up, went to school, where we were christened and christened our children. We didn't go anywhere, move anywhere else... When the children take me somewhere, I come home quickly. Where can you find a better place? This is dear to my heart; it's grown into my blood."[52] "No, I wouldn't go anywhere now."[53] "Always [lived] close to home. Not much difference – [it's] the same Samogitia; they just talk different."[54] "Don't know, if it's special, I got used to it here. Wouldn't want to go far."[55] "I really love the Klaipėda

[49] LIIBR F–75 b. 2323(40), l. 357–364.

[50] In Samogitia, 64 percent; in Lithuania Minor, 63 percent; in Dzūkija, 32 percent of the people in the study.

[51] A woman from Judrėnai, LIIBR F–75 b. 2333(17), l. 149.

[52] A woman from Pikeliai, LIIBR F–75 b. 2342(9/1), l. 52.

[53] A man from Plateliai, LIIBR F–75 b. 2342(13), l. 82.

[54] A well-educated middle-aged man from Žarėnai, LIIBR F–75 b. 2342(18), l. 118.

[55] A young man from Girkalnis, LIIBR F–75 b. 2333(53), l. 462.

area. It's not just the place and the neighbors, it's all the trees and flowers and birds too. We love our homeland because it belongs to our country."[56] "If I hadn't loved my home, I wouldn't have stayed here. It's so special to me that I wouldn't trade it for anything."[57] "How can't you love your homeland: it even smells different in Dzūkija."[58]

The same symbols, beautiful expressions, and motifs of longing repeat in stories about home : "There's a cottage. It's nice there; it's like you're in a different country. Every inch has been stepped on; it's where you were born, where you grew up; the woods are all explored. Now it's overgrown; it's changed."[59] "My home is no more. I'd like to be there; there's some kind of longing."[60]

In the border areas, people associate their identity with the land.[61] "I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. Your land is your land. Country people are more sincere."[62] "I was born and raised here. We're not real Samogitians here. It's very, very special, I wouldn't change it for anything. Probably my blood's grown into this land. As long as I'm alive, I'm not going anywhere."[63] "I'm not going anywhere as long as I have my arms and legs; you can make money here."[64] At intervals, relationships were revealed: "I'm half Aukštaitian... We're near Samogitia and Latvia here. My husband's from Latvia. My children: one daughter is Latvian; the other two girls and the two boys are Lithuanian. My son-in-law and daughter-in-law are

---

[56] A woman from Dovilai who identifies herself as a *lietuvininkė*, LIIBR F–75 2333 (16), l. 137.

[57] A man from Katyčiai whose entire family emigrated to Germany, LIIBR F–75 b.2333(20), l. 179.

[58] A middle-aged woman from Seirijai, LIIBR F–75, b. 2317(12), l. 114.

[59] An elderly man from Ylakiai, LIIBR F–75 b. 2333(54), l. 456.

[60] A woman from Nemakščiai, a former exile, LIIBR F–75 b. 2333(49), l. 419.

[61] Twelve percent of the Samogitians interviewed.

[62] A teacher from Kaltinėnai, LIIBR F–75 2333(39), l. 403.

[63] A woman from Vaiguva, LIIBR F–75 b. 2333(47), l. 403.

[64] A Samogitian from Rietavas, LIIBR F–75 b. 2333(29), l. 245.

Polish: the grandchildren are Lithuanian."[65] "I'm half-Samogitian. I don't know how to say it. My mother's half-Samogitian."[66] "I'm an Aukštaitian from Ukmergė. We talk like everyone here does, *po prostu*, half Belorussian, half Polish. I sent the children to a Lithuanian school."[67] In some narratives, land is probably linked with homeland, with a wider sense defining the area or the country where one lives. Land is associated with people, their character, their peculiarities. Blood is a symbol showing family roots and family ties. At the same time, a viewpoint toward politics and people's work achievements is expressed. Those of mixed families who are inclined toward patriotism emphasize their native language.

The images of self are associated with the concept of the local. In Samogitia and Dzūkija, it is thought that a local is someone who has solid ties to a particular place: "I'm not a Samogitian. Maybe I'm thought to be Samogitian. My father's a local; he was born here."[68] "I'm a local; my parents, grandparents, great-grandparents are here. The children are in Pakruojis, they're Aukštaitians."[69] Or, "A Lithuanian Aukštaitian – that's what I was born."[70] Records of the inhabitants of Džūkija showed more mentions of locals; a Pole who was born in Butrimonys, who did not mention his surname, thought "Maybe I'm a Džūkian; since I didn't come here, I'm a Lithuanian; my parents are locals."[71] This reveals the particularities of migration,

---

65 A former exile; her parents lived in Latvia because they were not allowed to return to Lithuania from exile. LIIBR F–75 b. 2342(3), l. 18.

66 A young man from Vaiguva, LIIBR F–75, b. 2323(14), l. 90.

67 A middle-aged woman who self-identified as half-Polish, half-Russian, from Butrimonys, LIIBR F–75, b. 2323(14), l. 90.

68 A middle-aged woman from Bazilionai, LIIBR F–75 b. 2333(41), l. 359.

69 A woman who identifies herself as a Samogitian from Papilė, LIIBR F–75 b. 2342(5), l. 27.

70 A teacher from Spitrėnai village, Utena area LIIBR F–75 b. 2221(1), l. 2–4.

71 A middle-aged Polish man from Butrimonys, LIIBR F–75 b. 2323(13), l. 86.

people's belonging to a nation, and feelings toward the community, or the other's transformation into self and alterity.

Conclusions

In theoretical interdisciplinary research, approaches and images of identity are changing. The Lithuanian language and cultural priorities disclosed in nineteenth-century historiography and later, reveal primordial, instrumental, and, in part, constructive concepts of ethnic identity. Over time, the constructive approach increased in studies of Lithuanian society; the primordial or instrumental concepts were not rejected; the discourse was expanded from essentialist to anti-essential views of self and other, eventually tying itself to "hard," "soft," "situational," and other identities, exceptional personalities, and belonging to groups, communities, or territories.

On this basis, the concept of "alterity" in a definitive view is important in disclosing contemporary man; essential concepts are rare – self turns into other, and the other way around. It is meaningful to research "identity/alterity" so observant eyes see "where you came from, whose child you are."

Definitions of self and other are important to the people of Lithuania, whose concept of identity is revealed in diverse ways by alterity and community. During the last two centuries of political convolutions, the love of the Lithuanian language and culture is revealed. As dialects assimilate, people speak less of their or others' language than they do of their homeland, home, land, and family.

In their narratives, the people of western Lithuania pay particular attention to their homeland and ties to a place; they speak warmly of family and kinship. These particulars of "narrative identity" are confirmed by the positive statements made as often by people who have migrated as by those who still live there. The distinctive value Suvalkians place on "our land" could be associated with an agricultural mentality and the echoes of historical politics, influenced by the value of a fertile soil. The narratives reveal that many things associated with collective customs and traditions change, while the concept of

homeland or home in the wider sense remains as important to the younger generations as to the old, although the narratives of young individuals in many cases are less Romantic.

Research on narrative identities were carried out in the small cities, towns, and villages of Lithuania, so there is no sense in investigating situational identities associated with people's lifestyles, professions, nature of activities, jobs, and economic change. We did not find distinctive conclusions peculiar to Lithuania in the last decades; we can see the influence of economic development, associated with new large-scale farming operations, business, European Union policies and numerous political aspects, and the huge change in migration and demographics, which, of course, encourages alterity in ethnic, cultural, and national identities.[72] The work that has been done raises new questions about identities' alterity and home in a changing space in large Lithuanian cities as well as wherever in the world Lithuanians and their children live.

WORKS CITED

Amit, Vered, and Rapport, Nigel. *Community, Cosmopolitanism and the Problem of Human Commonality.* London: Pluto Press, 2012.

Anglickienė, Laima. *Kitataučių įvaizdis lietuvių folklore.* Vilnius: Versus aureus, 2006.

Barth, Fredrik, ed. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: the Social Organization of Culture Difference.* Bergen, Oslo: Universitets Forlaget, 1969.

Čiubrinskas, Vytis. "Įvadas. Transnacionalinė migracija ir išjudintasis identitetas" in *Lietuviškasis identitetas šiuolaikinės emigracijos kontekstuose.* Edited by Vytis Čiubrinskas. Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, 2011.

Donelaitis, Kristijonas. *The Seasons.* Translated by Nadas Rastenis. Los Angeles: Lithuanian Day Publishers, 1967.

[72] Savoniakaitė, "Šiuolaikiniai žemaičiai ir lietuvininkai."

Dumpe, Linda. "Entwicklung der lettischen Ethnographienwissenschaft zur Zeit der nationalen Bewegung des Volkserwachens in der 2. Hälfte des 19. Jh." in *Etninė kultūra ir tautinis atgimimas*. Edited by R. Merkienė. Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 1994.

Edgar, Iain, and Tõnno Jonuks. "The Edgy Northern European Imaginaries: Cultural Identity Through the Looking Glass of Fabulous Ancestors and Ludic Realities," *EASA 2014. Collaboration, Intimacy, Revolution*. Tallin: Tallin University, 2014.

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. *Small Places, Large Issues*. London: Pluto Press, 2001.

Giddens, Anthony. *Modernity and Self-Identity*. Cambridge: Polity, 1991.

Gingrich, Andre. "Conceptualising Identities: Anthropological Alternatives to Essentialising Difference and Moralizing about Othering," in *Grammars of Identity/Alterity: A Structural Approach*. Edited by Gerd Baumann and Andre Gingrich. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2004.

Grossberg, Lawrence, Ellen Wartella and Charles D. Whitney. *Media Making: Mass Media in a Popular Culture*. London: Sage, 1998.

Heidegger, Martin. *Identität und Differenz*. Pfullingen: Neske, 1957.

Klumbytė, Neringa. "Post-Socialist Sensations: Nostalgia, the Self, and Alterity in Lithuania," *Lietuvos etnologija: socialinės antropologijos ir etnologijos studijos*, 2009, 9 (18).

Končius, Ignas. *Žemaičio šnekos*. Vilnius: Vaga, 1996.

Kuznecovienė, Jolanta. "Nelietuviškumo dėmenys: savo/svetimo ribų braižymas," in *Lietuviškojo identiteto trajektorijos*. Edited by Vytis Čiubrinskas and J. Kuznecovienė. Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, 2008.

Lacan, Jacques. *Language of the Self. The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968.

Merkienė, Regina, ed. *Etninė kultūra ir tautinis atgimimas*. Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 1994.

Merkienė, Irena Regina. "Pratarmė," in *Etninė kultūra ir tapatumo išraiška*. Edited by Irena Merkienė and Vida Savoniakaitė. Vilnius: Mokslo aidai, 1999.

Potašenko, Grigorijus. *Daugiatautė Lietuva: Lietuvos etninių mažumų istorija*. Kaunas: Šviesa, 2008.

Rapport, Nigel, and Overing, Joanna. *Social and Cultural Anthropology: The Key Concepts*. London and New York: Routledge, 2007.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Press, 1978.

Savoniakaitė, Vida, ed. *Lietuvos etnologijos ir antropologijos enciklopedija*. Vilnius: LII leidykla, 2011.

Savoniakaitė, Vida. "Šiuolaikiniai žemaičiai ir lietuvininkai," in *Lietuvos kultūra: Žemaitijos ir Mažosios Lietuvos papročiai*. Edited by Žilvytis Šaknys. Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos leidykla. 2012.

Savukynas, Virginijus. "Kito buvimas visuomenėje: stereotipai ir tolerancija (Lietuvos atvejis)," in *Etninės kultūros paveldas ir dabarties kultūra*. Edited by Irena Merkienė. Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos leidykla, 1999.

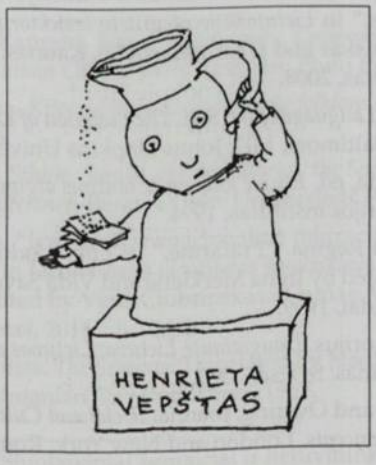
Staliūnas, Darius. "From Ethnocentric to Civic History: Changes in Contemporary Lithuanian Historical Studies," in *Emerging Meso-Areas in the Former Socialist Countries: Histories Revived or Improvised*. Edited by K. Matsuzato. Sapporo: Hokkaido University, 2005. Online: <https://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/coe21/publish/no7_ses/chapter14.pdf>.

Staliūnas, Darius. "Lietuvos idėja Aušroje," *Archivum Lithuanicum 15*, 2013.

Subačius, Paulius. *Lietuvių tapatybės kalvė*. Vilnius: Aidai, 1999.

Uherek, Zdaněk. "Constructing the National Identity of a Czech City," in *Etninė kultūra ir tautinis atgimimas*. Edited by Regina Merkienė. Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 1999.

Višinskis, Povilas. *Raštai*. Edited by A. Sprindis. Vilnius: Vaga, 1964.



Proximity, Interaction, and Social Organization in Lithuania

AUKSUOLĖ ČEPAITIENĖ

It is quite common among ethnologists and social anthropologists to discuss social organization through the lens of structure – be it a family, kinship, neighborhood or any other kind of social group. Today, this view is often developed within a concept of identity, which inevitably draws on classificatory practices and the opposition between "we" and "others." This understanding of social organization is synchronic and rather static; its main emphasis is on aspects of membership, inclusion and exclusion, and boundary drawing. Ethnographies show, however, that human worlds are more complex. Social structures, even if they are stable as concepts, are not stable and static as social units of real human beings. In their lifetimes, people establish different kinds of relationships and move across structural boundaries in one way or another. They reconceptualize their connections, cut or establish new ones, and reclassify the previous ones. Social worlds are reproduced in a variety of forms that link people inside, across, and beyond groups, and are related to different social and cultural contexts and stimuli. Evidently, the dynamics of social interaction are no less significant in understanding society and social organization than structural considerations.

AUKSUOLĖ ČEPAITIENĖ is a senior research fellow at the Department of Ethnology at the Lithuanian Institute of History. Her research interests are kinship and identity studies, the anthropology of knowledge, and Lithuanian ethnography. Her new book, *Gyvenimo etnografija: vietos, struktūros ir laikas. Besikeičianti Lietuva XX amžiuje,* deals with the basics of Lithuanian ethnography.

This article discusses the ways in which Lithuanian people conceptualize social relations, prioritize one relationship over another and transform one into another, and how this relates to aspects of social organization in Lithuania. Attention is paid to the relationships of family, kinship, and neighborhood. The paper suggests that a "spatial" sense and physical proximity are influential factors in social ordering and of the ways that people relate.

Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

Ideas about family, kinship and neighborhood are inseparable from critical thinking about the nature of community and society.[1] Although they refer to different principles of relating and function in societies within their own contexts, which seem to be quite clear, this does not imply their meanings are self-evident, either from a theoretical or from an empirical point of view. This leads us to return to the classics of social thought.

Ferdinand Tőnnies in his work *Community and Society* suggests considering *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* as two fundamentally different and contrasting models of social organization,[2] which he relates to the differences of their structural patterns. He indicates that the ties of kinship and neighborhood, as well as history, language and culture, and individual identity developed within the wider coexisting whole, are characteristic features of community and the rural. He sees civil society and the urban, on the other hand, as grounded on freestanding individuals, a "spatial" rather than "historical" sense of mutual awareness, and an individual identity that precedes that of the wider group.[3] These attempts to understand the specificities of social organization are echoed by other authors, among them Louis Wirth with his "urbanism as

1 See for example, Fortes, *Kinship and the Social Order*; Strathern, *After Nature*; Godelier, "Community, Society, Culture"; Asch, "Lévi-Strauss and the Political"; Reay, "Kinship and the Neighborhood"; Bestard-Camps, *What's in a Relative?*

2 Tőnnies, *Community and Civil Society*.

3 Ibid.

a way of life," urban personality, and heterogeneous and differentiated individuals.[4] In a majority of these works, however, the structural considerations were *a priori*. The relationship between the individual and the community that claims the aspect of collectivity was assumed as the main criterion in classifying the relations and the type of social organization. The ties of family, kinship, and neighborhood seem to belong to the same kind of communal connection.

Later studies in urban anthropology and modernity challenged this view. Attention was directed at the distinction between kinship and neighborhood, emphasizing that kinship and neighborhood are based on different principles of social connectedness. Moreover, it appeared that kinship, which indicates the primal unity of existence and points to family ties as well, does not always actually represent direct social relationships, communal connections, and close proximity. And a neighborhood does not necessarily affirm the patterns of a rural community. It rather identifies the reproduction of social life in segmented and fractured worlds, where the locality and the spatial sense of mutual awareness, the sharing of communal spaces, and the relational consciousness of other neighborhoods' autonomy have a value.[5] The body of anthropological and sociological literature shows that distinction between kinship and neighborhood quite often comes to stand for contrasting rural and urban, homogeneous and heterogeneous or multicultural settings, and even the difference between the disciplinary approaches of anthropology and sociology. But even so, the ethnographic reality reminds us that human worlds are not simple or two-sided, but complex and dynamic. It is an invitation for skeptical investigation rather than ready-made models upon which to hang analysis.

Since the very beginning of studies on society in Lithuania, the family occupies the main position of interest and field of investigation, and kinship is just a small part of it. Neighborhood

4 Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life."
5 Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 186.

is treated as a type of communal relationship.[6] This article, however, approaches all three ideas about family, kinship, and neighborhood as the focus of inquiry on social organization.

The empirical basis of this article is the lengthy ethnographic research I have carried out in Lithuania since 1997. Its aim rests mainly on the critical investigation of kinship and the other forms of social organization of contemporary Lithuanian society, with traditional contexts taken into consideration as well. The ethnographic insights into people's understandings of kinship and social organization are acquired during my stays and conversations with local people in different Lithuanian locations. My visits are random and informal chances to meet and talk with people I did not know before. The ethnographic interviews focus mainly on people's understandings of kinship. However, all of the topics the interviewees include – their family backgrounds, life stories, and personal experiences, as well as the details and circumstances that surround our talks and events that occur during my visits – are taken into consideration. I allow people to guide me along their thinking about human relatedness and follow them obediently. It is research that conventionally might be termed "ethnography at home," where home is "a mixture of geographical, emotional, social and cultural components brought together under the rubric of familiarity."[7] I am a stranger and "the other" in that home, despite the fact that I am of the same society as my interviewees and speak the same language. The position of a researcher as "the other" establishes the possibility of entering their lives, which sometimes seem so puzzling.

A Relationship: A Kin Who is Not a Kin, but a Neighbor

In a village in the Varėna district of East Lithuania, where I went at the very beginning of my research in 1997, I met an elderly woman named Elžbieta.[8] She was living alone, and

---

[6] See Witort, *Zarysy prawa zwyczajowego*; Vyšniauskaitė, "Kaimo šeima"; Vyšniauskaitė, "Lietuvių valstiečių šeima"; Kalnius, "Miesto šeimos"; and others.

[7] Madden, *Being Ethnographic*, 46.

[8] The name of the intervewee is changed.

only her brother-in-law's daughter (*dieverio dukra*) lived nearby. Elžbieta agreed to talk to me, and we sat in her kitchen for hours and discussed a variety of issues. Although my research interest rested mainly on kinship, I was also interested in her family and village life. During our conversation, I learned that Elžbieta's surname is the same as a woman's I had met in this village before. To my question about this coincidence of surnames, Elžbieta observed that there are a lot of people in the village with the same surname as hers – "they all are kin." Her statement, however, contradicted the woman I had met earlier, who denied the ties of kinship among villagers with the same surnames.

Elžbieta was born in another village not far away. She came here after her marriage in 1932. The newlyweds at first lived in Elžbieta's husband's father's house. It is common in Lithuania to stay in a husband's father's house (or perhaps in a wife's father's house, if he has no sons) after marriage, a practice known as patrilocal residence. Elžbieta's father-in-law owned a farm with thirty hectares of land. He lived with his second wife and his married and unmarried children, who included the oldest son (Elžbieta's brother-in-law) and his wife, the second son and Elžbieta, and three unmarried daughters (Elžbieta's sisters-in-law). "I came to a large family where a father lived together with his children," she said.

Elžbieta's father-in-law's family is a type of joint family quite often called a *didžioji šeima*, "grand family."[9] Joint families are the second most common type of family in Lithuania, after nuclear ones. According to ethnographers and historians, they were more common in Lithuania in the nineteenth century and began to break down after the abolition of serfdom in 1861 in particular, at the end of the nineteenth century.[10] However, in the eastern part of Lithuania they persisted until the middle of the twentieth century, and Elžbieta's case is an example. A joint family is usually composed of several nuclear families, either

[9] Vyšniauskaitė, "Kaimo šeima"; see also Löfgren, "Family and Household."

[10] Vyšniauskaitė, "Kaimo šeima."

of parents and their married children, often sons, or of married brothers' families, sometimes living together with their married children as well.[11] It is a coresidential, productive, and consuming domestic group, which forms one social and economic (and labor service) unit based on joint labor and capital, with some autonomy for the individual needs of its nuclear families. A joint family usually consists of three or more generations, and the relations between their members are based on kinship and authority. Concerning overall household matters, a father or an eldest brother acts as head of the family, and concerning domestic matters, especially food and eating, a mother or an eldest brother's wife.[12] Elžbieta remembers life at her father-in-law's house and says that it was "like hell. [...] I had cows as my dowry, but was not able to milk them." The father-in-law was head of the farm, and his wife was the main housekeeper.

But the stay of the couple with the family was temporary, because her father-in-law decided to break down their living together. He divided the land into three parts shared between his two sons and himself. Traditional rules of inheritance underlay this decision. In Lithuanian tradition, all of the children hold equal inheritance rights to the property of a household, despite gender or birth order. The share might be given as land, money, education, buildings, cattle, etc. In the case where the household is left to one child – either a son or a daughter – the others receive their share when they leave the household. Although the method of sharing the property is determined by the parents, it is more common in west and southwest Lithuania to leave a household to one child, and in southeast Lithuania to share it between all the children. Sons (or a son) usually inherit the household and land. Daughters usually leave their parents' house and get their share as a dowry in money, cattle, furniture, textiles, etc. When there are no sons in a family, the household is left to a daughter (or daughters).[13] Elžbieta's father-in-law, it seems, followed the traditional customs of inheritance. He gave

[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.

the first part of the land to one son with a wife and the eldest daughter; the second part he gave to Elžbieta's husband and her and the second eldest daughter, and the third part he took for himself and his wife with the third, his youngest daughter. The sons were obliged to give dowries to their sisters, if they married and decided to move out. Elžbieta and her husband gave cattle, furniture, and textiles to the second daughter when she married. They made a contract stating that her rights of inheritance had been satisfied. After the partition, both Elžbieta's husband and his brother built separate houses on their inherited parts of land. These houses stand close to each other to this day. Elžbieta's brother helped the couple build the house, and her husband paid for that help.

At the end of our conversation, Elžbieta shows me her vegetable garden with its strawberries, cucumbers, and cabbage. She also shows another part of the house, which is quite large. Nobody lives there, and it is used for special occasions only. Her daughter's wedding party was held there, as well as the funeral of her husband, whom she calls *dziedulis, mano žmogus*, "the old man, my man." In one room, I see an altar to the Virgin Mary. Elžbieta explains that every evening in May the village people come together to pray the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary there. This tradition has been followed for several years.

When I return to the question of kinship, Elžbieta says it is *iš prigimties*, by birth. But at the same moment she turns away from this abstract and classificatory idea, and in her kinship thinking includes practices that come from reality of life. She says, "kinship is a dear thing, because it is one's own flesh and blood, but life goes on in the opposite way, one lives as one wishes." She explains this in more detailed way:

> The closest kin are the children of brothers and sisters. [...] But you communicate either with close, or with distant kin, or sometimes with a neighbor. If he [a neighbor] is good, he is the same as kin. [...] Sometimes a good neighbor is more important, because kin are far away. When a bad accident happens, the neighbor is there first. When I broke my leg, I called on my brother-in-law's daughter (*dieverio dukra*); my kin live far away – my

> sister and two sons are in Vilnius. So I hurried to the neighbor's. [...] You just thank the neighbor for the help; you do not give money, for there may be times you help him or her too.

Elžbieta's comment on kinship is informative in many aspects; first of all, in understanding the ways in which people conceptualize, denote and classify relations, establish values, and project their behavior. In describing what kinship is, Elžbieta emphasizes both aspects – being and doing, or classifying and practicing – as two different lines of relations that are autonomous and exist in parallel, without any priority of one over another. In concrete situations, those lines might be on opposing sides, or they may shadow or enhance each other. Perceiving kinship as multifarious opens up the possibility of introducing other, alternative kinds of relationships. Elžbieta says a good neighbor is like kin, and sometimes a good neighbor is more important. To illustrate this, she takes an example from her experience and speaks of her brother-in-law's daughter, living nearby, who helped her once. Although Elžbieta's story about her broken leg involves a relative, and Elžbieta calls her by a kin term (*dieverio dukra*) at the beginning of the story, she immediately ignores their kin relationship and denotes her as a neighbor (*kaimynė*), saying her kin live far away. She translates their kin relationship into neighborliness without hesitation, and this seems natural to her. This shadowing of kinship ties and the establishment of neighborly relations in its place contains different meanings. First of all, it bears witness to Elžbieta's life story – her marriage, the partitioning of a joint family, the establishment of her own family and household, and the brother-in-law's family living close by. It might seem that kinship here is the main context that arranges life and its matters, and is inseparable from neighborhood.[14] But Elžbieta presents her brother-in-law's daughter as an example of a good neighbor, not of a relative, or of both. She confirms that being and doing are two different and parallel lines of relations that open the gate for mobility and openness in the restructuring

[14] See Reay, "Kinship and the Neighborhood."

of social connections. The significant factor that influences the reinterpretation of relations and the transfer of kinship into neighborliness, in this case, is the physical aspect of living in close proximity.

A Village of Neighbors or a Village of Kinsmen?

To discuss further the dynamics that stretch between kinship and neighborhood, I would like to recall another example. In the summer of 2003, I was staying in the town of Pajūris (in the Šilalė district of western Lithuania), together with a group of ethnographers and historians who were collecting material for a monograph. One day, I was walking along the street of a village called Tūbinės, known since the time of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The village has a wooden church built during the middle of the nineteenth century, although a parish was established there only in 1937. In Lithuanian, a village with a church is called a *bažnytkaimis*. In the 1920s, there were twenty-two farmsteads with 158 inhabitants in Tūbinės.[15] At that time, there was a primary school run by few farmers in turn, a post office, a center for buying milk, and two shops. There was also an estate close to the village that was leased by a lawyer from Kaunas. The estate, as well as the surrounding farms, were engaged in agricultural production. In Soviet times, Tūbinės belonged to a kolkhoz named "Soviet Lithuania." Today, the village is a settlement with 203 inhabitants (as of 2001), and is the center of the smallest administrative territorial unit, a *seniūnaitija*. There is a post office and a library there.

Walking along the street of Tūbinės, I meet two women chatting in a yard, and we started a conversation. A man from nearby joined us as well. It appeared they were all indigenous to the village. They were raised there, went to school, worked, and lived their lives there. The interviewees were of retirement age, born in the 1920s and 1930s. Their parents were farmers who owned small plots of land. During the interwar period, their family income was mainly from agriculture, although their parents made some additional earnings working

[15] Kviklys, *Mūsų Lietuva*, 197.

as servants, builders, or blacksmiths. In Soviet times they all worked at the kolkhoz.

When I told the interviewees that I am an ethnographer interested in kinship, they all doubted they would be able to help me, stating they know nothing about kinship. One woman explained, "we are living in families," and added that she knew nothing about the others. Every family has a house, and people are concerned only with what is going on in their house, not in the others. Their houses, built in Soviet times, stand close by each other along the main street of the village. They were built, as the interviewees say, "house-upon-house." In another part of the village, the interviewees add, the farmsteads are scattered over a large territory, but in this part they live close to one another.

My interviewees are neighbors. But when the first woman introduced the man, she said: "he is both my neighbor and my relative." Later, it is revealed that the second woman is a neighbor and a relative of the man as well. They tell me that, in this line of fifteen houses stretching along the street, there are eleven houses where the occupants are related as brothers, sisters, cousins or children. The interviewees recall the words of a local priest, who once said in surprise, "There is a whole line of relatives here." But to my surprise, the conversation about their kinship relations finishes at this point. Instead, the interviewees continue by discussing what it means to live close to each other. It appears they celebrate a number of various events in their informal community. One example they gave of their communal relationship is the sharing of food – not daily, but special dishes, such as a freshly baked pie. They see sharing food as a very common act of friendly exchange and, at the same time, as a metaphor symbolizing their relationship. Even the words of one of the women, seemingly said in jest, that "nobody brings *me* any food," and the reply from the other, "but *you* have a cow," is a part of this sharing of communality, which concerns the core, but not the surface of living together. Another example of togetherness they gave is collective singing. They sing in a church choir and at funerals, and travel with the

choir to a number of other parishes and places. They also sing for themselves. One woman explained, "a sister was going to the hospital, we all – not just the relatives – came together and sang."

However, when I asked about how they consider their kinship relatedness, my three interviewees explained this in slightly different ways. The first woman said "we all are kin-like, we come together and sing; even those who are not kin are like kin, we women like that." The second woman corrects her words: "but we are kin." Whereas the man presented a completely different view: "We men, I don't know, [we are] friends and that's all." To my question about what unites them, they all said, "It's human nature; we know each other; we are together all the time. There is a lot to talk about." Evidently, life in close proximity and daily relations establish a kind of intimacy different from that emerging through the classificatory bias of kinship. This intimacy of living close to each other is filled with stories and histories, mutually experienced events, emotions, and sociality they call "human nature." It might seem unquestionable that, in their case, kin and neighborhood relations overlap, and mutually enhancing practices might be cut, according to the interviewees, only by leaving the place. However, the interviewees do not emphasize and even ignore their kin relatedness as the main factor. On the contrary, they call their connections "kin-like," or even those of "friends," and diminish that great mystery of "blood relations" by the sense of living in close proximity. These interchanging relations of kinship and neighborhood establish a situation of social fluidity that is open to accepting others, strangers and the other, as "kin-like" or "friends." It is an ambivalent and creative situation that, however, poses the question of whether there is any structure that provides stability and autonomy for a person and organizes social life in that process of moving. The woman's words at the very beginning of our conversation – "we live in families" – testify that the family is this structure.

People in Lithuania, when comparing family, kinship, and neighborhood, emphasize that all three arrangements

are different. They say that family (*šeima*) unites husband and wife (who are nonkin), and children (their kin) and is based on coresidence, physical proximity, intimacy of domestic space, daily commitments, and the sharing of duties, rights, and responsibilities that extend over daily routine. Kinship, or as Lithuanians more often say, kinfolk (*giminės*), is a different arrangement than the family and is modeled on the natural or biological fact of blood relations. People do not consider the mother's and father's kin as one group of kinsmen of an *ego*. They separate them and say *tėvo giminės*, the father's kin and *motinos giminės*, the mother's kin, but treat them equally without any preferences. It is a bilateral model of a kinship system. They also distinguish between consanguinity and affinity, and say that in-laws are "not true kin" or even "half kin," although they are "our own" or "our" people (*savi*).[16] Distance plays a role in making kin relations occasional and festive without any sense of duty and obligation. As one interviewee said: "One meets one's kin and just talks with him or her, but all problems are solved within the family." People quite often compare neighborly relations to kinship ties as their alternative. The value and morality of neighborly relations, they say, is grounded on living close to each other, the sharing of communal space, and helping each other when there is a need. The phrase "a good neighbor sometimes is better than kin, because kin is far away and a neighbor is near" repeated by the majority of people across Lithuania, is actually a normative stereotype. It encompasses the meaning of both close proximity and moral concern, and is like an informal rule that underlies neighborhood ties.

A House Society

When comparing family, kinship, and neighborhood, people emphasize the family. But they also say that each family has a house, and everyone is concerned only with what is going in their own house, even though the houses are very close to one another. Family, in their thinking, is materialized in the

[16] Čepaitienė, "Imagining."

physical structure of a house, with boundaries that are as evident as the walls of the house, social identities that are visible, and subjectivities that hold people together. The house here is a universe that brings legitimacy to the social being of a person with his/her place, history and memory, people and kinship, the wholeness and complexity of relations outside and inside the house, and anchors and reproduces the social being in space and time.[17] The house, which is created by a family and is inseparable from a family, is as indivisible and divisible as the family is. It unites the people inside, both kin and nonkin, accommodates filiation and residence, patrilineal and matrilineal descent, property rights and inheritance, and grounds outside relationships. The structural significance of a house is recognized by Claude Lévi-Strauss in his concept of "house" (*maison*) and "house society" (*société à maisons*).[18] He showed that a house is an "institutional creation that permits compounding forces which, everywhere else, seem only destined to mutual exclusion because of their contradictory bends," and that various known types of society are reunited in a house. The attention here shifts from bounded groups to the optative aspect of group membership.[19]

In Lithuania, a "house" as an institution is a building, but not only a building. It is a homestead (*sodyba*), the place and space of a family, where it lives, works, celebrates, and reproduces itself when the births, marriages, deaths or departures change the family members, but do not challenge the family as a whole. It is the home of the family. In the material sense, the homestead consists of a residential house and nonresidential buildings scattered about the landscape that serve particular functions of the household. It includes also the natural environment and the spaces between buildings, which may include trees, bushes, a flower garden, an apple orchard, a well, fences, and the roads of the holding that belongs to a family and an owner of the homestead. In the Kupiškis district, the

[17] Carsten and Hugh-Jones, "Introduction."
[18] Lévi-Strauss, *The Way*, 163–187.
[19] Ibid., 184.

homestead is called *kiemas*: literally, "a yard," and is synonymous with *sodyba*. *Kiemas* (or *valstiečių kiemas*, "a farmer's yard") is both a historical notion and a formal word for a structure that contains, not only the household's social, economic, and symbolic meanings and functions, but also administrative, legal, and political ones. It is said that a number of *kiemai* compose a village (*kaimas*), whose collectivity is based on neighborhood relations (*kaimynystė*). The linguistic categories of *kiemas*, *kaimas* and *kaimynystė* in the Lithuanian language are interrelated in an etymological sense as well.[20] In a variety of respects, they are informative in understanding social organization in Lithuania.

To emphasize with Lévi-Strauss, it is not the individuals or the families that act; it is the houses, which are the subjects of rights and duties.[21] But the house – at once a physical place and a social unit – is in dynamic formation and cannot be defined in itself, but only in relation to the others. Houses are most visible in their interaction with other houses.[22] To discuss a "house" is to discuss the organizing principles of society. In the case of Lithuania, one just needs to make a cultural shift from a "house" to a "homestead."

Concluding remarks

Edward T. Hall said that virtually everything man is and does is associated with space. His concept of proxemics emphasizes the cultural aspects of spatial experience and underlines the role and meaning of proxemics in social organization and in representing cultural differences.[23] The ethnographic examples discussed above show that space and distance is an influential factor of social organization in a structural and interstructural sense. Spatial closeness, mutuality, and the sharing of spaces and matters establish a communicative process that contains the aspect of social creativity that changes, reinterprets, and transfers relations between individuals, social groups, and structures.

---

[20] Gudavičius, "Baltų alodo."
[21] Cited in Carsten and Hugh-Jones, "Introduction."
[22] Gillespie, "Lévi-Strauss," 29.
[23] Hall, "Proxemics."

But closeness and distance are not states of their own; nor do they contain any cultural meaning in themselves. They are states and ideas that emerge only in a relational view. Closeness and distance are always identifiable between a subject and an object (or objects) in their interactions. Communication is an inseparable part of proxemics, the study of the communicative process.[24] Closeness and distance are also about localization and place. A place materializes and encompasses closeness, and loads physical proximity with social and cultural meanings. The discussion above has shown that a "house," or, in the Lithuanian case, a "homestead," is a place like an institution that encompasses and localizes that proximity of the social. It is significant in thinking about family, kinship, and neighborhood, and the constitution of group, community, and society in Lithuania.

WORKS CITED

Asch, Michael. "Lévi-Strauss and the Political: *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* and the Resolution of Relations between Indigenous People and Settler States," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 11 (3), 2005.

Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis, Minn: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Bestard-Camps, Joan. *What's in a Relative? Household and Family in Formentera*. New York/Oxford: Berg, 1991.

Carsten, Janet, and Stephen Hugh-Jones. "Introduction: About the House: Lévi-Strauss and Beyond." In *About the House: Lévi-Strauss and Beyond*. Edited by Janet Carsten and Stephen Hugh-Jones. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Čepaitienė, Auksuolė. "Imagining Assisted Reproductive Technologies: Family, Kinship and 'Local Thinking' in Lithuania." In *European Kinship in the Age of Biotechnology*. Edited by Jeanette Edwards and Carles Salazar. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2009.

[24] Ibid.

Fortes, Meyer. *Kinship and the Social Order. The Legacy of Lewis Henry Morgan*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969.

Godelier, Maurice. "Community, Society, Culture: Three Keys to Understanding Today's Conflicted Identities," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 16 (1), 2010.

Gudavičius, Edvardas. "Baltų alodo raida," *Lietuvos TSR Mokslų Akademijos darbai. A serija*, 4 (69), 1979.

Hall, Edward T. "Proxemics," *Current Anthropology*, 9 (2-3), 1968.

Kalnius, Petras. "Miesto šeimos etnodemografiniai bruožai ir vidaus organizacija XIX-XX a.," In *Lietuvių šeima ir papročiai*, Angelė Vyšniauskaitė, et al. Vilnius: Mintis, 1995.

Kviklys, Bronius. *Mūsų Lietuva: krašto vietovių istoriniai, geografiniai, etnografiniai bruožai*. Vilnius: Mintis, 2-oji fotografuotinė laida, 1991.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *The Way of the Masks*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988.

Löfgren, Orvar. "Family and Household among Scandinavian Peasants: An Exploratory Essay," *Ethnologia Scandinavica*, 1974.

Madden, Raymond. *Being Ethnographic: A Guide to the Theory and Practise of Ethnography*. Los Angeles, London: Sage, 2010.

Reay, Barry. "Kinship and the Neighborhood in Nineteenth-Century Rural England: The Myth of the Autonomous Nuclear Family," *Journal of Family History*, 21 (1), 1996.

Strathern, Marilyn. *After Nature: English Kinship in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Tőnnies, Ferdinand. *Community and Civil Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Vyšniauskaitė, Angelė. "Lietuvių valstiečių šeima." In *Lietuvių etnografijos bruožai*. Edited by Angelė Vyšniauskaitė. Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1964.

———. "Kaimo šeima." In *Lietuvių šeima ir papročiai*. Edited by Angelė Vyšniauskaitė, et al. Vilnius: Mintis, 1995.

Wirth, Louis. "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *The American Journal of Sociology*, 44 (1), 1938.

Witort, Jan. *Zarysy prawa zwyczajowego ludu litewskiego*. Lwów: Nakladem Towarzystwa Ludoznawczego, 1898.

Living in the Borderland: The Case of Polish-Lithuanians

DARIUS DAUKŠAS

Since the ninth decade of the twentieth century, those engaged in the humanities and social sciences have held the notion of nation as an imagined community.[1] A number of scholarly works have been written regarding how that image of community is constructed (e.g., through language, traditions, the press, and other methods), although there is another equally important aspect in discussing an imagined community in today's world: affiliation to a state and nation through citizenship. Citizenship is the main legal bond between citizens and the state, indicating membership in a political community. At the same time, citizenship also creates a feeling of membership in a common group. Belonging to a state on the basis of citizenship is often done using a notion of nationality that contrasts with the understanding of ethnicity, which points to an imagined community based on the categories of nature and birth origins.

The purpose of this article is to explore the meaning of national/citizen identity in present-day Lithuania and to explain national identity in relation to ethnic identity. The case of Polish-Lithuanians living in the Šalčininkai area is offered, with the prior hypothesis that the age of an informant is relevant to defining one's membership in a state. The choice of Šalčininkai for the study is not accidental, since it reflects the complicated

[1] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

DARIUS DAUKŠAS is a scholar at the Lithuanian Institute of History. His basic areas of interest are borderlands and international migration. He has conducted fieldwork in Lithuania, Poland, Norway, and the United Kingdom.

meaning of ethnic/national identity in a borderland. During field studies, using a semi-structured interview method, it was intended to clarify how the inhabitants of Šalčininkai understand their ethnic and national identity. Results collected during several field studies in 2005, 2009, and 2012 are used in this report.[2]

According to the 2001 census, 79.9 percent of those living in the Šalčininkai area describe themselves as Poles, making it a dense Polish-Lithuanian area.[3] The historical context in this region (we are referring to the town of Šalčininkai) plays an important role. During the first years of Lithuanian independence, debates transpired regarding the various levels of declared Polish autonomy, and the Šalčininkai area was one of the most active participants in this cause.[4] The presumption is that, even after a relatively short period (about twenty years), historical events can have an effect on the construction of Polish-Lithuanian identity and their identification with the state (states). The Poles living in Šalčininkai and in the Vilnius area could be described as unusual and perhaps not representative of greater Lithuania's Poles, especially those living in Middle Lithuania.[5] Polish-Lithuanians living in Vilnius area are often described in Lithuanian historiographic literature using the *paribis* (borderland) concept.[6] However, it is not the intention here to demonstrate or prove the differences or similarities of

---

2 The first field study, completed in 2005, was part of the project "Normative and folk understanding of kinship and ethnicity" (financed by Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation). Another field study was completed during September and October 2009 in Šalčininkai. The last field study was completed in 2012 as part of the project "The Impact of Globalization and Transnationalism on the Fragmentation of State and National Identity"(the project was financed by the Research Council of Lithuania).

3 See *Lietuvos apskritys*, 63.

4 See Budrytė, *Taming Nationalism*: Popovski, *National Minorities*.

5 For example, the Polish Lithuanians living in the Kėdainiai and Panevėžys areas are seen as fully integrated into Lithuania's political and social life.

6 Kasatkina and Leoncikas, *Lietuvos*.

Polish-Lithuanians, but to examine the essential self-understanding of the Polish-Lithuanians as reported by the informants in Šalčininkai.

Ethnic and National Identity in a Borderland

In today's world, a state is generally described as national, i.e., a nation-state.[7] In this conjunction of concepts, a nation, according to Benedict Anderson, defines an imaginary community bound by nationalism as a homogenizing force.[8] National identities in this paper are understood as a national ideology seeking to connect all the individuals living in the nation's territory as an "imagined community." The essence of nationalism can be explained in a few sentences. Nationalism is an ideology whose essence is: the sovereign state must be connected with the nation within its boundaries, that is, with people who differ from other nations. Nationalism, as one of a nation-state's ideologies, underscores that political boundaries must coincide with national boundaries.[9] Obviously, the question of boundaries has great significance for the ideology of nationalism, stressing the importance of a clearly defined state territory, without which nationalism would be impossible.[10] In other words, "The idea of 'the state' legitimates the fact of rule, nationalism legitimates who controls the state, for whom, and to what general ends."[11]

The described concurrence of a nation and a state's boundaries should be understood as an ideal model. In most states, there exist groups of people who are considered culturally different. The concept of ethnicity is often used in describing these people. Ethnic theories in anthropology describe "social relationships between agents who consider themselves as culturally distinctive from members of other groups."[12] Using

7 Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*.
8 Anderson, *Imagined Communities;* Williams, *A Class Act*.
9 Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 108.
10 Ferguson, "Introduction."
11 Ibid., 14.
12 Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 12.

this definition, it would be difficult to discuss the differences between ethnicity and nationality, because both underscore collective commonality and at the same time define the boundary of the "other." Current scholarly literature stresses that the main difference between ethnicity and nationality lies in the latter's relationship to the state.[13] As mentioned earlier, nationalistic ideology seeks to integrate the political and cultural boundaries of a nation, while ethnicity is most often not seen as seeking influence in the state. On the other hand, ethnicity can be ideologized and become nationalism in the political mobilization process.[14] In the event that ethnicity is presented as ideology, it is often referred to as ethnonationalism as opposed to civic nationalism.[15] The latter stresses "civil rights rather than shared cultural roots."[16] Ethnonationalism is based on the ideal of a monoethnic nation, on which account, one would think, arise the basic present-day conflicts in a state defining the relationship between the dominant national group and national minorities.

In discussing national minorities, the anthropologist Gerd Bauman stresses that current nation-states can be understood in two ways. First, they represent themselves as postethnic, because, through the notion of citizenship, they attempt to show that the earlier ethnic divisions are a thing of the past and the idea of a nation should unite the imagined people's community on the basis of citizenship.[17] However, although it may seem strange, nation-states are also super ethnonations and may be considered a large ethnic group.[18] This scholar holds that most of the nation-states were unsuccessful in creating a nation based totally on citizenship and that ethnic divisions are still an important factor in discussing why one group assumes a dominant position and leaves no room for others in a nation-state

---

13 Banks, *Ethnicity*.
14 Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 107.
15 See Giordano, "Affiliation"; Čiubrinskas, "Forging."
16 Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 119.
17 Bauman, *The Multicultural Riddle*, 31.
18 Ibid.

project. Those groups that are marginalized or do not enter the dominant nation because of their ethnic differences are forced to become minorities.[19]

The aspect of a dominant majority or minority is perhaps best seen in a country's borderlands, especially if the country's borders have changed relatively recently (as, for instance, in the Vilnius region, which had been a part of Poland until 1939).

The so-called anthropology of borders, which chose the borderlands territories and the processes acting on them as the subject of its studies, became established in political anthropology relatively recently. Two noted anthropologists in this field, Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, characterize it as the interaction between a state and a nation, and demonstrate how this interaction is reflected in people's daily lives.[20] According to the description offered, a state's borders are comprised of three elements: The state borderline that separates two countries; the state's physical structures that mark and guard the country's boundary; and the frontier territories, which can be of varying extent and not necessarily directly connected to the state's borderline. These are the zones where the inhabitants question their place within the nation and the state.[21]

From this description, it becomes evident that borders are much more than lines separating two states; they are a cultural range, a borderland without clear boundaries. It is important to keep in mind not only a concrete functioning border, which separates two or more nation-states, but also that border "in the past, present and future."[22] In this sense, the borderland is understood not just as an institutionalized space in the present, but also as a cultural range, a zone of cultural overlap. Historically, cultural overlap zones arise most often in borderlands, in which questions of national identity and people's loyalty to a state are less than clear.[23] In discussing the identity of people

---

19 Ibid.

20 Donnan and Wilson, *Borders*, 63.

21 Wilson and Donnan, "Nation," 9; Donnan and Wilson, *Borders*, 15-16.

22 Wilson and Donnan, "Nation," 7.

23 Kaplan, "Territorial Identities," 37.

living in borderlands, the researchers think it is most useful to analyze them through the prism of ethnicity and nationality, while at the same time understanding that "these identities cannot be studied in a political vacuum, however, no matter how hard some anthropologists try to portray them as local isolates."[24]

A nation-state could not exist without a territory or without a national idea connecting the state and the territory. In an ideal situation, the three criteria should coincide.[25] However, there are many situations where the three criteria do not build on each other. More precisely, the state, as a product of the territory, functions within clearly defined borders, but the nation's borders do not always coincide with the physical borders of the state. This is especially true of nations formed after the fall of earlier multiethnic empires, where the borders of the newly formed states were drawn without regard to the identity of the population. For this reason, the identity of the people living in the borderlands is often described as multidimensional and unstable, dependent on the state's political program, because the people are not bound to the state by blood or cultural ties.[26]

According to H. Donnan, it is precisely within these border regions that ethnic and national interpersonal tensions are felt most acutely. In his words, "state nationalism and citizenship, draw border people inward, away from the border, toward the centers of culture and power within the state, similar ties of ethnic and national affinity simultaneously pull them in the opposite direction, across the border."[27]

Šalčininkai: Between Lithuania and Poland?

Before discussing the identity issues of Polish-Lithuanians living in the Šalčininkai area, it is necessary to give a short description of some of the specifics of this region.

---

[24] Donnan and Wilson, *Borders*, 63.
[25] Wilson and Donnan, "Nation."
[26] Ibid., 12–13.
[27] Donnan, "Material Identities," 70.

In beginning a discussion about Polish-Lithuanians, one must keep in mind the regional differences that manifest themselves quite clearly, both in language and identity.

The Vilnius region (which also includes the Šalčininkai area) belonged to Poland throughout almost the entire period between the wars (1920–1939). For a short time in 1939, the region belonged to Lithuania, and later, together with the occupied Republic of Lithuania, the region was incorporated into the Soviet Union. When Lithuania regained its independence in 1990, the region became part of the Republic of Lithuania.

During the period of Lithuania's reestablishment, one of the clearest and most pressing issues was the problem of autonomy for Polish-Lithuanians.[28] Some of the questions related to them have still not been addressed, as witnessed by the public discourse on such issues as the posting of street names in Polish, the spelling of Polish names in Lithuanian passports, and the issuance of a Polish identity card. The media often characterize the Polish card as fostering lack of loyalty to the Lithuanian state.

Quite often, the Šalčininkai region is described as "distanced" from Lithuania proper, both economically and culturally. It is noteworthy that the press clearly contributes to the formation of this discourse, because Šalčininkai and its region are portrayed as an example of "distancing" from the rest of Lithuania. People interviewed during the research period also stress this sense of distance. Comments of this type seem to be part of daily discourse and are used to explain their supposedly harder economic situation, for example, their claim that more money is allotted to "there, in Lithuania," while "here, in Šalčininkai," even the budget office employees are allegedly paid lower salaries. People explain that because of this apparent discrimination, they are unable to integrate successfully into Lithuania's cultural and economic life, and the main reason is the lack of proficiency in the national language. The demographic makeup of this region is also important. According to statistical

[28] See Popovski, *National Minorities*; Budryte, *Taming Nationalism*.

data, 39,282 persons live in the Šalčininkai region and, of those, 31,223 consider themselves Poles.[29] During the field studies, however, it was noted that one often heard Russian spoken on the streets, instead of Polish or Lithuanian. The use of Russian could be partially explained by the Soviet policy of forced assimilation, when many Russian-speakers from all over the Soviet Union were moved into this region and the surrounding areas, and because of the aggressive Soviet educational policy of establishing Russian schools. Another influence in the spread of Russification was the fact that, after World War II, around 170,000 people were repatriated to Poland.[30]

It appears that this cultural "distancing" is not as acute for the younger generation; this is reflected by the numbers attending Lithuanian universities and trying to establish themselves in the Lithuanian work force (this was often mentioned in the interviews). The younger generation also doesn't face a language problem, owing to the favorable Lithuanian educational policy, because Lithuanian language classes are required even in Polish-language schools.

Ethnic Identity: its Roots and Place

Before we begin to discuss the national/civic identity of the Polish-Lithuanians living in Šalčininkai, it is essential to examine just how important ethnicity is to them, since the mere concept of a Polish-Lithuanian already ascribes a certain "otherness" from Lithuanians.

As mentioned earlier, the concept of ethnicity points to a certain commonality. Certain cultural elements, such as language, dress, and food, delineate the differences between "us" and the "other." From the results of our field studies, one could conclude that family descent, and not cultural factors, is understood as the strongest element indicating who is Polish. It is also significant that age is not a determining factor; both the older and the younger generations used family descent as

[29] *Lietuvos apskritys*, 63.
[30] See Kalanius, *Etniniai*.

a basis for their interpretation. The following interview with a man, age 31, indicates why he considers himself a Pole:

> *"Why do you call yourself a Pole?"*
>
> Well... that depends on the roots. Let's say, well ... at the time of our great-grandparents. They were all Polish, well, let's say Polish-Lithuanians, and my parents are Polish, and I am Polish, and we have a lot of relatives in Poland proper. And let's say, earlier, in Vilnius and the region. Well, one can't say that it was all Polish, but the majority were Polish. So I am from this area, was born here; so that is why I can say that I am Polish. (Male, 31)

In this interview excerpt, besides family origin (the parents and grandparents were Polish), there is another important element: the territory; or, more precisely, in that territory, Poles compose or have composed the majority of inhabitants, and that in itself acts as a certain guarantee in determining who is Polish. Many of the other informants also use the territory in which they live, as well as family origins, as grounds for defining their ethnic identity. An excerpt from another interview more clearly indicates the relationship between family origin and territory by a description of a cemetery and ancestors buried there:

> You know, I don't know history, I just think our history begins with the cemetery. Our ancestors lie there, when I go to our cemetery – I don't know, they say this was Russia, or that we were Lithuanian and then we were Polonized – but I can only say, that, for instance, all the surnames are Polish: my great-grandmother's surname is Polish; all our surnames in the cemetery are written in Polish. We don't have a single surname, I have in mind old gravestones, which means that my ancestors considered themselves Polish; and that's in my blood, and I also consider myself Polish. (Female, 50)

It is of interest that cultural factors, such as language, are not mentioned as strong determinants of being Polish. On the contrary, during our field studies, we met many people who consider themselves Poles, but do not speak the language, or for whom Polish was not the only language in which they interacted at home or in public places. Often people stressed that,

in Šalčininkai, people communicate in three languages. In the following interview, a young woman who considers herself Polish and uses Polish language at work, describes her use of language in the following way:

And how do you communicate with your parents, which language do you use in general?

Polish, Russian and Lithuanian quite often. Well, let's say the three languages simultaneously.

But most often?

Most often Russian: at home, in the shops in town; for instance, with friends it happens that we also use Lithuanian, if the Lithuanians don't understand Polish.

But Russian most often in town?

Well, yes, most often.

And you use Russian within your family?

Yes.

Sometimes, or...?

Russian most often.

Why?

Well, you see my mother is Polish, but she graduated from a Russian school; well, it's all the same to her. I, for instance, attended a Russian kindergarten; for some reason, they sent me there. Well, with my brother we speak Lithuanian, but that is rare. (Female, 24)

As mentioned earlier, the Polish-Lithuanians suffered rather greatly from Soviet assimilation policies, which is why Russian is frequently heard on the streets of Šalčininkai, while Polish is apparently used rarely in public.

There are many Poles here, but it does not feel that there are any Poles because everyone speaks Russian. If you were to go to Eišiškes, they speak Polish, but here it is difficult to hear Polish spoken; it is very complicated.

And your daily language here, in town?

Russian.

And within your family?

Yes. (Male, 27)

With the reestablishment of the Republic of Lithuania, the Lithuanian language also began to be used, which was not the case during the Soviet period. For this reason, many older people still struggle with speaking it. Lithuanian, however, is notably growing in popularity, especially among the younger generation. In the next interview, a woman who had completed Lithuanian schools confirms that, with friends who had also finished Lithuanian schools, they speak Lithuanian among themselves:

And your friend's nationalities, if you were to name them?

Polish, Russian, Lithuanian.

Mostly which one?

Probably Polish.

And you among yourselves in Lithuanian...

Lithuanian.

And why do you use Lithuanian?

Simply because we practically all attended Lithuanian schools, and those from Polish schools go along with the majority. (Female, 18)

The same woman reasoned that speaking Lithuanian was based on the fact that she lives in Lithuania, where the Polish language isn't necessary:

Well, if you live in Lithuania, then why the Polish language? If I lived in Poland, and I were Polish, then obviously I would know Polish; I would have to know it. But I live in Lithuania, and I know the Lithuanian language, and Polish is not very necessary in Lithuania. (Female, 18)

On the other hand, according to several younger informants, they are more inclined to speak Russian with their friends and other people, and not Lithuanian or Polish:

And why don't you converse in Polish?

Because we live in Lithuania; simply, it's that country.

But you converse in Russian?

It's that sort of country. Everyone understands Russian. For example, we study in Lithuanian, they in Polish, but we speak

Russian because everyone understands that language. In every country almost everyone understands it.

When you go into a store, if you don't know the salesperson, which language do you use?

If they speak to me in Lithuanian, then I answer in Lithuanian.

What if you want to ask a question?

If I am in Šalčininkai, then I ask in Russian; but if in Vilnius, then in Lithuanian. (Female, 18)

The younger generation that was born and grew up in free Lithuania, like the older generation who graduated from Russian schools, stress that it is easier for them to communicate in Russian than either in Lithuanian or Polish:

And in Russian with whom?

I have a few friends.

Are those friends Russian or Polish?

Polish.

So why do you speak Russian with them?

Maybe it's easier to communicate. (Female, 18)

Sometimes this sort of language mixture is explained using the concept of being trilingual:

You know, both Polish and Russian are very – it becomes trilingualism. I would say it's both a plus and a minus. On the one hand, you speak Russian, Polish and Lithuanian – forced almost, but from the point of view of grammar, it's very much in one or another language. And when you begin to write documents – we have many partners from Poland – you get confused, then you're not sure what the word is. (Female, 46)

These examples allow one to conclude that, in the local context, for the Polish-Lithuanians, the primary basis for ethnic identity is family origin (being Polish is passed from generation to generation), and language is not ascribed as much ethnic importance.

The Polish-Lithuanians' Construed Relationship with Lithuania and Poland

The aforementioned fluctuation in the borders (Šalčininkai belonged to Poland, to Lithuania, and later to the Soviet Union) is undoubtedly also reflected in public memory. Depending upon the age of the informants, various explanations are given for these border changes. The older generation, which directly or indirectly remembers when the area belonged to Poland, are more inclined to stress the influence of Poland on their identity. The following is typical of responses from the older generation:

> ...I was born when this was Poland, which means my nationality too [Polish] (Male, 76).

This excerpt from an interview illustrates that the older generation, depending on when a person was born, has remained strongly connected with the historic state in which one was born, and the current state in which one resides is considered foreign:

> ...the Lithuanians have their nation here, because they have their own territory, borders, money and other [things]. While we Poles living here – we don't have a nation, because our nation is Poland. We don't have our own money, nothing. We just live here on foreign soil [Lithuania's] – although historically, it's still not at all clear. This land always belonged to the Vilnius region [to Poland]; I consider it occupied. There were Russians once upon a time, after that Lithuanians, Russians again, and Poles again, and Lithuanians once again. (Male, 70)

These two excerpts confirm our chosen perspective on the borderland theory, according to which the state's changing borders create ranges of cultural transmutation, in which the people's construed self-identity is measured by its relationship with the state or with past or present states. As was mentioned in the introduction, life in the borderlands determines multifaceted relationships with a state or states. Historical memory is one of the basic elements influencing one's relationship to the state of residence at that moment. However, if the territory had formerly belonged to another state, it leaves an influential

mark on one's relationship with the current state and probably with states this territory had formerly belonged to as well.

On the other hand, the younger generation (born during the Soviet era or later) does not emphasize life in the borderland, or more precisely, their identity with the state or states is limited to the Soviet Union and Lithuania – not Poland:

> I enjoy living in Lithuania. When I was born, there was no Poland here. I was born in 'forty-four: I lived in Russia, now I live in Lithuania. (Female, 61)

In this interview, Russia means the Soviet Union. And this illustrates that, while living in the Soviet Union, Lithuania was not seen as a separate state; it was only after the reestablishment of independence that people began to understand they live in Lithuania.

Those of the youngest generation, having spent most of their lives in independent Lithuania, tend not to emphasize the Soviet past. They simply state that Lithuania is their country, unless they want to emphasize some region (such as the Vilnius region or Šalčininkai) as their birthplace:

> One could call this my little birthplace [the Vilnius area], but my large birthplace then is the state of Lithuania, because I was born in its territories and I grew up here; all my relatives are here. (Female, 26)

Moreover, from these interviews it was apparent that even though the informants consider Lithuania their country, they also note the imagined differences between "there" – that is, in Lithuania, and their own region (in speech people often use the concept of region, describing their differences from "there," meaning Lithuania proper). The same woman also added she feels the rest of the Lithuanians have a somewhat negative perspective regarding the Poles living in the Vilnius region:

> maybe from say, Mažeikiai, there they consider us, they're Poles there – we're total dullards here, we don't even know how to speak Lithuanian. (Female, 26)

Two Native Countries?

As mentioned earlier, to the older generation, being born in the Poland of that time remains a strong basis for self-identity. In the meantime, the younger generation, especially those who were born and grew up in free Lithuania, consider their relationship with the Polish state in more multilayered ways. The strategy of the official Polish-Lithuanian political party,[31] which has a large majority in the area's local government, of fostering relationships with Poland, adds to this multilayered picture's construction. An informant with a high position in Šalčininkai's town government, who was elected from the party's list, mentioned looking for various means to enable the children from Polish schools to visit Poland:

> [...] common history: Poland's, Lithuania's – we were a common state for many years. So as the native land of their ancestors, it's imperative that they become familiar with both the present and the past. (Male, 48)

The same informant later added that children should maintain relations with Poland because it is one of their native lands:

> No, our fatherland is Lithuania, it was and is, but there was a common state. We say this in Polish: that Poland is our *macierz* – how would it be in Lithuanian? Lithuania is *ojczyzna*, fatherland. Everyone of us has a *tevynė* [Lithuanian, fatherland], the one and the other. Of course, that here we are citizens of Lithuania, no one is debating that point. (Male, 48)

The concept of *macierz* (motherland) is often used by Polish-Lithuanians to indicate their relationship with Poland as the ultimate country of origin; they use the concept of *ojczyzna* (fatherland) to indicate their relationship with Lithuania:

> [...] we often say about Poland that it is our *macierz*. We call it that in Polish, that it is our, well, anyway our second native country. We have two native countries, but I think everyone loves Lithuania the most. Here are our roots; our parents live

[31] Known as "Lietuvos lenkų rinkimų akcija (The Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania)."

here; our ancestors lived here. The surroundings are more familiar. (Female, 41)

Poland is understood as a native country historically. Although there is discussion about two native countries, stronger emotions are more often associated with Lithuania, arising from living in a common territory and familiarity with the surroundings. In underscoring their relationship to Lithuania, Polish-Lithuanians quite often use the concept of patriotism:

> Culturally, we are Polish; we consider ourselves Poles; maybe in another life we weren't Poles, but if a person considers himself – he wants to talk in Polish, he wants to sing in Polish – then why shouldn't he be allowed to? There is nothing wrong with that. The more people live here with us in Lithuania, the better. For instance, basketball, the comments about why Real [the Madrid basketball team] did not want to release Darius Lavrinovičius, but he decided himself. And Ilgauskas, as they say, it was the same situation, it was decided, but he had to make the decision himself, and he didn't make it. We may be greater Lithuanian patriots than you, brother Lithuanians. Take emigration, for example, there aren't as many of us Poles who have left the country to earn money abroad – not as many in terms of percentage. Why? Because our parents, our grandparents remain in this land, remain in this land, their land. I say there's nothing wrong, if there's a place in Lithuania where Polish will be spoken. (Male, 53)

Even though differences from the dominant culture are stressed, that does not prevent one from considering oneself a Lithuanian patriot, at the same time understanding oneself as of "that land," the land of one's parents and grandparents, culturally different from the rest of Lithuania. It is important to note that Polish-Lithuanians feel they are culturally different from Poland's Poles. Often people who visit relatives in Poland are referred to by the Poles as Lithuanians and even, sometimes, as Russians:

> I, for instance, often visit Poland, my grandmother and grandfather are buried there. And when I travel to Poland, I feel I am a Pole because I speak Polish; but in spite of that, my relatives say: "Mariusa came here from Lithuania; she's Lithuanian."

> They consider us, since we are from Lithuania , Lithuanians. (Female, 50)

The youngest generation, which has grown up in independent Lithuania, tends to call Poland a neighboring country:

> Oh Poland, Poland – that's my neighboring country. [...] I wouldn't say I have any special sentiments for Poland. Lithuania is my native country, and I try harder here, I work, and let's say, Poland's over there; present-day Poland, it doesn't interest me very much, let's say. We have friends there and acquaintances; we travel there quite often; we give concerts there, so we often travel to Poland. I like to sing in Polish and to read books in Polish – all the classics. But that it would be like my second native country? Well, I wouldn't say that. (Female, 31)

Nevertheless, a pragmatic relationship can be discerned working among those of the youngest Polish-Lithuanian generation. Many of the eighteen-year-olds interviewed did not reject the possibility of studying in Poland because there are very favorable conditions there, such as scholarships, being provided by various Polish organizations. However, these favorable conditions notwithstanding, the youngest generation considers Poland a foreign country:

> I was born here, and Poland does not mean anything; it's just a foreign country. It's not all that different from Lithuania. (Female, 18)

The study shows that, for the younger generation, being born in Lithuania constitutes the basic factor that determines one's relationship with the Lithuanian state; even though, at the same time, one identifies oneself ethnically as a Pole. On the other hand, the study shows that people who were born when the territory belonged to Poland tend to identify with the historic Polish state.

Conclusions

The analysis of the results from our field studies reveal a complex and multilayered relationship between Polish-Lithuanians from the Šalčininkai area and the Lithuanian state. On the one hand, Polish-Lithuanians tend to identify with the state

where they reside, that is, Lithuania, on the basis of citizenship, even though their historic native land, Poland, remains a strong identity factor. The historic native country, *macierz*, does not conflict with their concept of Lithuania as *ojczysna* (both terms refer to a native land). On the other hand, genealogy and family origin, more than language, are the primary criteria used by Polish-Lithuanians to determine identification with the state, outweighing even citizenship. One of the most important criteria for determining their relationship, with either Lithuania or Poland, is the informants' age. The older informants tend to identify to a lesser degree with the state of Lithuania and to see themselves as more loyal to Poland, while the younger informants tend to portray Poland as a foreign country and to identify themselves as Lithuanian citizens, at the same time stressing that they consider themselves Poles ethnically. In this case, the ethnic and national/civic identity do not interfere with each other; they are clearly separate.

Translated by Birutė Penkiūnas-Tautvydas

WORKS CITED

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983.

Banks, Marcus. *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions*. London, New York: Routledge, 1996.

Baumann, Gerd. *The Multicultural Riddle: Rethinking National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities*. New York, London: Routledge, 1999.

Budrytė, Dovilė. *Taming Nationalism? Political Community Building in the Post-Soviet Baltic States*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005.

Čiubrinskas, Vytis. "Forging (Ethno)Nationalist Sentiment through Time and Space: Revivalist and Diasporic Ways of Accommodating Multiculturalism in East Europe and the USA," in *From Palermo to Penang – a Journey into Political Anthropology: Festschrift for Christian Giordano*. Edited by F. Ruegg and A. Boscoboinik. Berlin, London: LIT Verlag, 2010.

Donnan, Hastings, and Thomas M. Wilson. *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State*. New York: Berg, 1999.

Donnan, Hastings. "Material Identities: Fixing Ethnicity in the Irish Borderlands," *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 12: 69-105, 2005.

Eriksen, Thomas H. *Ethnicity and Nationalism*. London: Pluto Press, 2002.

Ferguson, Brian. "Introduction: Violent Conflict and Control of the State." In *The State, Identity and Violence*. Edited by Brian Ferguson. London: Routledge, 2003.

Giordano, *Christian*. "Affiliation, Exclusion and the National State: 'Ethnic Discourses' and Minorities in East Central Europe." In *Rethinking Nationalism and Ethnicity*. Edited by H.R. Wicker. Oxford: Berg, 1997.

Kalnius, Petras. *Etniniai procesai pietryčių Lietuvoje XX a. antrojoje pusėje*. Vilnius: Žara, 1998.

Kaplan, David H. "Territorial Identities and Geographical Scale." In *Nested Identities*. Edited by Guntram Henrik Herb and David Kaplan. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999.

Kasatkina, Natalija and Tadas Leoncikas. *Lietuvos etninių grupių adaptacija: kontekstas ir eiga*. Vilnius: Eugrimas, 2003.

Lietuvos apskritys: ekonominė ir socialinė raida 2001. Vilnius: Statistikos centras, 2002.

Popovski, Vesna. *National Minorities and Citizenship Rights in Lithuania, 1988-1993*. New York: Palgrave, 2000.

Williams, Brackette F. "A Class Act: Anthropology and the Race to Nation Across Ethnic Terrain," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 18: 401-444, 1989.

Wilson, Thomas M. and Hastings Donnan. "Nation, State and Identity at International Borders." In *Border Identities: Nation and State at International Frontiers*. Edited by Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Contemporary Social Art Festivals as Intertextual Manifestations of Postmodern Cultural Identity

VYTAUTAS TUMĖNAS

Traditional folk culture symbols are in the process of revival in today's Lithuanian culture. Folklore and folk art inspire forms of contemporary art practices that seek a cultural identity based on a meaningful heritage. The artists are actively exploiting, quoting, transforming, interpreting, and adapting the texts, forms, and meanings of archaic tradition in new contexts and circumstances. Folk culture from the countryside is invited to participate in the festive life of modern cities.

Though the aesthetic ideology of folklorism, as a broader notion of historicism, as "secondary" folk culture, which is in contrast to natural, genuine, old folk culture,[1] or "the conscious recognition and use of folklore as a symbol of ethnic, regional, or national identity,"[2] determines this modern way of folk life;[3] a similar strategy can be recognized in contemporary transformations of visual folk art. The intertextual nature of the creativity of creators, artists, or interpreters becomes a significant feature of this phenomenon. Explaining intertextuality, Julija Kristeva commented that every text and every reading depends

1 Bendix, *In Search for Authenticity,* 183–186.
2 Smidchens, "Baltic Music."
3 Roginsky, "Folklore, Folklorism," 41–42.

VYTAUTAS TUMĖNAS is a research fellow in the Department of Ethnology at the Lithuanian Institute of History. He is the author of *Lietuvių tradicinių rinktinių juostų ornamentas: tipologija ir semantika. Lietuvos etnologija 9* and numerous studies and articles on ethnology and the study of art in folk ornament symbolism.

on prior codes. A literary work, then, is not simply the product of a single author; any text is constructed of a mosaic of quotations and every text is the absorption and transformation of another.[4] Similarly, Roland Barthes, in *The Death of the Author*, explained that every text is a new tissue of past citations: Bits of code, formulae, rhythmic models, fragments of social languages, etc. pass into the text, for there is always language before and around the text. Gérard Genette proposed the term "transtextuality," which distinguished several subtypes of intertextuality (quotation, plagiarism, allusion) and paratextuality" (the relationship between a text and the paratext that surrounds the body of the text, such as titles, headings, prefaces, dedications, acknowledgements, footnotes, illustrations, etc.).[5]

Several scholars have carefully investigated the vitality of mythopoetical symbols of the archaic world outlook in contemporary Lithuanian literature and music,[6] although creative interpretations of the Baltic mythological tradition, linked with sacred geometry or traditional ornament, are not widespread in modern professional Lithuanian culture. A unique phenomenon of this artistic thinking, connected to or influenced by the science of mythology and cultural anthropology, is the well-known oratorio composed by Bronius Kutavičius, *Paskutinės pagonių apeigos* (The Last Pagan Rituals) with its ornamentally written score.[7] Scholarly and creative interpretations of ornamental tradition in neighboring Latvia's modern culture are described by Valdis Celms,[8] However, modern interpretations of traditional symbols in contemporary Lithuanian culture remain in short supply.

There are archaic symbols in many cultures, traces from an entirely different cognitive pattern based on a mythopoetical

---

4 Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, 66–69.

5 Genette, *Paratexts*.

6 Šiukščius, *Mitopoetika lietuvių prozoje*; Jankauskienė, "Antropologijos ir istorijos," 105–114; Apanavičienė, "Modernizmas lietuvių muzikoje," 195–212.

7 Jankauskienė, "Broniaus Kutavičiaus," 68–77.

8 Celms, *Latvju raksts*.

model, like the case of the Latin American Quechua culture, which uses poetic images integrated into mythical thinking instead of rational logic.[9] The increasingly specific scholarly investigations into archaic pattern symbolism are simultaneously changing many contemporary artists' attitudes toward folk ornament. Traditional patterns obtain a revitalized intellectual cognition and meaning linked with a mythological and mystical approach to the universe. Artists actualize traditional textile symbols in various exterior design projects and narrative comments, in the patterns of pyrotechnics, in stadium dance performances, etc. Although the symbolism of ancient ornaments is interpreted in terms of modern culture, at the same time, it can be qualified as a living tradition due to its associations with a mythological world view.

The Intertextuality of Archaic Symbols: The Complex Referential Links of the Forms and Folk Names of Ornaments

According to the Estonian semiotician Juri Lotman, every culture needs key symbols of an archaic nature derived from the era when the elementary signs had the function of accommodating broad and significant texts stored in the collective oral memory. The symbol does not belong to one particular synchronic layer of culture; it comes and goes from the past to the future. It emerges as a messenger of other eras, as a reminder of ancient and eternal cultural foundations. Implementing the cultural memory of oneself, these symbols unite culture, preventing it from falling into chronologically isolated layers. The integrity of the major symbols and the longevity of their cultural life largely determine the boundaries of national and area cultures.[10]

In my view, the patterns' archaic symbolism may be revealed and revived based on their folk names connected with mythopoetical images of narrative tradition and on a semiotic comparison of the patterns' compositional schemes, as well as on a wider contextual, intercultural analysis. Some of these

[9] Almeida and Haidar, "The mythopoetical."
[10] Лотман, *Семиосфера*, 240–241.

names refer to mythopoetical images of folklore and are widespread in the Lithuanian tradition, as well as in those of Latvia, Belorussia, Russia, etc. The names of these patterns promote wide implications for an understanding of ornament as a part of the mythological tradition that inspires modern artistic ideas. Research reveals significant features of a traditional mentality and of the existence of the associative and contextual interconnections of visual signs, their mythopoetical images, elements of the biosphere and atmosphere, and attributes of mythic beings.

Traditional Baltic woven sashes were usually patterned with two, three, or four different ornamental motives. Another distinctive characteristic of the sash is its geometric composition of ornaments, using huge numbers of different patterns linearly composed in changeable sequence. These sashes were only popular in some regions of Latvia (Lielvarde, Krustpils, Rucava, and others in Kurland), Lithuania Minor (Klaipėda, Šilutė, Tilžė), and Lithuania (Palanga, Ukmergė, Pakruojis, Pasvalys). This type of ornamentation presupposes the presence of linear reading in the Baltic cultural tradition.[11] It is similar to the linear reading of runic script known in medieval Lithuania.

The oldest formal examples of East European geometrical ornamentation can be traced from the protoscript, symbols, and ornamentation of the Neolithic Old Europe Civilization.[12] An elaborated tradition of the same geometrical patterns arranged in a multipatterned irregular order is well known in Latvia[13] and Finland[14] at the beginning of the second millennium.

I have distinguished twenty-five traditionally-named pattern types of Lithuanian sash ornament, based on their traditional complex unity in form and name.

The referential links of visual symbols and patterns of folk art as signifiers, with their folk names or mythopoethic images

---

[11] Tumėnas, "Lietuvių tradicinių juostų 'šimtaraštiškumas.'"
[12] Tumėnas, "The Connections"; Haarman, *Early Civilization.*
[13] Zariņa, *Apģērbs.*
[14] Lehtosalo-Hilander, *Ancient Finnish.*

as signifieds related to the discourses of folklore and mythology of the Slavic, Finno-Ugric, and Baltic oral tradition, have been analyzed from an interdisciplinary point of view.[15]

Earlier, the Latvian scholars Edvards Brastiņš[16] and Jēkabs Bīne[17] contextually compared and linked the folk names of national patterns with symbols in archaeological decorations. They associated these names, as mythopoetical images, with deities and their attributes in Latvian folklore and mythology.

That the same folk names sometimes refer to different patterns suggests the similarity of their symbolism. In addition, the same pattern may have several different names. These peculiarities represent the variability in associations of the different pattern forms and names, which reflects the sophisticated links of the various mythopoetical images and suggests another method for systematic analysis of the mythological worldview, based on attempts to understand the meaning and logic of archaic associative thinking. For example, the net of associations between the mythopoetical images of an apple, star, wolf, swan, duck, bride, or heart may be revealed by analyzing the logic and meaning of the intercodic associations of the Toothed Diamond sign in Lithuanian folk culture.

The Toothed Diamond sign has the names *žvaigždė* (star)[18] and *obuoliukas* (apple).[19] An apple in Lithuanian folklore is often associated with fertility, matchmaking, and marriage.[20] In Indo-European mythologies, golden apples are linked with eternal youth and immortality.[21]

---

[15] See Иванов, "Отражение индоевропейской"; Иванов, Топоров, "Структурно-типологический"; Амброз, "О символике"; Грибова, "Пермский звериный"; Русакова, "Традиционное"; and Толстой, "К реконструкции семантики."

[16] Brastiņš, *Latviešu ornamentika.*

[17] Bīne, "Latvju rakstu."

[18] The Lithuanian Institute of History (LIH), Ethnology Department Manuscript Archive, ES b. 1959, l. 8; The Lithuanian National Museum, EMO 1826.

[19] The National M. K. Čiurlionis Art Museum, E 2876.

[20] Basanavičius, *Iš krikščionijos santykių.*

[21] Гамкрелидзе, Иванов, *Индоевропейский язык*, 642.

The same sign in Lithuanian folk textile has a significant name *vilko gerklė* (wolf's mouth).[22] This name corresponds with calling a woman a wolf when she first enters the bathhouse after childbirth.[23] The wolf appears in fertility magic: if you want your bees to steal the honey from other bees, you must let the beehive fly through the open mouth of the wolf.[24] In traditional Lithuanian dream symbolism, wolves signify matchmakers and bridegrooms.[25] The wolf's mouth symbol is probably similar to the *vagina dentate* image, well-known in the Medieval European tradition. A drawing in a fourteenth-century book from Vienna of "The Seven Deadly Sins" represents a crowned woman-fish. She has a wolf's head with an open mouth depicted in place of the woman's genitals.[26] Basing his conclusion on the traditions of various cultures all over the world, Mircea Eliade asserts that the *vagina dentate* often represents the mouth of chthonic Mother Earth in initiation ceremonies associated with symbolic death – a return to the womb and rebirth in a superior state.[27]

Another name for the Toothed Diamond is *žųsiąžarnis* (goose intestine)[28] that, like the neighboring Belarusian denomination, "swan,"[29] suggests an association with waterbirds. A goose, a duck, a swan, and other waterbirds are bridal and marriage symbols in Lithuanian folklore. In songs of courtship and matchmaking, a young girl is associated with a waterbird:

Roll, oh duck,
Swimming fast –
Pause, oh girl,
before you wed me.[30]

---

22 LIH, ES b. 1983, l. 4.
23 Urbanavičienė, *Lietuvių apeiginė*, 90.
24 Elisonas, "Mūsų krašto fauna," 128.
25 Tumėnas, *Lietuvių tradicinių*, 204.
26 Williams, *Deformed Discourse*, 166.
27 Eliade, *Rituals and Symbols*, 62–63.
28 LNM, EMO 2193.
29 Нячаева, *Арнаменты*, 84.
30 Susvartyk, antela,/Bistriai plaukiodama,/Susdūmok, mergela,/Už manį eidama (Kazlauskienė, *Lietuvių liaudies*, 348).

The duck is clearly the symbol of matchmaking in another type of song, where the girl lacks the courage to come closer to the boy because she is afraid she will be late returning home and provoke her mother's angry questions about where she has been. The boy suggests she answer that a flock of geese landed in the lake and muddied its waters. The boy has seduced the young girl, and the mud has not yet disappeared.[31]

Traditional Patterns in Contemporary Festivals

Archaic symbol, according to Juri Lotman, retains its semantic and structural independence in any context: it is a text of defined boundaries that allow it to be clearly distinguished from the surrounding semiotic context and easily incorporated into a new environment. On other hand, the semantic potency of a symbol is always wider than its given implementation. It forms a semantic reserve with which a symbol can initiate unexpected connections, changing its substance and deforming the textual environment in an unforeseen way.[32]

Some contemporary artists are interested in the actualization of traditional Lithuanian ornament symbols. An important original implementation of traditional ornament geometry into the figures of stadium dance choreography was created for the Dance Day of the traditional Lithuanian Song Festival (2009) with a scenario by Birutė Marcinkevičiute and chief ballet-master Laimutė Kisielienė.

The First Fire-Sash Project

The interpretations of traditional patterns became an important element of popular cultural events in Vilnius: The Fire-Signs of the Autumn Equinox joined with an older event, The Fire-Sculpture Festival of the Autumn Equinox (both coordinated by Eglė Plioplienė). This cultural action, which used interpretations of traditional textile symbols, attracted crowds of

---

[31] *Vai ir atlėkė/Žųsų pulkelis,/Sudrumstė vandenėlį/Į juodą purvynėlį./Dar vandenėlis/Nenusistojo,/Bernelis mergelį Jau priviliojo* (Misevičienė, *Darbo dainos*, 55–57; Kazlauskienė, *Lietuvių liaudies*, 594).

[32] Лотман, *Семиосфера*, 240–241.

people. The projects' participants included professional artists, as well as amateurs, beginners, students, and school children, and founded a new artistic tradition associated with mythological and traditional aspects of contemporary culture. The ornamental fire performance started in 2005 during the annual Autumn Equinox Festival (around 21–24th of September) on the right bank of the Neris River near Cathedral Square and King Mindaugas Bridge. The author Julija Ikamaitė and the author of this article connected the candlelight ornamentation with the sacredness of the Šventaragis Valley, where in ancient times an eternal fire smoldered in a temple. Lithuanian dukes had been cremated on that spot. The artists sought to evoke the greatness and power of fire, its creative and destructive aspects, and the temporary forms of the eternal life-force. About fifteen hundred candles were installed on the architectonic diagonal-squared Neris River bank construction with the help of 140 pupils and their teachers from ten Vilnius schools. The huge 300-meter-long installation of candles was easily observed by crowds of people from the bridge and the opposite side of the river (Fig.1).

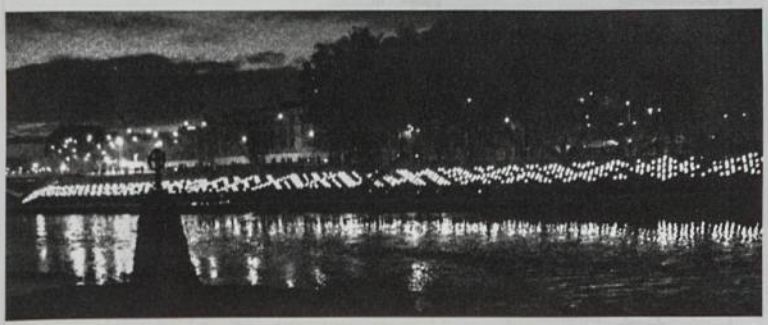


Fig. 1 The ornamental multipatterned sash of flaming candles at the Autumn Equinox Festival in Vilnius, September 24, 2005. Photo by the author.

The concept and planning for this fire sash's performance location and its form was generated over a year. The creators were stimulated by antimodern aspirations to continue the old Baltic tradition of multipatterned woven sash ornamentation. The researchers presumed the ornaments may be associated

with mythological tales, cosmological legends, or prayers. It was decided to compose the candle flames in a similar multi-patterned and changeable order.

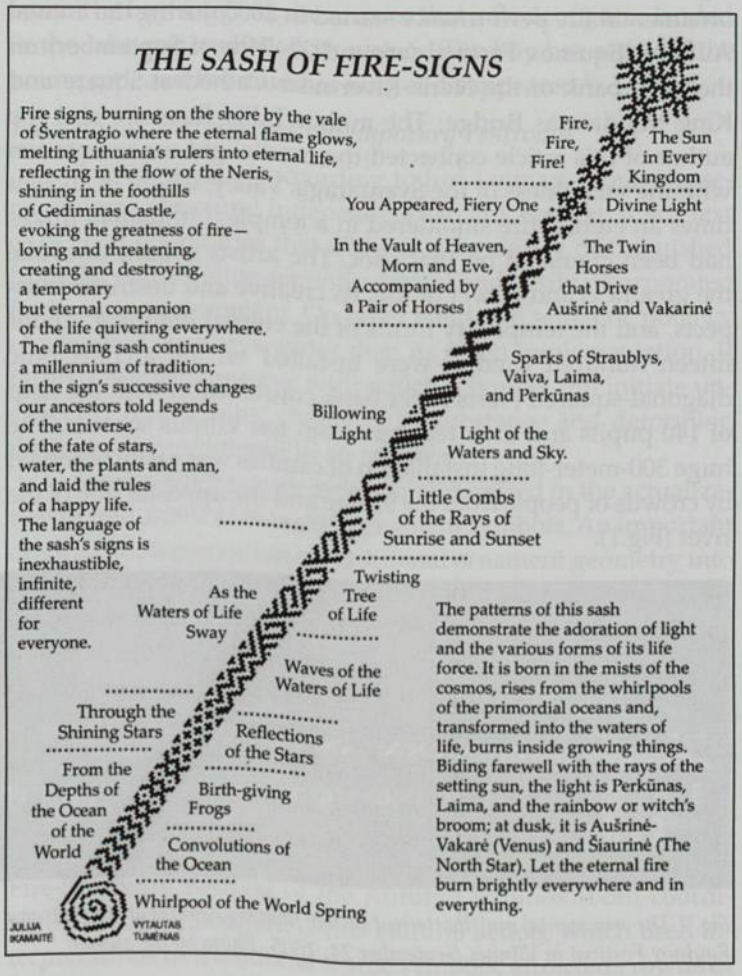


Fig. 2 The Sash of Fire-Signs and explanations of the pattern's meanings by Julija Ikamaitė (left side) and Vytautas Tumėnas (right side). The Autumn Equinox Festival in Vilnius, September 24, 2005.

The Sash of Fire-Signs was organized for reading from left to right. The authors aimed to describe the specific meanings for the different parts of this ornamentation expressed by their names and the explanations given for them based on folk tradition (Fig. 2).

In the textual comments on the lower right side, I have explained the message of the Sash of Fire-Signs, which includes references to Perkūnas, the Lithuanian God of Thunder, and his wife Aušra, associated with sun rays, beauty, and youth. Perkūnas had transformed his wife into Laumė, Lauma or Mara, because of her misconduct, and punished her by sending her to live on Earth.[33] Laumė is associated with female sexuality. This divine pair is similar to another pair, the Sky Light God, Dievs, and his wife, Mara, in the Latvian tradition, and Laima, the deity of marriage, happiness, and fate in the Baltic tradition. Laima is similar to the Sun Goddess in Latvian tradition.[34] The ornamental sash also referred to the rainbow named *vaivorykštė* or *Laumės juosta* (The Sash of Laumė). J. Ikamaitė expressed the symbolism of the Fire Sash in poetry on the left side of the Fire-Sash illustration (Fig. 2).

I have ascribed the patterns with mythopoetical images or names. Reading from bottom to top on the right side of the sash, the ornaments' names are Spiral, (labeled *Whirlpool of the World Spring* in the diagram); Vertical Zigzag, (*Convolutions of the Ocean*); Frog (*Birth-giving Frogs*); Small Crosses (*Reflection of the Stars*); Zigzag (*Waves of the Waters of Life*), Hooked Horns (*Twisting Tree of Life*); Combs (*Little Combs of the Rays of Sunrise and Sunset*); Broken Half-Cross (*Sparks of Straublys, Vaiva, Laima, and Perkūnas* and *Light of the Waters and Sky*); Two Horses (*The Twin Horses that Drive Aušrinė and Vakarinė*); Candelabra (*Divine Light*); and Candelabra/Rose (*The Sun in Every Kingdom*).

What is the symbolism of these patterns from a scholarly viewpoint?

---

[33] Toporov, "Dar kartą," 127–148; Иванов, Топоров, "Аушра," "Лайма," "Лаума," 72, 309, 312.

[34] Ibid.

The whirlpool image in Lithuanian folklore is associated with the mythology of birth and with the mythic beings of the Aušra (similar to Greek Aphrodite) group, associated with marriage symbolism. The Spiral sign, the female symbol associated with the idea of fertility and creation, was well-known in Old European culture, where it was depicted on the bellies of female deities.[35]

The Middle of the Ocean in Lithuanian folklore is associated with the source of life, where the palm tree, the Tree of the World, grows.

The Frog image (See Fig. 5F) is associated with birth and rebirth, transformation, and reincarnation in the traditional Lithuanian world outlook.

The Zigzag is the symbol of life-giving water, a symbol widespread in world mythology. And twisting, according to tradition, is associated with the growing Life Tree. A Toothed Zigzag is called the *žųsiąžarnikė* (goose intestine) and linked with the symbolism of waterbirds.

The Comb image in Lithuanian folklore is associated with a young girl drifting along in a boat as she combs her hair. Mythologically, the comb has been explained as an attribute of the Morning Star, and hair combing is an activity of Aušrinė, who is considered an analogue to Venus or Aphrodite. In folk tradition, the Rake sign is called *grėbliukai*[36] (rake or raker) or *šukos*[37] (comb) and sometimes *vėželis* (crab) and *vėžlelis* (turtle). In Lithuanian Užgavėnės (Mardi Gras) folk songs, a girl in a boat in the middle of a sea, a lake, or river combs her hair with a fish-bone comb, then floats downriver to her beloved to ask him if he loves her. But the boy answers that he does not and is willing to make a rake from her fingers.[38] It is evident that the images of the rake and comb are associated with the idea (or

[35] Рыбаков, "Борис Альбертович," 1, 24-47; 2, 13-33; Gimbutas, *The Language*; Tumėnas, "The Connections."
[36] LIH, ES, b. 1954, l. 9.
[37] Ibid., b. 1985, l. 45.
[38] Kriščiūnienė, *Užgavėnės*, 62, 64–65.

problems) of courtship and matchmaking. The image of a girl sitting in a floating boat while combing her hair is also used in a folksong sung during hair-combing rites on the eve of a wedding. In these songs, an orphan girl is mourning the absence of all her family members. Mercifully, Father Moon, Mother Sun, Brother Pleiades, and Sister Star substitute for them during the wedding.[39] Who is this girl, with the Moon for a father, the Pleiades her brother, and the stars her sisters? Perhaps she is the deity of the Morning Star; for this context is similar to the mythological images of the solar or morning-star goddesses of the Indo-European tradition (for example, Greek Aphrodite, Hindu Ushas): her hair is a metaphor for the rays of the Sun, the planet Venus (Aušrinė), or the morning sunrise.

Other evidence linking the Rake pattern with the Comb is that it has the same name, *гребешок* (comb),[40] in the Arkhangelsk region of northern Russia. It is important to note that the comb is a significant artifact of success in matchmaking in Ukrainian[41] and Lithuanian wedding rituals.

It is also significant that the Rake pattern on the bridal shirt in Udmurtia (a Finno-Ugric area of Russia) has the name "Duck Wings."[42] This links the image of a rake with the image of a duck, because both images have wedding symbolism.

The Swastika and other signs derived from it (Fig. 5B) are associated with the luminaries of the sky, especially with the sun and its light, in many traditions.[43] In Indo-European mythology, the Aušrine-type deity is conducted across the sky by the Divine Twins (Greek *Dioskouros*; Hindu *Ashwinau, Ashwini Kumaras*; Lithuanian *Dievo sūneliai*; Latvian *Dieva dēli, Jumis*) riding horses. The Horse pattern and its variations (Fig. 3; Fig. 5E) are widespread in Lithuanian textile tradition. It was very popular in the Old Europe Civilization (for example, the ram-like oil

[39] Burkšaitienė and Krištopaitė, *Aukštaičių*, 222-226, 660–661.
[40] The Russian Museum in St. Petersburg, T–3985.
[41] Карпова, "Гребень."
[42] Виноградов, "Терминология."
[43] Tumėnas, "The Visual," 78-85.

lamp decorated with a horse sign in Fig. 3). The Horse-type sign is related to the mythology of the Twins,[44] and possibly symbolized the mediator who carries light and fire between worlds (Fig. 3). The Divine Twins are mentioned in Lithuanian folk meteorology as well: the two light columns flanking the sun on both sides at sunrise or sunset ("sundogs" in English) as a prognostic sign of cold weather are named *saulabroliai* (brothers of the sun).

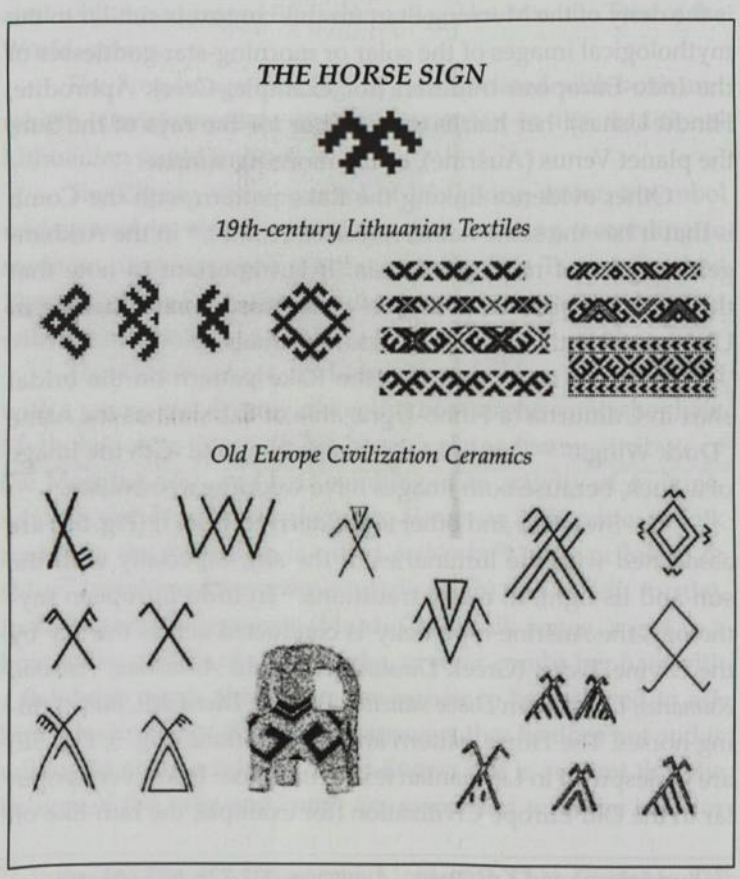


Fig. 3. The Horses sign in Lithuanian textiles compared to Old Europe Civilization ceramic signs.

[44] Иванов, "Отражение."

According to tradition, the Rosette (Fig. 5D) can symbolize the sun and celestial light.

The Second Fire-Sash Project

A similar project was created in 2008 and realized on September 21 in the same place on the same occasion. The symbolism of these signs, based on scholarly investigation, was briefly described in a booklet distributed to the public during the festival. But the concept of this performance was simpler than 2009 project. In this project, the narrative aspects of the ornaments (similar to a poem or a story) were not developed (Fig. 4).

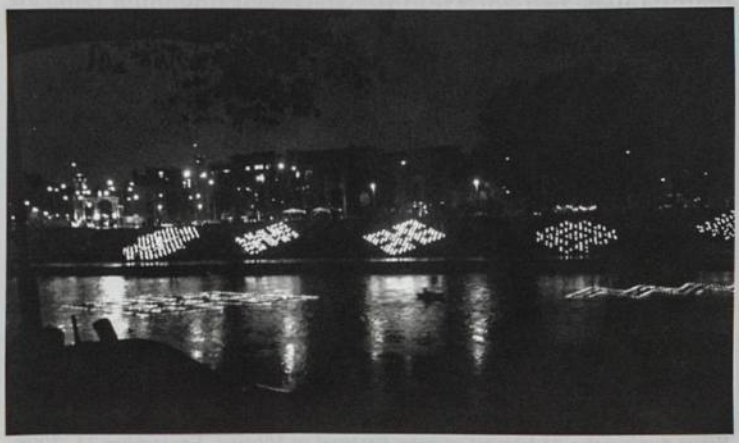


Fig. 4. Fire ornaments by Julija Ikamaitė, Mindaugas Aliukas, and Vytautas Tumėnas at the Autumn Equinox Festival in Vilnius, September 21, 2008. Photo by the author.

Nine fire patterns were installed at this festival: A.) the Cross, in Lithuanian folk nomenclature known as the sign of beginnings, initiation, and protection, or *krikštelis* (baptism sign) or *gvazdikėlis* (dianthus); B.) the Broken Cross, Swastika (*sulaužtinis kryžiukas*), in Latvian culture known as *Pērkona krusts* or *Laimas krusts* (the cross of Pērkons or Laima); C.) the Five-squared Cross, traditionally called *liktoriukai* (lamp or candelabra); D.) the Horse sign, called *žirgeliai* (horses) or *arklio galvukė* (horse's head); E.) the Rosette or Horned Square joined with

the Rhombus sign, with four dots in the middle of the crossed square: the first element is called *roželė* (rose) or *erškėtėlis* (wild rose), *snaigė* (snowflake), *būrtukė su grėbliukais* (magic wooden tablet with rakes), or *žvaigždutė* (star); the second element is called *akutės* (eyes) or *varnakis* (crow's eye), *būrtukė* (magic or squared wooden tablet), *riešutukas* (nut), *langučiai* (windows) or *kryžlangėlis* (cross window). F.) This sign is named *varlytė* (frog), *vėžlelis* (turtle), *vėželis* (crab, cancer), *voras* (spider), or *plačiakojis* (straddled legs); G.) the Herring Bone sign, traditionally known as *eglutė* (pine tree) or *šluotelė* (whisk broom); H.) The Serpent sign is called *žaltinėlis* (grass snake) or *zuikutis* (hare); I.) The Bee sign's traditional name is unknown.

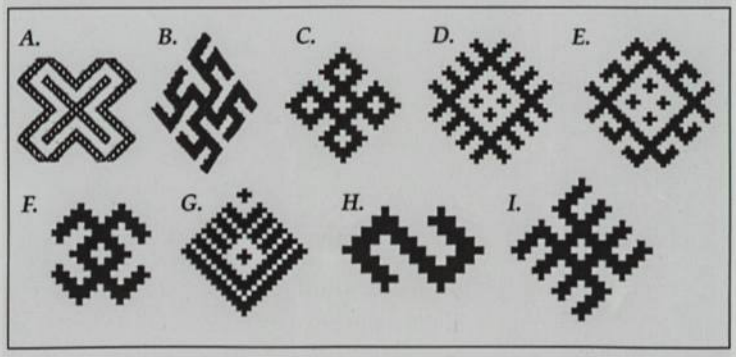


Fig. 5. The schemes of the nine patterns installed on the bank of the Neris River during the Autumn Equinox Festival in Vilnius, September 21, 2008.

In the Lithuanian narrative tradition, the Horned Rhombus or Rose (Fig. 5D) is a star-like sign, which has the name *žvaigždutė* (star),[45] but also *gėlytė* (flower),[46] *roželė* (rose),[47] and *snaigė* (snowflake).[48] This sign is placed at the top or center of cosmic structure compositions in nineteenth-century East Prussian carpets called *koc*.[49] The context of Baltic folklore and mythology demonstrates the strong association of the Rose

[45] LIH, ES b.1958, l. 6.
[46] LIH, ES b. 1954, l. 9.
[47] LNM, EMO 505.
[48] LIH, ES b. 1983, l. 3.
[49] Hahm, *Ostpreussische*, 34, 94.

sign with sun or star symbolism, with the images of the flowers of the World Tree, Sun Garden, or Sun Bush at the Center of the World or Sky, and with the highest level in the cosmological structure. In Latvian songs, the rising and setting sun is depicted as a rose wreath, bush, or garden. A rose garden is one of the most characteristic motifs in Baltic mythology. The association between the Sun as celestial fire and the image of a rose is known in Lithuanian and Latvian mythological folklore.[50] The Horned Rhombus represents the sun, and sometimes it is called this: in Lithuanian, *saulukė*,[51] and in Latvian, *saulyte*.[52] In Lithuanian folklore, the sun rising on Christmas morning is associated with, or replaced by, the flowering rose and has marriage symbolism:

> *On Christmas morning the rose bloomed*
> *The deer with the nine horns is coming*
> *On one horn the fire burns*
> *On the second – the smiths are hammering*
> *Oh smiths, my brothers*
> *Please make me a golden ring.*[53]

This song brings to mind the image of the sun forged by a smith (*kalvelis/televelis*, a name similar to the Estonian mythic hero Kalev) who is similar to the servant of the Thunder God, Perkūnas, in Lithuanian mythology.[54] Another association of the Rose image, with a star or the sun, as well as fertility, is evident in the names of the flax laid out for drying in the sun during harvest rituals. The figure so formed – the circle of rays – was called rose, star, wreath, or circle.[55] The other pattern name, Star, also refers to the sky luminaries, and its synonymous name, Snowflake, designates snowflakes as sky

---

[50] Vaitkevičienė, "The Rose," 23–29.
[51] LIH, ES, b. 1949, l. 5.
[52] Slava, *Latviešu*, 17.
[53] Kalėdų rytą rožė inžydo/Atbėga elnias devyniaragis/Ant vieno rago ugnelė dega/Ant antro rago kavolėliai kala/Jūs, kavolėliai, mano broleliai/Vai jūs nukalkit aukselio žiedą. (Valiulytė, *Atvažiuoja*, 70)
[54] Оболенский, "Летописец," 19–21.
[55] Vyšniauskaitė, "Lietuvių," 68-70.

elements, given their similarity to falling stars. Another rarely used name for this sign, *katės pėdukė* (cat's paw),[56] again harks back to the love and marriage symbolism of the sky luminaries in Lithuanian folklore.

Sometimes the *rožytė* (rose)[57] or *žvaigždukė* (star)[58] bears the Chessboard pattern. But it is better known as *katpėdėlė* (cat's paw).[59] The Chessboard pattern consists of a combination of five dark squares and four light ones. A Cat's Paw resembles a feline paw-print, but is also like a flower with four petals with a spot in the middle. In the Lithuanian folkloric tradition, cats are symbolically associated with female sexuality. That is why it is best to sow rue (a most important virgin apotropaic symbol in Lithuanian tradition) on St. George's Day and to harrow it with a cat's tail or leg. By examining the wedding symbolism of the cat, we can explain the connection between the Cat's Paw pattern and the Rose and Star images.

The Serpent sign (Fig. 5H), known as *žaltinėlis* in Lithuanian,[60] is popular not only in Lithuanian sash decoration, but also in wooden architecture, folk furniture painting, other interior decoration, and even on Easter eggs. It was popular in archaeological jewelry. The earliest examples of this sign can be found in Old European ceramics, where it can be interpreted as the symbol of the dynamism of the life force (Fig. 6). In the well-known Lithuanian folk tale *Eglė, the Queen of the Serpents*,[61] a wedding agreement is made by a young girl after bathing in the sea when the king of the underwater world, the King of Serpents, will not return her clothes unless she agrees to marry him. In earlier times, grass snakes were almost domestic animals – they lived inside homes, and there was a belief that if

---

[56] LIH, ES b. 1949, l. 5.
[57] Ibid, b. 1953, l. 2.
[58] Ibid, b. 1958, l. 24.
[59] Kišūnaitė, "Lietuvių," 45.
[60] Tamošaitienė, Tamošaitis, *Lithuanian Sashes*, 40.
[61] Aarne, *The Types*, 425M.

a grass snake leaves the house, it means someone in the home will die.[62] The Serpent image may stand for a vital power, the life force, love and family, and fertility, and is strongly connected with women.[63] The Serpent sign, also known as the S sign, arranged as two serpents or dragons and spirals, was one of the most popular signs in Tripolye-Cucuteni ceramics.[64] In the Lithuanian Bronze Age, the combination of swastika and grass snakes is present in fibulas (brooches or clasps)[65] (Fig. 6). The grass snakes were often connected with the moon symbol in the so-called moonlike fibulas.[66]

Lithuanian folk beliefs show a strong connection between the snakes and the sun: *If you kill a snake, the sun will cry. If one kills a snake and leaves it in the forest unburied, the sun will shine dimmer for three days.*[67] So it is possible that, in the Lithuanian folk ornament tradition, the snake is also connected with the sun.

In their performances, today's artists try to connect the recreation of traditional patterns with contemporary scholarly interpretations of their symbolism and the social participation of schoolchildren.

This kind of reverence for the past may be defined as traditionalism, pointing to an unwillingness to change.[68] Such modes of transcending archaization infusing the globalizing modernity is a reaction against the spread of the rationality of the modernistic West that, according to A. Mickūnas, is posing a threat to the differences and identities of cultures.[69]

---

62 Elisonas, "Mūsų krašto ropliai," 142.
63 Beresnevičius, "*Eglė žalčių*," 69-82.
64 Tumėnas, "The Connections"; Рыбаков, "Космогония."
65 Седов, "Финно угры и балты", 406, 422, 453, fig. CXXXIV/24.
66 Vaitkunskienė, "Mitologiniai," 55, fig. 31.
67 Elisonas, "Mūsų krašto ropliai," 107.
68 Hansen, "Modernity as Action," 325.
69 Mickunas, Algis, "Cultural Logics," 147, 157–158, 163.

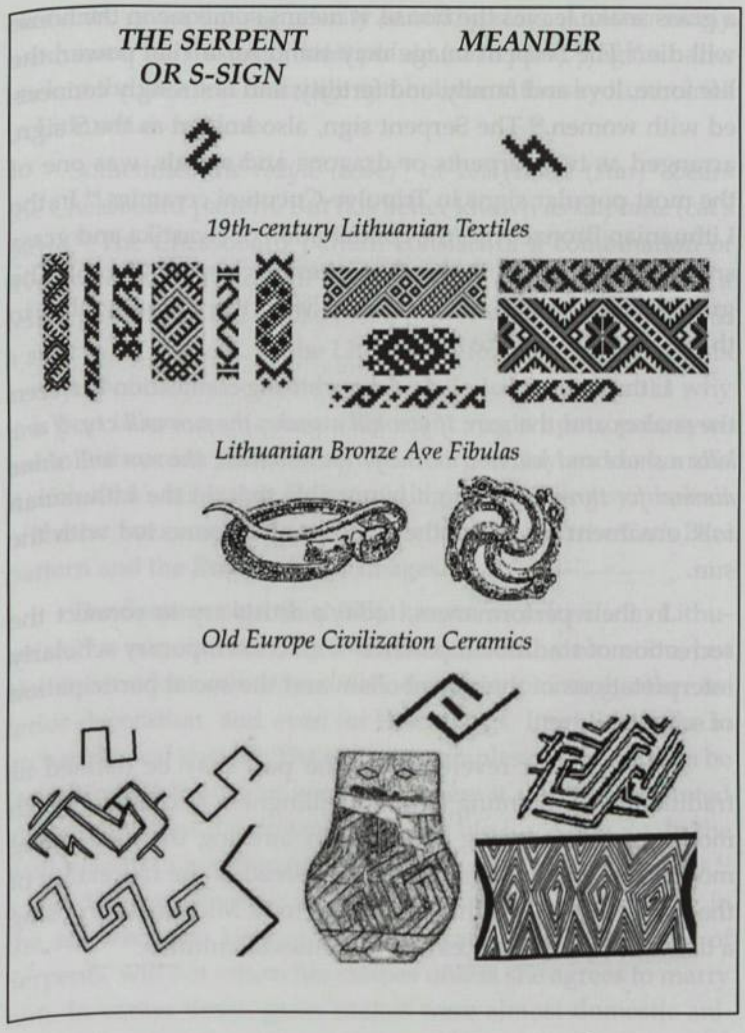


Fig. 6. The Serpent, Spiral, and Meander sign in Lithuanian ethnographic and archaeological examples compared to Old Europe Civilization signs.

Conclusions

The scientific and cultural tradition in Baltic countries is advantageous for the evolution of a specific methodology for the investigation of the symbolism of ornaments based on the

contextual revealing of the symbolism of patterns' folk names. This promotes the relevance of scholarly as well as modern artistic and poetical intertextual interpretations of the ornament tradition in contemporary culture.

Pattern names often have associative connections with mythological tradition. The discoveries of new associative links between the mythopoetical images and objects of culture, based on particular mythological logic, can stimulate the rethinking of common scholarly reconstructions of mythology as a system to explain the world.

Folklore tradition and scholarly knowledge become involved in the process of collaborative connection with modern creative interpretations of the Baltic mythopoetical tradition, especially in the annual Festival of the Autumn Equinox in Vilnius. It is important to note that even hypothetical scholarly interpretations of the meaning of traditional Baltic ornament can be taken as the base for modern creative interpretations and the invention of new traditions. In this way, a new set of intercodical relations is generated.

The links of modern symbols with the mythic tradition suggest their actual function not only as signs of national identity, but even much more as the expression of cultural identity based on archaic-mythological, interdisciplinary, and intertextual language associated with the paradigms of collectiveness, traditionalism, and archaism.

WORKS CITED

Aarne, Antti. *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography.* Helsinki: The Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, 1961.

Almeida, Ileana, and Julieta Haidar. "The mythopoetical model and logic of the concrete in Quechua culture: Cultural and transcultural translation problems." *Sign Systems Studies* 3-4 (2012).

Амброз, Анатолий. "О символике русской крестьянской вышивки архаического типа." *Советская этнография* 1 (1966).

Apanavičienė, Virginija. "Modernizmas lietuvių muzikoje: etninio ir kultūrinio tapatumo bei muzikos madų sąveika." In *Rytų Europos kultūra migracijos kontekste: tarpdalykiniai tyrimai.* Edited by I. R. Merkienė. (Lietuvos istorijos institutas), Vilnius: Versus aureus, 2007.

Basanavičius, Jonas. 1912. *Iš krikščionijos santykių su senovės lietuvių tikyba ir kultūra: (prie studijos „Lietuvių kryžiai archaiologijos šviesoje").* Vilnius: M. Piaseckaitės-Šlapelienės knygyno leidinys. (cit. from: J. Basanavičius, *Rinktiniai raštai,* Vilnius, 1970).

Bendix, Regina. *In Search for Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997.

Beresnevičius, Gintaras. *"Eglė žalčių karalienė" ir lietuvių teogoninis mitas: religinė istorinė studija.* Vilnius: Kultūros, filosofijos ir meno institutas, 2003.

Bīne, Jēkabs. "Latvju rakstu saturs un pielietošana." *Vāditājs* 5 (1937).

Brastiņš, Edvards. *Latviešu ornamentika: 1.* Rīga: Latviešu senātnes pētitāju biedrības izdevums, "Vālodzes" apgādība, 1923.

Burkšaitienė, Laima, and Danutė Krištopaitė,eds. *Aukštaičių melodijos.* Vilnius: Vaga, 1990.

Celms, Valdis. *Latvju raksts un zīmes. Baltu pasaules modelis. Uzbūve. Tēli. Simbolika.* Rīga: Folkloras informācijas centrs, 2007.

Eliade, Mircea. *Rituals and Symbols of Initiation: The Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth.* Translated by W. Trask. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

Elisonas, Jurgis. "Mūsų krašto fauna lietuvių tautosakoje." [Special issue]. *Mūsų tautosaka* 5 (1932).

_____. "Mūsų krašto ropliai (reptilia) lietuvių folkloro šviesoje." *Mūsų tautosaka* 3 (1931).

Гамкрелидзе, Г., Иванов, В. *Индоевропейский язык и индоевропейцы: Реконструкция и историко-типологический анализ праязыка и протокультуры (в двух частях), т. 2.* Тбилиси: Изд-во Тбилисского ун-та, 1984.

Genette, Gérard. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Gimbutas, Maria. *The Language of the Goddess.* New York, London, etc: Harper & Row, 1989.

Грибова, Любовь Степановна. *Пермский звериный стиль. (проблемы семантики).* Москва: Наука, 1975.

Haarman, Harald. *Early Civilization and Literacy in Europe: An Inquiry into Cultural Continuity in the Mediterranean World.* Berlin, New York: Morton de Gruyter, 1996.

Hahm, Konrad. *Ostpreussische Bauernteppiche.* Jena: Diederichs, 1937.

Hansen, Kjell. "Modernity as Action." In *Modernisation and tradition: European local and manorial societies 1500-1900.* Edited by Kerstin Sundberg, Tomas Germundsson, and Kjell Hansen. Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2004.

Иванов, Вячеслав Всеволодович. "Отражение индоевропейской терминологии близнечного культа в балтийских языках." In *Балто-славянский сборник.* Москва: Наука, 1972, 193-205.

Иванов, Вячеслав Всеволодович и Топоров, Владимир Николаевич "Аушра", "Лайма", "Лаума." In *Мифологический словарь.* Edited by Мелетинский, Елеазар. Москва: Советская энциклопедия, 1991, 72, 309, 312.

Иванов, Вячеслав Всеволодович и Топоров, Владимир Николаевич. "Структурно-типологический подход к семантической интерпретации произведений изобразительного искусства в диахроническом аспекте." In *Труды по знаковым системам* 8, 1977, 103-120.

Jankauskienė, Inga. "Antropologijos ir istorijos temų traktuotė Broniaus Kutavičiaus muzikoje." *Teksto slėpiniai* 9 (2006), 105-114.

_____. "Broniaus Kutavičiaus kompozicijos – 'svetimo' raiška,'" *Menotyra* 3 (24) (2001), 68-77.

Карпова, О. В. "„Гребень" в свадебной обрядности украинцев." In *Этносемиотика ритуальных предметов. Сборник научных трудов.* Edited by И. Б. Белобородова, О. О. Брашнина, Т. А. Бугаец. Санкт-Петербург: Российский этнографический музей, 1993, 110-118.

Kazlauskienė, Bronė (parengė). *Lietuvių liaudies dainynas II. Vestuvinės dainos 1.* (Lietuvos TSR Mokslų akademija, Lietuvių kalbos ir literatūros institutas). Vilnius: Vaga, 1983.

Kišūnaitė, Birutė. *Lietuvių liaudies tautinės juostos* (P. Dundulienė, advisor). Vilnius: VVU istorijos fakulteto Lietuvos TSR istorijos katedra. Diplominis darbas (Masters degree thesis, manuscript), 1971.

Kristeva, Julia. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1980.

Kriščiūnienė, Inga. *Užgavėnės.* Vilnius: TECHLAB, 1992.

Lehtosalo-Hilander, P.L. *Ancient Finnish Costumes.* Helsinki: The Finish Archaeological Society, 1984.

Лотман, Юрий М. *Семиосфера: культура и взрыв, внутри мыслящих миров, статьи, исследования, заметки.* Санкт-Петербург: Искусство-СПБ, 2001.

Misevičienė, Vanda. *Darbo dainos. Kalendorinių apeigų dainos. Lietuvių liaudies dainų katalogas.* Lietuvos TSR Mokslų akademija, Lietuvių kalbos ir literatūros institutas. Vilnius: Vaga, 1972.

Mickunas, Algis. "Cultural Logics and National Identities." In *Phenomenology of the Cultural Disciplines.* Dordrecht, Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994.

Нячаева, Галина (ред.). *Арнаменты Падняпроуя.* Минск: Беларусская навука, 2004.

Оболенский, К. М. "Летописец Переславля–Суздальского." In *Временник императорского Московского общества истории и древностей Российских* 9. Москва: Московский университет, 1851.

Roginsky, Dina. "Folklore, Folklorism, and Synchronization: Preserved-Created Folklore in Israel," *Journal of Folklore Research*, 44 (1), January-April (2007).

Русакова, Лидия Михайловна. *Традиционное изобразительное искусство русских крестьян Сибири.* Новосибирск: Наука, 1989.

Рыбаков, Борис Альбертович. Космогония и мифология земледельцев энеолита. *Советская археология* 1 (1965), 24-47; 2 (1965), 13-33.

Седов, В. В. *Финно угры и балты в эпоху средневековья*. In Б. А. Рыбаков (ред.), *Археология СССР*. Москва: Наука, 1987.

Slava, Mirdza. *Latviešu rakstainie cimdi*. Rīga: Zinātne, 1992.

Šiukščius, Vygantas. *Mitopoetika lietuvių prozoje: tekstų interpretacija*. Vilnius: Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, disertation, 2000.

Šmidchens, Guntis. *Baltic Music: The Folklore Movement in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, 1968–1991*. Bloomington: Indiana University, unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1996.

Tamošaitienė, Anastazija, and Antanas Tamošaitis. *Lithuanian Sashes*. Toronto: Lithuanian Folk Art Institute, 1988.

Толстой, Никита Ильич. К реконструкции семантики и функции некоторых славянских изобразительных и словесных символов и мотивов, In *Фолклор и этнография. Проблемы реконструкции фактов традиционной культуры*. Edited by Б. Н. Путилов. Ленинград, 1990.

Toporov, Vladimir. "Dar kartą apie baltiškus ir slaviškus dievo karvytės pavadinimus iš pagrindinio mito perspektyvos (Coccinella Septumpunctata)." In *Baltų mitologijos ir ritualo tyrimai. Rinktinė*. Edited by Nikolai Michailov. Vilnius: Aidai, 2000.

Tumėnas, Vytautas. "Lietuvių tradicinių juostų 'šimtaraštiškumas' lietuvių istoriniu ir lyginamuoju aspektu." *Liaudies kultūra* 6 (99) (2004).

_____. *Lietuvių tradicinių rinktinių juostų ornamentas: tipologija ir semantika. Lietuvos etnologija 9*. Vilnius: Diemedis, 2002.

Tumėnas, Vytautas. "The Connections Between Old European Signs and Lithuanian Sash Ornamentation." In *Signs of Civilisation: Neolithic Symbol System of Southeast Europe*. Edited by J. Marler and M. R. Dexter. Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology; Novi Sad: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Novi Sad Branch, 2009.

Tumėnas, Vytautas. "The Visual and the Mythical-Poetic Interpretations of Sky Luminaries in Lithuanian Traditional Textiles." In *Archaeologia Baltica, Astronomy and Cosmology in Folk Traditions and Cultural Heritage* 10, (2008).

Urbanavičienė, Dalia. *Lietuvių apeiginė etnochoreografija*. Vilnius: Lietuvos muzikos akademija, 2000.

Vaitkevičienė, Daiva. "The Rose and Blood: Images of Fire in Baltic Mythology." *Cosmos (The Journal of the Traditional Cosmology Society)* 19 (1) (2003).

Vaitkunskienė, Laima. "Mitologiniai ir ritualiniai simboliai m. e. I tūkstantmečio vidurio Lietuvos metalo plastikoje." In *Lietuvos TSR Mokslų akademijos darbai* (A), 1-3. Vilnius: Mokslas, 1986–1988.

Valiulytė, Skirmantė, ed. *Atvažiuoja Kalėdos. Advento-Kalėdų papročiai ir tautosaka*. Vilnius: Lietuvos liaudies kultūros centras, 2000.

Виноградов, Семен. "Терминология удмуртских народных узоров," *Советская этнография* 2 (1967), 12-17.

Vyšniauskaitė, Angelė. "Lietuvių valstiečių linininkystė." In *Valstiečių linininkystė ir transportas. Iš lietuvių kultūros istorijos* 9. Vilnius: Mokslas, 1977.

Williams, David. *Deformed Discourse: The Function of the Monster in Mediaeval Thought and Literature*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996.

Zariņa, Ana. *Apģērbs Latvijā 7-17 gs.*, Rīga: Zinātne, 1999.

BOOK REVIEW

Turning Life into Credible Fiction

Giedra Radvilavičiūtė. *Those Whom I Would Like to Meet Again.* Translated from Lithuanian by Elizabeth Novickas. Champaign: Dalkey Archive, 2013, 129 pages. ISBN 978-1-56478-859-7.

The ever more dwindling distinction between fiction and nonfiction, the growing affinity between once distinct genres, such as autobiography, biography, history, confessions, diaries, travel narratives, and essays, as well as the increasing popularity of all sorts of writings hinged on the autobiographical "I," has been one of the most striking developments in European literature over the last forty years or so.

In Lithuania, this phenomenon coincided with a major historical change, with breaking free from the Soviet imperial power to which it had been bound for fifty years and the reestablishment of an independent Lithuanian state in 1990. The political, social, economic, and emotional turmoil brought about by this dramatic shift had to be dealt with in all walks of life, including and especially in literature. The most pertinent literary form to capture the intensity of those times, to give expression to the experience of a disintegrating world, as well as the installation of a new – imagined, sometimes illusionary, often gritty, but mostly just ultimately unstable – reality proved to be the literary essay. From 1990 until now, the prevailing literary mode that produced the most powerful and relevant texts in the Lithuanian language has been the literary essay, creatively used and elaborated as a genre by the most talented Lithuanian thinkers and writers of the time, such as Alfonsas Andriuškevičius, Gintaras Beresnevičius, Sigitas Geda, Jurga Ivanauskaitė, Danutė Kalinauskaitė, Sigitas Parulskis, Giedra Radvilavičiūtė, Rolandas Rastauskas, and Dalia Staponkutė among others. In the early days of Lithuanian independence, there was little time or money for books. Instead, the national newspapers provided the platform for intellectual and literary

life and served as the breeding ground for the newly discovered literary form. Many contemporary writers (mostly, if not exclusively, male) ran weekly columns, offering a personal take on the latest developments in the emerging state and/or their own lives and, at the same time, using or establishing (depending on their age and/or status on the literary scene) their own voices as writers. As soon as there was time and money for books again, the columns turned into collections of essays that sealed the literary status of both the Lithuanian literary essay and those who write it. The very first collection, published in 2002, was a compilation of essays, *Siužetą siūlau nušauti* (*I Suggest We Shoot the Plot*), featuring five authors. Giedra Radvilavičiūtė was the only female author featured in the anthology, which makes her a very important part of this development in Lithuanian literature.

Born in 1960 in Panevėžys, Radvilavičiūtė studied Lithuanian language and literature at Vilnius University. She then taught Lithuanian in a small provincial town (under Soviet law, all university graduates were appointed to their first job for four years, usually away from the university town where they studied). She then worked as a journalist in Vilnius and for family and parenting magazines. In 1994, she moved to Chicago with her young daughter and husband, professor of Lithuanian Language and Literature, Giedrius Subačius. Radvilavičiūtė entered the Lithuanian literary scene two years after her return from the United States in 1999, when she began publishing her essays in literary journals. The aforementioned anthology marked her as one of the most important Lithuanian authors at the turn of the century and one of the most interesting voices in Lithuanian literature. She has published two collections of essays to date: *Suplanuotos akimirkos* (Planned Moments) in 2004 and *Šiąnakt aš miegosiu prie sienos* (I'll Sleep by the Wall Tonight) in 2010. Radvilavičiūtė was awarded the European Prize for Fiction in 2012.

Last year, the American not-for-profit literary publishing house Dalkey Archive Press published a collection of Radvilavičiūtė's essays in English translation entitled "Those Whom I Would Like to Meet Again." Essays in this collection come from all three of Radvilavičiūtė's books – in chronological

order: three essays from the joint collection of 2002, three from the first solo collection of 2004, and four from the latest one of 2010 – selected and compiled by the author.

The narrator of one of her essays featured in the collection under review says: "First, I need to get through a little bit of life and only afterward turn it into credible fiction," which captures something critical about Radvilavičiūtė's creative method. Reading the English translation of her work made me think of the French writer, Annie Ernaux, whose complete works, all still in print, were published by Gallimard a couple of years ago, underscoring the importance of her life-writing project. I see a crucial similarity between the two creative enterprises. Radvilavičiūtė's fiction, like Ernaux's, features a female protagonist who is also the narrator and whose story is representative of a particular generation and social type of Lithuanian woman (as Ernaux's represents French women). It also contains, to quote Siobhàn McIlvanney's observation in reference to Ernaux's work, "a plethora of realist information," which consists of references to places, historic events, reading material, food brands, and fashions that situate both Ernaux's and Radvilavičiūtė's texts firmly in a specific time and place. In Radvilavičiūtė's case, it is post-1990 Vilnius, inhabited by a single, educated, intelligent, independent-minded, and strong-headed Lithuanian woman and mother (it is no coincidence that Radvilavičiūtė's fictional world is populated with girlfriends of a similar stripe). Her work gives voice to the generation of Lithuanian women born into the last thirty years of the Soviet system, the years of its utmost perversely debilitating stagnation, who witnessed the conception of, the run-up to, and the creation of, the new Lithuanian state at the prime of their lives and the peak of their powers. They were granted the extraordinary opportunity to do with their lives what they pleased, where they fancied, and how they saw fit. This is the generation who lived long enough under the Soviet system and in a newly established Lithuanian democracy to be identified as both post-Soviet and distinctly Lithuanian.

Those Whom I Would Like to Meet Again opens with an essay called "The Native Land and Other Connections." Written

over a short period, apparently soon after Radvilavičiūtė's return to Lithuania, it lays claim to her protagonists' (and her own) national identity, as well as her identity as a writer and, to some extent, a woman. Mass emigration from Lithuania to the United States has its own history, mythology, and literary tradition, referred to in the text by way of a quote from the most famous Lithuanian émigré poet, Alfonsas Nyka-Niliūnas, "Leaving home is always material, whereas returning is always metaphysical." However, Radvilavičiūtė's protagonists' ventures across the Atlantic are more closely associated with the first wave of emigration from the newly independent Lithuania, which represented the leap to a "better world," to the land of formerly forbidden plenty. The disillusionment of many of those adventurers is laid bare in the text through a strong use of contrast: "Before departing, you tell all your relatives what they already know: 'I'm leaving all the worst things in my life behind in Lithuania.' (I heard precisely this several years ago from a roofer in the suburbs of Chicago. In Vilnius, he had graduated from the Academy of Art.)" Or more painfully still: "In the evenings, her mother would be in a bad mood, because she cleaned Americans' houses, and her back hurt, and because she had nonetheless to write only cheerful letters to her relatives." By the end of the essay, the protagonist comes back to Vilnius for good with her daughter only, having made a decisive life-decision for both: "There really was a giant magnet buried underground, holding me here as easily as a metal shaving. One's native land is nothing more than this connection..." This connection is where the journey to the pleasures of the text portraying the protagonist's life in her native land begins. And what a fascinating life it is, made up of small, seemingly unrelated, visually and emotionally intense scenes and recollections, shot through with painful irony and wit. Readers are taken on sometimes atmospheric, sometimes rather grainy, but always picturesque and emotionally transformative walks along the streets of Vilnius (mostly near the railway station) participating in the protagonist-narrator's decision-making—whether about her future neighbours or her next book, watching her watch herself in the mirror, reminiscing about her school years'

infatuations and divorce, accompanying her on holiday to the seaside or sharing in her musings over human nature.

As the anthology progresses, Radvilavičiūtė's carefully crafted essays get more ambitious in terms of structure. My personal favourite, "Awakenings," is situated halfway through the book. Radvilavičiūtė's elegant signature play between the personal and generational, the trivial and consequential is most intense here. The essay opens with an image of the protagonist's late mother's photo hanging by her bed, taken by the mother's male friend who never got to be her second husband: "She had gotten divorced three years earlier, found herself someone else, and immediately fell ill with an incurable disease." The mother, it is implied, died a single woman. Gender relationships and the female perspective are among the most interesting aspects of Radvilavičiūtė's prose. It has been suggested by critics that stories determined by the dynamics of relationships among women often use a male figure to drive the story along at crucial moments in the narrative. The mother-daughter plot for many Lithuanian women of Radvilavičiūtė's generation and social type has been one from which the man is absent altogether. The underlying social and historical reasons for this are too complicated to explain here and are only marginally related to the fact that, statistically, women in Lithuania outnumber men considerably. It has more to do with the wider context of gender relationships in that part of the world. Specialists working on gender relationships in Soviet and post-Soviet Lithuania observe that neither the right to vote granted to women by the Lithuanian government in 1918, nor the subsequently introduced Soviet ideology that installed theoretical equality, canceled the patriarchal mindset of male comrades or the misogyny of the society of that time. Thus, throughout Soviet times and well into the era of reestablished independence (social relations do not change overnight the way governments do), in addition to achieving professionally and earning a living, women have been expected to be loving and caring wives, housewives and mothers, available lovers, and admiring partners in equal measure. Financially independent, extremely well-educated, and intelligent, many Lithuanian women have

naturally found themselves ill at ease with the conflicting gender roles available to them and therefore end up alone. "I've written about the inevitable solitude, that circle drawn around me by some unseen hand, that border only three creatures can cross without frightening me – the cat, my daughter, and Nobody. (Or, in order: my daughter, the cat, then Nobody)," – says Radvilavičiūtė's protagonist-narrator. "Nobody" is a loaded figure containing both an imaginary and ideal partner, the longing for him, and the impossibility of his existence in her real life.

At the beginning of "Awakenings," a powerful text about being a single woman in her forties, the protagonist says to her dead mother's photograph next to her bed: "When I wake up in a pool of sweat, most often at daybreak, I start to feel quite clearly that I myself belong to Nobody. My eyes are Nobody's. My arms are Nobody's. My legs, skin, nails, lungs, breath, and hair – Nobody's. It makes me feel terrible," to which the mother retorts: "Don't get carried away. You aren't Nobody's. I'll be thinking about you... for at least another few years." At these words, the narrator's daughter, sleeping next to her in the same bed, smacks her in the face, thus staging the first of the three awakenings featured in the essay and signalling the protagonist's belonging to the female lineage. The narrative moves on to her troublesome, but apparently still healthy heart, "the organ thought to be so vital to love," and, subsequently, to men – real and imaginary. The real ones feature Russia's president, Putin, committing atrocities in Chechnya, representing violence and the worst of male chauvinist power she feels threatened by; the US president, George W. Bush, referring only to the latter and therefore inspiring contempt rather than threat; a divorced heart-specialist, who conducts an ultrasound of the protagonist's heart and recommends she learn the joy of life from the drunks she sees in the street; and a well-dressed Lithuanian passerby, who, stopped by a toothless female beggar, "quickly unzips his jeans and puts his signifier of masculine power into her hand." The last two embody ordinary men she meets in the city of Vilnius who could potentially be let into that circle of solitude drawn around her. This not being a desirable option, the protagonist resorts to her imagination and

invents a man for herself, "an ordinary man. (An electrician.)," who cannot tell Tzvetaeva from Akhmatova, but "exudes peace and understanding," and continues to want her, even though she is "furious, sweaty, unshaven, and disgusting." However, before she does that and before she explains why such a man would not be an option either, the protagonist-narrator evokes yet another of her awakenings, the most beautiful and authentic of them all: "I generally do wake up a half-hour before I get out of bed. I call those thirty minutes my stolen time – stolen from the day, from my routine. You need it, not just to speak with the dead (as if they were alive), but also to gently, calmly, and respectfully remember some of the living (as if they were dead)." The stolen time is the time when the protagonist-narrator comes face-to-face with herself, with her loneliness and sadness, but also with her sense of self, with knowing who she is, where and with whom she truly belongs. In the final section, the essay launches into a farcical and genuinely funny sequence about the protagonist's new fiancé, who is supposed to move in with her, but presumably never does, because she wonders what would happen when, in the middle of the night, she wakes up for no reason and he asks why, she wouldn't know what to say: "In anticipation of this, the question fills me with horror, because... well, how will I ever manage to give him a short answer?" says the protagonist thus closing the circular composition of the piece.

Since I had only read Radvilavičiūtė's work in my native Lithuanian, it was strange to read it in English, let alone American English. That said, Radvilavičiūtė's texts in this translation have not lost much of their original urgency and fluidity; and although some of them have been slightly culturally adapted for the US audience, they have not lost the feel of the place and time they were written from. I enjoyed reading this collection of Radvilavičiūtė's work in translation almost as much as I enjoyed the original texts when they first came out, because they offer a rare glimpse into the mind of a contemporary Lithuanian woman whose main pastime is turning life into credible fiction.

Eglė Kačkutė

ABSTRACTS

Proximity, Interaction and Social Organization in Lithuania

Auksuolė Čepaitienė

The article discusses the ways in which Lithuanian people conceptualize social relations, prioritize one relationship over another, and transform one relationship into another, and how this is related to the aspects of social organization in Lithuania. The article focuses on ideas about family, kinship, and neighborhood that refer to different principles of relating and are inseparable from thinking about the nature of community and society, and suggests that the "spatial" sense and practice of proximity are influential factors of social ordering and of the ways people relate. It also shows that a "house," or in the case of Lithuania, a "homestead," is an institution that encompasses and localizes the physical proximity of the social and is significant in thinking about family, kinship, and neighborhood, as well as the constitution of group, community, and society in Lithuania.

Living in the Borderland: The Case of Polish-Lithuanians

Darius Daukšas

There has been a great deal of discussion recently in the social sciences that belonging to a nation-state does not depend entirely on citizenship in that state. Anthropologists note that living in a particular country does not necessarily imply a person's identification with that country. We are referring to a loyalty not construed by territory, but one that may cross the boundaries of one or several states. The borderland is one of the most sensitive areas where national and ethnic identities are most intensively reflected upon by the people living there. As a borderland, Šalčininkai provides a vivid illustration of interactions and changes in ethnic and national identity.

Defining Lithuanians

Vida Savoniakaitė

The article seeks to reveal the theories and practical aspects relative to the research issues of Lithuanian identity and how to critically assess the concept of "to be a Lithuanian". It is maintained that identity/alterity is a meaningful investigation in contemporary society. The article investigates the concept of "self" and "other" in history, the identities of the people of Lithuania, and their viewpoints on belonging to a nation, an ethnic group, a community, a territory, or similar concepts.

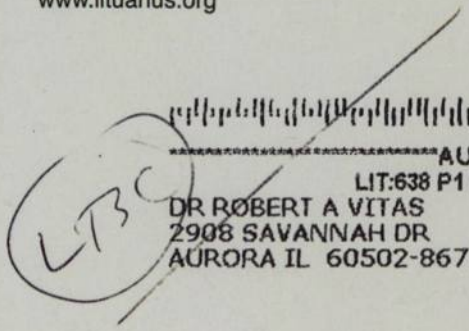
Contemporary Social Art Festivals as Intertextual Manifestations of Postmodern Cultural Identity

Vytautas Tumėnas

The search for cultural identity based on specific mythopoetical images and symbols can be treated as a manifestation of the aesthetic ideas of antimodernization, archaization, and folklorism. The author seeks to define the mythopoetical, textual, and codic aspects of the Lithuanian ornamental tradition and to reveal its intertextual vitality in modern culture, unfold the contextual links of these images within a broader Lithuanian and cross-cultural context, and demonstrate creative interpretations of traditional ornamental forms and symbolism in contemporary social art performances in Vilnius. The author concludes that modern symbols' links with the mythic tradition suggest a new significance, not only of national identity, but even more so as the expression of cultural identity based on mythological, interdisciplinary, and intertextual language associated with the paradigms of collectiveness, archaism, and traditionalism.

LITUANUS · 47 West Polk Street, Suite 100-300, Chicago, IL 60605-2000

www.lituanus.org



**********AUTO**3-DIGIT 605
LIT:638 P1 PK70
DR ROBERT A VITAS
2908 SAVANNAH DR
AURORA IL 60502-8677

LITUANUS THE LITHUANIAN QUARTERLY Vol. 60:4 (2014)