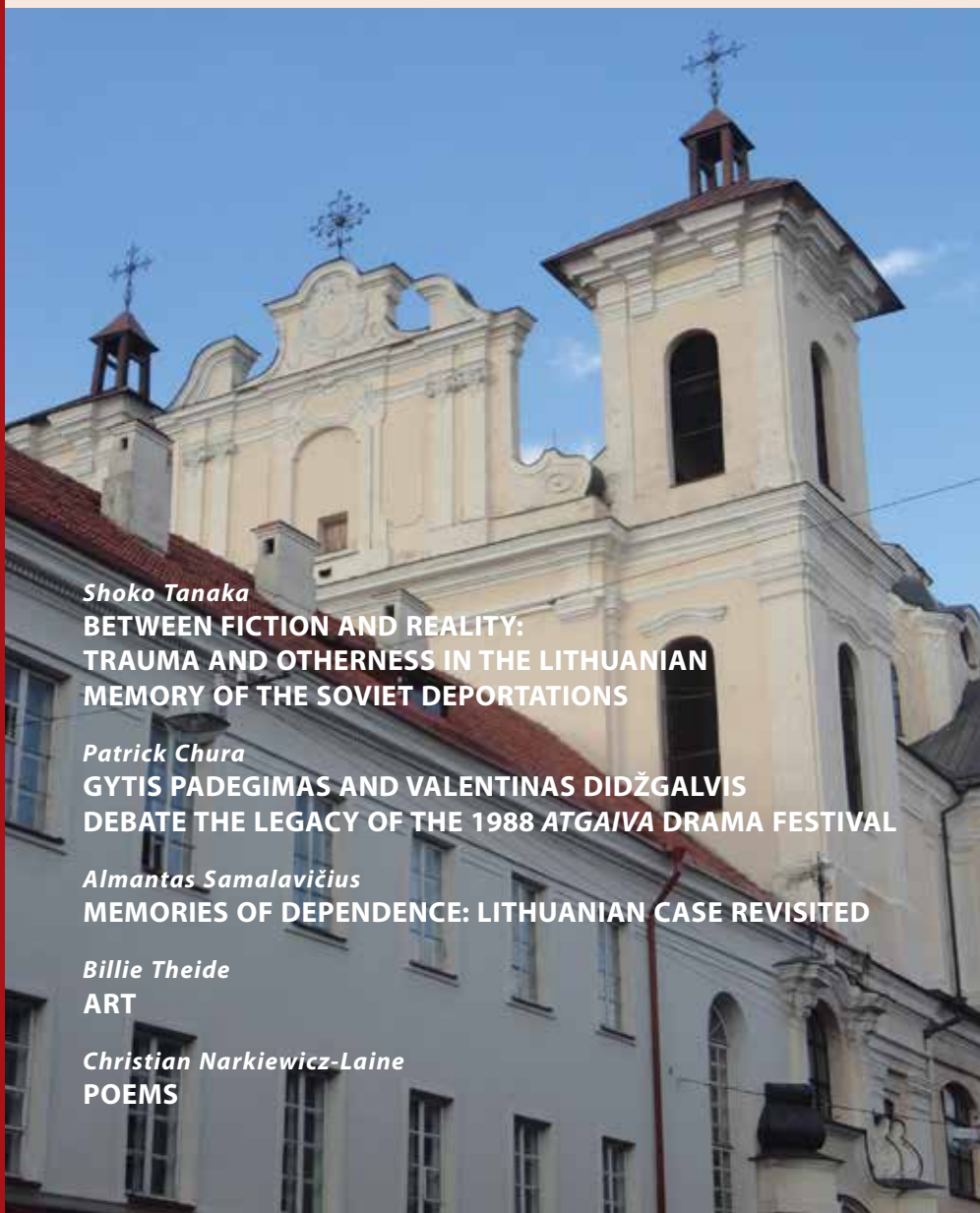
LITUANUS
THE LITHUANIAN QUARTERLY
Vol. 63:3 (2017)

LITUANUS

THE LITHUANIAN QUARTERLY VOLUME 63:3 (2017)



Shoko Tanaka
BETWEEN FICTION AND REALITY: TRAUMA AND OTHERNESS IN THE LITHUANIAN MEMORY OF THE SOVIET DEPORTATIONS

Patrick Chura
GYTIS PADEGIMAS AND VALENTINAS DIDŽGALVIS DEBATE THE LEGACY OF THE 1988 *ATGAIVA* DRAMA FESTIVAL

Almantas Samalavičius
MEMORIES OF DEPENDENCE: LITHUANIAN CASE REVISITED

Billie Theide
ART

Christian Narkiewicz-Laine
POEMS

LITUANUS

THE LITHUANIAN QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

VOLUME 63:3, Fall 2017

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.

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., Giedrius Subačius, 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 – 1,550 copies.
Individual subscriptions $30.00. Seniors/students $20.00.
Institutional print subscriptions $40.00. Electronic copy only $20.00.
 ISSN 0024–5089.
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

Contents

SHOKO TANAKA	5	*Between Fiction and Reality: Trauma and Otherness in the Lithuanian Memory of the Soviet Deportations*
PATRICK CHURA	23	*Gytis Padegimas and Valentinas Didžgalvis Debate the Legacy of the 1988* Atgaiva *Drama Festival*
ALMANTAS SAMALAVIČIUS	49	*Memories of Dependence: Lithuanian Case Revisited*
BILLIE THEIDE	69	*Art*
CHRISTIAN NARKIEWICZ-LAINE	77	*Poems*

BOOK REVIEWS
83

ABSTRACTS
96

Gytis Padegimas at the Atgaiva *Festival opening in 1988.* See article on page 23.
This photo and all photos in this article by Juozas Bindokas.

Between Fiction and Reality: Trauma and Otherness in the Lithuanian Memory of the Soviet Deportations

SHOKO TANAKA

1. Introduction

Lithuania is notorious for its tragic past and by long being in need of defining, re-defining, and raising public awareness of what Lithuanian-ness is in relation to its respective socio-political setting. On the one hand, some may go back to the times of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the thirteenth century and the subsequent breakup after the invasion of Russian forces in 1792, to find the awakening of Lithuania as a state.[1] Others, on the other hand, would recall the massacres of civilians, and the occupation and forced assimilation by the Soviets in the course of the twentieth century as what the core of the Lithuanian identity consists.[2] Lastly, dramatic changes in its political economy over the past decade should suggest the influence of Western Europe as the defining factor for the Lithuanian culture and identity to date.[3]

Among the countless tragic events in the history of Lithuania, what appears to be the most prominent discourse inevitably re-

[1] See, for example, Clarke, "Nationalism in Post-Soviet Lithuania," 163.

[2] See, for example, Dapkutė, "An Overview of the Emigration Processes." in Donskis, *Identity and Freedom*, 1–9.

[3] See, for example, Baločkaitė, "Between Mimesis and Non-existence." in Donskis, *Identity and Freedom*, 1–9.

SHOKO TANAKA received her MA in Political Science from the University of Bologna where she studied, among other subjects, social psychology of the post-Soviet space. She was awarded a scholarship to spend a year at Vytautas Magnus University for the academic year, 2013/14.

fers to the Holocaust. Indeed, the Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius holds a permanent exhibition dedicated to "Nazi occupation and the Holocaust in Lithuania", and the Ninth Fort Museum in Kaunas presents a 32-meter-tall sculpture built upon the place of massacre by the Nazis as its main visitor attraction. The Holocaust in Lithuania has also attracted scholarly attention, and a term "double genocide" referring to the atrocities instigated by Hitler and Stalin against Lithuania's Jews has been cited and discussed by scholars in Lithuania and internationally.[4]

This, however, does not mean the memory of the Soviet deportations from Lithuania has faded away. A number of memoirs by former deportees have been published and archived in some Lithuanian public institutions, the most well-known examples of which are the memoirs *A Stolen Youth, A Stolen Homeland;* and *Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea* written by Dalia Grinkevičiūtė.[5] The Museum of Genocide Victims exhibits a number of pictures that capture the living in the Soviet prisons and labor camps. Sharing this theme, a novel *Between Shades of Gray* written by Ruta Sepetys was published in 2011. The novel follows the life of a 15-year-old Lithuanian girl Lina who was deported to Siberia with her mother and her brother as well as other fellow Lithuanian deportees.[6] The novel has been translated from its original English language into many languages and was well-received internationally including Lithuania. It was one of the New York Times' Bestsellers. Concerning this, a Lithuanian sociologist based in the United Kingdom, Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, writes in an article:

> the first major novel about Soviet deportations of Lithuanians was written not by a native Lithuanian writer, but by the American novelist Ruta Sepetys (*Between Shades of Grey*, 2011). This, I

[4] See, for example, Budrytė, "We Call It Genocide," 92; Cohen, "The Suffering Olympics"; Freedland, "I See Why."

[5] Raškauskienė, "Deportation and the Self," 2–3; Sambrooke, "Narratives of Identity."

[6] Penguin Group, *Between Shades of Gray*.

> suggest, leads us to ask a lot of questions about the role and status of 'hegemonic ethno-nationalist narratives' in the broad fields of Lithuanian cultural policy and the cultural sector.[7]

Rindzevičiūtė's remark as well as the novel's reception in Lithuania necessarily raise questions such as: why was it not until the publication of *Between Shades of Gray* that discourse on the Soviet deportations gained popularity in Lithuania? What does Rindzevičiūtė mean by "hegemonic ethno-nationalist narratives" in the Lithuanian context?

By way of unfolding these questions, this article unpacks the phenomena of Lithuania's historical consciousness and cultural trauma rooted in the memory of the Soviet deportations, and illustrates the shaping of culture and identity of post-Soviet Lithuania. The article analyzes some significant textual ways in which Lithuanian society perceives and portrays Otherness in the post-Soviet context, and attempts to illuminate Lithuanian-ness embedded in its memory of the deportations. The article is significant in that it employs sources that are made available in English. This enables the article to translate what Lithuania projects to the eye of Other as its remembrance of the Soviet deportations to an international audience.

Thus, the article first attempts to gain insights into the shaping of culture and identity of the Baltic space and Lithuania by synthesizing articles written by scholars who specialize in Baltic studies. This enables a discussion and investigation into how the novel *Between Shades of Gray* has been received in Lithuanian society in the following section of this essay. The article introduces reviews of the novel by three Lithuanian scholars, which the article uses as examples of Lithuania's reception of the novel. The case studies are then grounded in the concepts of historical consciousness and cultural trauma, as studied by Jörn Rüsen, and by Neil J. Smelser and Jeffery C. Alexander respectively. By way of articulating intersections between the socio-cultural dy-

[7] Rindzevičiūtė, "Hegemony or Legitimacy?," 177.

namics and the representation of the memory of the Soviet past in contemporary Lithuania, the article aims at projecting Lithuania's remembrance of the traumas rooted in the deportations through foreign voices.

2. Culture and Identity of Post-Soviet Baltic Space and Lithuania

The past two decades have seen a surge of discussions about what Baltic-ness or Lithuanian-ness are, where they are derived from and how they have been represented. Among them, a number of scholars have consulted the postcolonial perspective to define and/or re-define the shaping of post-Soviet Baltic or Lithuanian culture and identity, the insights of which have been gathered in a book *Baltic Postcolonialism: On the Boundary of Two Worlds: Identity, Freedom and Moral Imagination in the Baltics* edited by Violeta Kelertas.

In simple terms, postcolonialism mainly concerns art works produced by the colonized, and analyzes, explains, and responds to the cultural legacy of colonialism.[8] The fundamental premise of this discipline is the fluidity of culture, and it also examines the engagement of language in socio-cultural dimensions. Hence, the postcolonial perspective is discursive by nature and helps grasp the being of culture, and the identity of the previously colonized. Furthermore, Ashcroft notes:

> It [postcolonial studies] was never conceived of as a grand theory but as a methodology: first, for analyzing the many strategies by which colonized societies have engaged imperial discourse; and second, for studying the ways in which many of those strategies are shared by colonized societies, re-emerging in very different political and cultural circumstances.[9]

[8] Ashcroft, *Post-colonial Transformation*. 2–3.
[9] Ibid., 7.

Seeing postcolonialism not as a theory but as a methodology which helps observe and analyze culture and identity, frees the traditional focus on the geo-politics and history of the Third World, and allows an application to an evolving socio-cultural space in a broader spectrum.

One of the contributors to the book, Karl E. Jirgens points to a degree of exclusionism within Baltic scholarly circles[10] and the correlations between economy and dynamics of culture, by which he suggests the Baltic space has been underrated due to its relative economic weaknesses within the European Union.[11] As a result, the static culture becomes a hotbed of what he calls "double-speak"; a tendency of Baltic scholars to promote their own views which are often caught in "ruptured or traumatized psyches" rooted in the memory of the Soviet atrocities, while being tentative in the international arena so as to avoid challenging interactions with non-Baltic scholars.[12]

> The Baltic tendency towards "open" texts that fuse postcolonial reactions with postmodern structures generates expressions that tend to be associational rather than linear, absurd rather than rational, disjunctive rather than unified, dialogical rather than monological. […] Such expressions can be read as a rejection of imposed conventions and limiting worldviews. […] Baltic writers meld an ironic and postcolonial sense of psychic dismemberment and a profound awareness of the polysemic plan available through the ambiguities of language that is as much in keeping with their ancient cultural heritage as it is with contemporary postmodern innovation.[13]

His analysis shows how the shaping of culture and identity in the Baltic space are intertwined with the traumas of the Soviet past, and that it is the traumas that have kept the Baltics' ties so tight that there is little room for the Other to interact with them.

[10] Jirgens, "Fusions of Discourse," 47–48.
[11] Ibid., 51.
[12] Ibid., 61.
[13] Ibid., 72.

Another contributor to the book, Arūnas Sverdiolas, uses sieve and honeycomb as metaphors for the postcolonial presence in Lithuania.[14] The sieve represents language barriers, English not being sufficiently learnt or used, and Russian being neglected and diminishing. That leads him to coin another metaphor to illustrate the constellation of culture in Lithuania.

> The cellar structure of cultural space creates an absence of public space for open discussion where differing perspectives could confront each other, where contrary arguments would be heard and answers would be hammered out for others and for oneself, thus pushing things forward. Usually there is no communication and no cooperation, not because attitudes cannot be reconciled or hostility clearly expressed, but because of passivity or a lack of knowledge about the existence of the other.[15]

Ironically, his article was originally written in Lithuanian and translated into English by the editor Kelertas. Thus the article exemplifies the sieve and honeycomb by itself and becomes a testament to the contradiction, frustration, and provinciality that he claims are the characteristics of post-Soviet Lithuania.

Violeta Kelertas depicts Lithuania's postcoloniality as a toddler "who as yet has little understanding of where his boundaries are and easily yields to feelings of omnipotence leading to megalomania".[16] She also writes:

> The toys and accoutrements are totally Western but since postcolonial man is disillusioned, neglected, rejected, and unprepared for the West being little different from the East, he has to 'grow up' starting from infanthood and go through all the stages.[17]

While her article testifies to the fluidity of culture and identity being present in post-Soviet Lithuania, it is also significant that she draws on a parallel between Lithuania's immature con-

14 Sverdiolas, "The Sieve and the Honeycomb," 233.
15 Ibid., 248.
16 Kelertas, "Perceptions of the Self," 265.
17 Ibid., 266.

sciousness and the West which has gone so far that Lithuania can only follow the paths that the West has paved already.

Subsequent to the publication of the book, Rimas Žilinskas had written a review and published it in *Lituanus* in 2008. Concurring with most of the arguments submitted in the book, he pointedly mentions that what he calls "the post-Soviet sense of self" stems from a deep pathology and the correlations between economic weaknesses and static culture that have been troubling the post-Soviet space.[18] He also writes on the ambiguity and frustration among Baltic scholars as regards the engagement of international scholars in discussing what Baltic postcoloniality is.[19] On the other hand, the countless references to the Soviet past have necessarily kept the Baltics caught in "ruptured or traumatized psyches". Lastly, the articles themselves become a testament to the memory of the Soviet past being embedded in the culture and identity of the Baltic space and Lithuania. Hence, the Baltic-ness or Lithuanian-ness cannot be discussed without touching on the bitter legacy of the past.

3. *Between Shades of Gray* and Lithuania's Memory of the Soviet Deportations

The novel *Between Shades of Gray* written by Ruta Sepetys who is a granddaughter of a former Lithuanian escapee, was published in March 2011.[20] The novel follows the life of Lina, her mother and her brother as well as other fellow Lithuanian deportees in the era of the Stalinist oppressions of the mid-twentieth century. The story is written in the first person from the perspective of Lina and involves themes like love, human cruelty, hardship and memory of the deportations. The novel, originally intended for young adult readers, has enjoyed positive

[18] Žilinskas, "Book Review."
[19] Ibid.
[20] Sepetys, *Ruta Sepetys*.

reviews from readers world-wide and was nominated for prominent literary awards in 2012, while becoming one of the New York Times Bestsellers.[21]

The novel was also well received in Lithuania. That is a peculiar phenomenon because, firstly, the novel was written by Sepetys who is foreign to the experience of the deportations. Indeed, Sepetys has developed the story based on a number of accounts that she collected from the deportation survivors.[22] Secondly, there has not been much popular literature on the topic except for two memoirs *A Stolen Youth, A Stolen Homeland* and *Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea* written by a former deportee Dalia Grinkevičiūtė.[23] Hence, the novel's popularity two decades after the re-establishment of statehood suggests a telling undercurrent of Lithuania's memory of the Soviet deportations. What role, then, has Sepetys' Otherness played in the reception of the novel in Lithuania and what does that suggest to Lithuania's remembrance of the Soviet deportations?

3.1. THE RECEPTION OF *BETWEEN SHADES OF GRAY* IN LITHUANIA. In her review, Rasa Avižienis first gives Sepetys' brief biography, and then comments on an occasion when she attended Sepetys' book signing event held in the Lithuanian World Center in Lemont, Illinois, upon the publication of the novel.

> In discussions of World War II, Balts have often, with disappointment and anger, questioned why so little attention is paid to the crimes that Stalin committed against the Baltic nations. […] Maybe the time has finally come. Maybe what was needed was someone to present these historical events in an interesting way.
>
> Sepetys [...] joked about how difficult it is to have such a Lithuanian name, yet not speak the language and not having ever participated in the activities of the Lithuanian community. Perhaps this is exactly what helped her to tell this story of de-

21 Ibid.

22 Penguin Group, *Between Shades of Gray*.

23 See above, note 5.

> portations, helped to give voice to "those whose voices were extinguished."[24]

Her comments point to the presence of a long-standing demand for an account about the Soviet suppression, which the novel has successfully fulfilled by virtue of Sepetys being foreign to the Lithuanian culture. Avižienis continues:

> Perhaps what is best about this book is that it was not written in anger or bitterness. Rather, the reader feels profound anguish and compassion, as if hearing the plea, "Look what happened to us."[25]

With that noted, it becomes evident her understanding of general humane sentiments, often thought to be appreciated by young adult readers, contributed to the novel's success. Thus, Avižienis' review indicates it was Sepetys' obliviousness to the Soviet atrocities that helped curtail the historical darkness and instead bring to light human benevolence amid extreme suffering. This has effectively made the novel acceptable to many Lithuanians including those who are young and as oblivious to the Soviet past as the author Sepetys.

Meanwhile, Ramūnas Čičelis writes about the novel (which was presented at an international book fair with the theme, "Open the World", held in Vilnius in 2012):

> Since Sepetys spent a large portion of her life around Hollywood, it was not surprising that *Between Shades of Gray*, […] displayed features of historical melodrama. Many Lithuanian readers were worried about the book's orientation towards popular culture. Readers from other nations apparently had fewer such reservations. Some Lithuanian critics pointed out the many historical inaccuracies to be found in the book. Even though they were right, one should not demand absolute factual precision from a novel that is only based on real events.
>
> Sepetys's novel is a success because it broadcasts Lithuanian suffering during and after World War II on an international scale.

[24] Avižienis, "Book Review."
[25] Ibid.

> During the book's presentation, the author recalled an American history professor telling her it was only from reading *Between Shades of Gray* that he first learned of the deportations that had befallen so many Lithuanians. In this way, one nation's story becomes part of the general international postwar destiny.[26]

The text reflects his unsettling approaches to the novel and to Sepetys. That is, on the one hand, he shows a degree of disapproval of the narratives' inaccurate historical accounts in favor of a popular culture presentation. On the other hand, he acknowledges and appreciates the novel for making known Lithuania's tremendous suffering internationally. Besides, commenting on the novel in more generic terms, he writes:

> Sepetys fosters a value contemporary society often forgets: moral sensitivity to another human being's pain. In telling the story of one girl's life, the author creates, as it were, a history of collective Lithuanian memory: in spite of all of history's wrongs, we have kept our pride and held our heads high. In this way, she has become a Lithuanian national by merging into a common experience that she lived through very compassionately.[27]

It is significant that, for the novel's noteworthy contribution to Lithuania, Čičelis writes as if he is giving Sepetys a membership in Lithuanian society. While that is indicative of how well the novel has been received in Lithuania, Čičelis' accreditation itself becomes a testament to the perceived Sepetys' Otherness to the Lithuanian culture and society.

Lastly, Audronė Raškauskienė also comments on the novel and notes:

> The book *Between Shades of Gray* by Ruta Sepetys stands out among other books (usually memoirs written by people who witnessed the Gulag and spent years in deportation in Siberia and who are not professional writers), especially in that it is written both in English and Lithuanian. It is especially important

[26] Čičelis, "The 2012 International Vilnius Book Fair."
[27] Ibid.

> that the book has reached a wider audience (being written in English), as the world at large has tended to overlook the problem of deportation and the genocide of the Baltic nations (Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians) that took place in the years 1941–1948.[28]

It is remarkable that she first points to Sepetys' unfamiliarity with the experience of the deportations and then gives the novel credit for illuminating the memory of the Soviet past in the Baltic space.

What the reviews by Avižienis, Čičelis and Raškauskienė all seem to agree on is, firstly, the novel has had an admirable impact by bringing to light what the Soviet Union has done to Lithuania in the international arena. Though embracing Sepetys' work, they also highlight her Otherness to the experience of the Soviet suppression. Lastly, the three find in the novel, the Otherness to be an important asset, and suggest it is this Otherness that has enabled her to narrate the deportations in ways that have led the novel to be popular world-wide. Above all, the fact that the three Lithuanian critics have expressed such views in English, highlights their disposition to endorse Sepetys' work, and acknowledges her Otherness before an international audience. All of this hints to a somewhat ethno-nationalist sentiment. It follows that the Lithuanian readers see Sepetys' Otherness as a prerequisite for the novel to be narrated and, it was the Otherness that has enabled her to re-tell the memory of the Soviet deportations.

3.2. HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS; INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN CULTURE, IDENTITY AND MEMORY. Historical consciousness is, in terms studied by Rüsen, an agent that mediates between moral values derived from historical memory and action-oriented actuality of the present.[29] It is a socio-historical construct, and "ties the past to the present in a manner that

[28] From a structured interview that I individually conducted with Audronė Raškauskienė on July 15, 2016.

[29] Rüsen, "Historical Consciousness," 66.

bestows on present actuality a future perspective".[30] Its functions are temporal in a sense that they are dependent on the dynamics of given contexts, and the spheres of its influence involve in "external practical life" and the "internal subjectivity of the actors".[31] In other words, historical consciousness helps comprehend the shaping of human actions, while it encourages the self-understanding of the rationale behind ongoing actions and events. Historical consciousness helps make sense of past memories in a present time, which in effect allows individuals to expand its identity beyond its lifespan and become part of a temporal whole.[32]

To further elaborate, Rüsen lists four types of historical consciousness. A traditional type which defines and maintains social groups and/or whole societies.[33] This type translates historical consciousness into unquestionable moral codes so as to ensure the stability and continuity of the culture and collectivity. An exemplary type, like rules or systems, which encompasses the morality of a value that is embodied in social and personal life.[34] Next, a critical type which approaches historical consciousness in a way that reinterprets and discredits the orientation of life insofar as it is unfit for given circumstances.[35] Lastly, a genetic type which presumes historical memory to be temporal and changeable as per different time and actualities, which paradoxically evokes a sense of permanence and continuity of the culture and/or society.[36]

Clearly, Lithuania's culture and identity being intertwined with the memory of the Soviet past, as the references to the postcolonial perspective demonstrate, concur with the idea of historical consciousness at large. In addition, the references to

30 Ibid., 67.
31 Ibid., 68.
32 Ibid., 68–69.
33 Ibid., 71.
34 Ibid., 73.
35 Ibid., 74.
36 Ibid., 76.

the postcolonial perspective by Baltic and Lithuanian scholars suggest the historical consciousness follows a genetic type, embracing a fluid culture and identity of the post-Soviet space. Notably, Rüsen writes:

> Within the horizon of this kind of [the genetic type] historical consciousness, moral values become temporalized, morality shedding its static nature. Development and change belong to the morality of values conceptualized in terms of a pluralism of viewpoints and the acceptance of the concrete 'otherness' of the other and mutual acknowledgement of that 'otherness' as the dominant notion of moral valuation.[37]

To put it differently, the text says that Otherness is a prerequisite for developing and addressing a new sense of morality out of prevalent historical consciousness. Historical consciousness is triggered by context dependent variables, hence the morality as well has to absorb the variability of the given context in question.

3.3. CULTURAL TRAUMA: INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN MEMORY, SOCIETY AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY. According to Smelser, cultural trauma is:

> a memory accepted and publicly given credence by a relevant membership group and evoking an event or situation which is a) laden with negative affect; b) represented as indelible; and c) regarded as threatening a society's existence or violating one or more of its fundamental cultural presuppositions.[38]

Hence, cultural trauma cannot be explained analogous to psychological trauma as it is dependent on the contingency of "forever changing and ongoing social and political conditions and on ongoing processes of negotiation and contestation among groups".[39]

[37] Ibid., 77.
[38] Smelser, "Psychological Trauma," 44.
[39] Ibid., 51.

Alexander also reflects on cultural trauma and explains the processes in which cultural trauma develops at a societal level.[40] The processes begin with "claim making" where certain crucial event in the past becomes elaborated and addressed by "carrier groups", namely agents of the processes with material interests and public influence.[41] The claim is contested amid "audience and situation" which can decide whether or not to accept the claim as the representation of social entity,[42] leading to a "cultural classification" stage where the extent to which the claim contributes to the social responsibility or values is decided.[43] The last stage is "identity, revision, memory, and routinization" which encompasses:

> a sociological process that defines a painful injury to the collectivity, establishes the victim, attributes responsibility, and distributes the ideal and material consequences. […] This identity revision means that there will be a searching re-remembering of the collective past, for memory is not only social and fluid but deeply connected to the contemporary sense of the self.[44]

Grounding the case studies on the novel in the concept of cultural trauma, elucidates a shift in the socio-cultural dynamics of post-Soviet Lithuania towards a direction where Lithuanians have become capable of embracing the narratives on the deportations through the voices of Sepetys who is foreign to the experience of the actual event. By so understanding the concept of cultural trauma, it also helps reflect the society's desire to revisit and renew its long-standing historical consciousness, given the current "audience and situation" most of which have a lesser knowledge of and links to the Soviet atrocities, and are often in support of further integration into the E.U.

40 Alexander, "Toward a Theory," 1–30.
41 Ibid., 11.
42 Ibid., 12.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., 22.

3.4. TRAUMA AND OTHERNESS IN THE LITHUANIAN MEMORY OF THE SOVIET DEPORTATIONS. Introducing the concepts of historical consciousness and cultural trauma to the reception of *Between Shades of Gray*, enables a better grasp of Lithuania's remembrance of the Soviet deportations to date. Given the four types of historical consciousness, and noting how the novel has sparked an open dialogue about the Soviet past in Lithuania, there is a shift in the mindset of the people as regards the remembrance of the bitter history. And, it is precisely in this scope that Sepetys' Otherness comes in as a mediator to make the ways of remembrance compatible with the current socio-cultural outlook. In this respect, it is noteworthy that cultural trauma can expand its circle of influence; in other words, the group of people for which it is responsible, when alien individuals show sympathy to the event that cultural trauma originates from.[45] Recalling how the three scholars acknowledge the novel's contribution to Lithuanian society and culture, and how Čičelis writes as if he invites Sepetys into the circle of Lithuanian society, the novel's reception in Lithuania may suggest a crack in its socio-cultural shelter inherited from Soviet times.

4. Conclusion

The article has discussed the role that Sepetys' Otherness has played in opening a dialogue about the Soviet deportations in contemporary Lithuania. By referring to the postcolonial perspective, the article has elucidated the shaping of Lithuanian culture and identity encompassing the "ruptured or traumatized psyches". Building on this, this article has looked at Lithuania's reception of *Between Shades of Gray* in line with the concepts of historical consciousness and cultural trauma, and has explained how Sepetys' Otherness to the experience of the Soviet atrocities has enabled her to narrate the deportations. By touching on cul-

[45] Ibid., 1.

tural trauma, meanwhile, the article has also illuminated Lithuania's desire to revisit and renew the remembrance of the deportations so as to better embody the "contemporary sense of the self". All of this enables us to respond to the questions that Rindzevičiūtė's remark on the novel evokes: *Between Shades of Gray* had to be narrated by the American Sepetys who is Other to the traumas rooted in the Soviet deportations. The novel could not have been narrated otherwise, for "hegemonic ethno-nationalist narratives" which stem from the traumas and are therefore exclusive only to the Lithuanians, sit at the depth of Lithuania's culture and identity. Hence, the fact that the novel has been well-received in Lithuania, is a testament to underwater changes in the shaping of culture and identity that had kept the Lithuanians locked in the memory of the Soviet past.

The article's aim is ultimately to reveal the gaps in historical consciousness between the Lithuania of the past and the present – in other words the inconsistency in socio-cultural dimensions incurred due to the underlying effects of the legacy of the Soviet Union on the one hand, and the growing consciousness of an independent Lithuania on the other hand. With this understanding, the phenomena translate how the Lithuanians want to be seen by the international community, speaking of both the development and struggles that the country has experienced ever since the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Works cited

Alexander, Jeffrey C. "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma." In *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, eds. Alexander, Eyerman, et al., Berkeley, LA: University of California Press, 2004.

Ashcroft, Bill. *Post-colonial Transformation*. London: Routledge, 2001.

Avižienis, Rasa. "Book Review," *Lituanus*, 53(3). Accessed April 2, 2017. http://www.lituanus.org/2011/11_3_11BR5_Sepetys.html

Baločkaitė, Rasa. "Between Mimesis and Non-existence: Lithuania in Europe, Europe in Lithuania." Accessed April 2, 2017. http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2008-05-08-balockaite-en.html

Budrytė, Dovilė. '"We Call It Genocide": Soviet Deportations and Repression in the Memory of Lithuanians.' In *The Genocidal Temptation: Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Rwanda and Beyond*, ed. Robert S. Frey, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004.

Čičelis, Ramūnas. "The 2012 International Vilnius Book Fair: a Subjective Map of Lithuanian Literature," *Lituanus*, 59(1). Accessed April 2, 2017. http://www.lituanus.org/2013/13_1_06Cicelis.html

Clarke, Terry D. 'Nationalism in Post-Soviet Lithuania: New Approaches for the Nation of "Innocent Sufferers".' In *After Independence: Making and Protecting the Nation in Postcolonial and Postcommunist States*, ed. Lowell W. Barrington. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2006.

Cohen, Roger. "The Suffering Olympics," *The New York Times*. Accessed April 2, 2017. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/31/opinion/the-suffering-olympics.html?_r=0

Dapkutė, Daiva. "An Overview of the Emigration Processes of Lithuanians," *Lituanus,* 58(3). Accessed April 2, 2017. http://www.lituanus.org/2012/12_3_01Dapkute.html

Donskis, Leonidas. *Identity and Freedom: Mapping Nationalism and Social Criticism in Twentieth-century Lithuania*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Freedland, Jonathan. 'I See Why "Double Genocide" Is a Term Lithuanians Want. But It Appeals Me,' *The Guardian*. Accessed April 2, 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/sep/14/double-genocide-lithuania-holocaust-communism

Jirgens, Karl E. "Fusions of Discourse: Postcolonial/Postmodern Horizons in Baltic Culture." In *Baltic Postcolonialism*, ed. Violeta Kelertas, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006.

Kauno IX Forto Muziejus. Accessed April 2, 2017. http://www.9fortomuziejus.lt/?lang=en

Kelertas, Violeta. "Perceptions of the Self and the Other in Lithuanian Postcolonial Fiction." In *Baltic Postcolonialism*, ed. Violeta Kelertas, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006.

Penguin Group. *Between Shades of Gray*. Accessed April 2, 2017. http://www.betweenshadesofgray.com/index.php

Raškauskienė, Audronė. 'Deportation and the Self in Dalia Grinkevičiūtė's Memoirs "A Stolen Youth, A Stolen Homeland" and "Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea"'. In *The European Journal of Life Writing*, (3), 2014.

Raškauskienė, Audronė. A structured interview that I individually conducted in Kaunas, Lithuania on July 15, 2016.

Rindzevičiūtė, Eglė. "Hegemony or Legitimacy? Assembling Soviet Deportations in Lithuanian Museums." In *Maps of Memory: Trauma, Identity and Exile in Deportation Memoirs from the Baltic States*, eds. Violeta Davoliūtė and Tomas Balkelis, Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 2012.

Rüsen, Jörn. "Historical Consciousness: Narrative Structure, Moral Function, and Ontogenetic Development." In *Theorizing Historical Consciousness,* ed. Peter Seixas, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.

Sambrooke, Jerilyn. 'Narratives of Identity: a Postcolonial Reading of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė's "Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea",' *Lituanus*, 54(4). Accessed April 2, 2017. http://www.lituanus.org/2008/08_4_02%20Sambrooke.html

Sepetys, Ruta. *Ruta Sepetys*. Accessed April 2, 2017. http://rutasepetys.com/books/between-shades-of-gray/

Smelser, Neil J. "Psychological Trauma and Cultural Trauma." In *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity,* eds. Alexander, Eyerman, et al., Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004.

Sverdiolas, Arūnas. "The Sieve and the Honeycomb: Features of Contemporary Lithuanian Cultural Time and Space." In *Baltic Postcolonialism,* ed. Violeta Kelertas, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006.

The Museum of Genocide Victims. Accessed August 19, 2016. http://genocid.lt/centras/en/

Žilinskas, Rimas. "Book Review," *Lituanus*, 54(2). Accessed May 1, 2017. http://www.lituanus.org/2008/08_2_05%20Kelertas.html

Gytis Padegimas and Valentinas Didžgalvis Debate the Legacy of the 1988 *Atgaiva* Drama Festival

PATRICK CHURA

Often big things happen that are disregarded at the time, and later we suddenly realize, "Wow, that was the beginning."

Gytis Padegimas

A few months before a short teaching visit to Šiauliai in November 2015, I emailed the city's Povilas Višinskis Public Library with the idea of opening an oral history archive that would house and preserve memories of the *Atgaiva* Drama Festival of December 1988. I attached a copy of "Ten Days that Shook Lithuania," an article I did for *Lituanus* in 2013 that described *Atgaiva* – the first Lithuanian drama festival to take place outside the restrictions of Soviet censorship – as "a declaration of Lithuanian cultural independence from the Soviet Union that preceded the country's political independence by some fifteen months." I offered to get the *Atgaiva* archive started while in town by recording the first interviews and promised to translate the interviews into English for the archive website. The library was receptive and assigned a talented young staff historian, Jonė Gorytė, to help with the project.

During the brief 14 days we worked together, I came to think it beneficial that Jonė and I were both, in a way, outsiders. Born in Šiauliai the year *Atgaiva* had taken place, Jonė represented the younger generation that had been told very little about the fes-

PATRICK CHURA is a professor in the English department at the University of Akron, where he teaches courses in American literature and culture studies. He has been a Fulbright lecturer in Lithuania, the United Kingdom, and Vietnam.

tival. Several of those we interviewed would gesture in her direction when speaking about the need for memories of *Atgaiva* to be collected and preserved. I am a non-Lithuanian who knew nothing about the historic festival until spring 2009, when I became deeply interested in it during a five-month Fulbright grant to Šiauliai University. We made a good, diligent team because the importance of *Atgaiva* was obvious to us and the reasons it had been largely forgotten were not.

Two of the interviews we did were especially thought-provoking when looked at side-by-side. From talking with Valentinas Didžgalvis in his Kaunas apartment on November 24, 2015 and Gytis Padegimas a day later in the café of the State Theater of Klaipėda, we learned about the context of the festival, its logistics, politics, and its dynamic atmosphere. It was interesting, for example, that Didžgalvis and Padegimas both used the word "euphoria" to describe the festival mood, yet held radically different opinions about the festival's meaning.

Didžgalvis, 63, a 1980 graduate of the Leningrad Theater, Music and Film Studies Institute, was the Communications Director for the Šiauliai Theater during *Atgaiva*. He wrote press releases and served as the contact and festival spokesman for visiting theater critics. He was also responsible for two of the festival's great achievements: the program of "Morning Reflections," an academic conference that essentially reopened the previously banned field of Lithuanian culture studies, and the publication of four issues of the *Atgaiva Bulletin*, an impressively designed newspaper about all aspects of the festival, including the dangerous topics its plays raised. Didžgalvis's *Bulletin* was wildly popular, with a total circulation of 6,000 copies that quickly ran out and were passed among multiple readers. Significantly, the *Bulletin* not only included daring articles but broke with Soviet tradition by publishing uncensored next-day play reviews. Standard Soviet practice was to publish reviews sometimes weeks after the play premier, after the critic had discussed the performance with peers and passed the content through the censors. Next-day drama reviews had not happened in Lithuania since the period of independence before World War II.

Jonė and I met Didžgalvis in Kaunas, where he lives alone in a typical Soviet era apartment building. His small flat is cluttered but comfortable and simply furnished, with bare walls except for a few tasteful paintings. Its interior immediately reminded me of the Lithuanian apartments I had seen when I first arrived in the country more than two decades earlier in 1992.

Not one to follow the majority or conform, Didžgalvis responded with indifference to preliminary interview questions about his background and education. Rather than reciting the litany of schools he'd attended, he saved time by declaring, "They kicked me out of two schools!" In explaining why this happened and how he had evaded the norms of a philistine society he expressed something essential:

> Because I was a long-hair. Also I told the truth. And that was a big minus. And because of that I couldn't get into any universities. I finished high school in 1972, and you can probably imagine how things were for hippies in 1972. Once you showed yourself in the street, there was no chance of getting accepted to a university, you couldn't even think of it. But I was clever, I decided to work for a living and they took me on as a laborer. There they didn't pay any attention to my hair, by the way. So I got a job, got good recommendations, and after that, there was nothing for me in Lithuania so I left for St. Petersburg. No one paid attention to my appearance there – they saw you purely in a professional way. So I was accepted to the Leningrad Theater, Music and Film Institute, in the department of Theater Studies. Right away after that, I got a position in the [Lithuanian] Academy of Sciences where they accepted me very warmly and I worked with an excellent team of colleagues.

Padegimas, 65, met us at the stage entrance to the State Drama Theater of Klaipėda. He did not seem at all preoccupied though final rehearsals were going on that afternoon for his production of *Karalienė Liuzė*, an Arvydas Juozaitis play about Klaipėda's chaotic history during the Napoleonic wars. Padegimas, the primary organizer and driving force of *Atgaiva*, has himself experienced history's instabilities and oscillations. He gave us a quick tour of the beautiful theater just renovated with

EU funds, and led us to the café. A large man, he loomed over and dominated a tiny round cocktail table, speaking very fast, telling us about his formative years with passionate intensity:

> In my childhood I spent a lot of time visiting my grandparents in their tiny village, and because I was curious I used to climb into the loft, and hidden in that loft was the military officer's uniform of my grandmother's brother, who died from working in a uranium mine, and his huge library. Another uncle of mine we called the "American;" he had returned from the United States and brought a set of encyclopedias. […] So before I went into military service I had read about art and culture from what those two uncles left behind. I was practically raised reading that material, and if people asked how I knew so much, I'd say, from those books! I read that encyclopedia like a novel, all the volumes in order. I grew up with the idealism I'd learned from my father and my extended family, and that idealism sunk deep roots into my consciousness. I try to think far beyond my narrow personal interests. I think that many things now considered worthless and uncool might in time acquire great value.
>
> […] I was also greatly influenced by the desire not to become "Russified." In every little village the old grandmothers always told me "don't come back a Russian." And to throw off that Russian influence, I went every summer on "Ethnologic Expeditions" through the countryside with Norbertas Vėlius, our very famous ethnographer. My whole family went on these – my father, my mother – to collect material. I gathered material about the folk theater then, about the harvest plays and where they were staged, who produced and performed them, etc. This was a practice that was closely watched by the KGB, which later banned it because it was a "nationalist" movement. I remember once when we drove with my parents' Volga to a meeting with some locals in Belarus, in the Lithuanian enclave in Belarus, there were twelve of us all together – and sitting on my lap was the sister of Čiurlionis, the elderly professor Jadvyga Čiurlionytė.

What follows is a compilation of excerpts from the November 2015 interviews, edited for clarity and arranged under introductory material.

Context of *Atgaiva*

On June 3, 1988, Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sąjūdis *was formed in Vilnius as a response to Gorbachev's program of Perestroika.* Sąjūdis *expressed concern about the state of Lithuania's environment and the future of Lithuanian culture and language, also advocating a stronger voice for the creative intelligentsia in national life and a restructuring of school curriculum around the teaching of Lithuanian history. On August 23 of that year, 200,000 Lithuanians gathered in Vilnius's Vingis Park to speak out on the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact and the tragic consequences of the incorporation of the Baltic States into the USSR in 1940. Two months later, on October 27, a resolution passed by the Artists Union of the Lithuanian TSR at its Joint Open Party Meeting stated, "We publicly declare our dissatisfaction with the current and previous actions of the leadership of the LTSR Ministry of Culture and view these actions as unsuitable to present national interests. We suggest that the Ministry immediately formulate and publicly announce a general program for the creation and strengthening of national culture and a plan for the realization of this program."*[1]

The stated goals of the Atgaiva *festival, held in Šiauliai from December 12–21, 1988, were "to produce the best Lithuanian classic and contemporary dramatic works, and to stimulate the participation of theater professionals in the rebirth of Lithuanian national culture." Promoting the festival just before its opening, Padegimas envisioned it as "a means of analyzing the nation's consciousness," rediscovering the "essential values" of its people, and "returning status" to a national theater that had been "forced to adjust itself to the priorities of the Ministry of Culture" for far too long.*[2] *The response to* Atgaiva *in its immediate context clearly indicated that it had lived up to these hopes.*

[1] Lithuanian TSR Artists Union Joint Open Party Meeting Resolution, October 27, 1988. Lithuanian National Literature and Art Archive, Vilnius, File 86, Folder 1.

[2] Andrašiūnaitė, "Kultūros šventė – *Atgaiva*," 4.

PADEGIMAS: When the liberation movement came along, I was not a member of the Communist Party and had never been indoctrinated into any kind of Communism in Moscow. I had learned a profession, but not that ideology – and actually its opposite; I saw only its evils. So in 1988 I had no doubts whatsoever about whose side I was on and what I had to do. During the period just previous to this, I could never have been the head a theater because I had never been a Party member and had never been a *komjaunuolis*. But then things changed, and I was for the first time assigned to be a Head Director, at the Šiauliai Theater, just at the time when it was Šiauliai's turn to host a festival. I decided that this festival would be different. At that time there was a battle going on – between the supporters of perestroika – *persitvarkymas* – and the conservative communists. And I decided that our theater would do absolutely everything it could to bring in fresh air. And from this decision there followed the idea to create the festival *Atgaiva*.

So I want to stress that *Atgaiva* was no accident or isolated incident; it happened in a certain context, and that context was a movement for self-government that was already taking place. I decided also that cultural workers – theater people, who at that time were very influential, much more influential than now – needed to speak their minds, for *Sąjūdis* and for Lithuania.

And that was the basic concept of *Atgaiva*. Because of that, all theaters were asked in advance to present Lithuanian productions or performances, and if possible, productions that were not previously permitted – that were "in the drawer" so to speak. We asked also for new historical material from all the theaters, about things like previously banned works, and as much as we could we added these to the picture.

We also amassed quite an array of political figures – we invited very many of those who at that time virtually stood for Lithuanian political independence. Landsbergis, Radžvilis, who is now in the opposition party, Ozolas – everyone really. And we held discussions, Morning Reflections about how Lithuania should look and exist as a society in the future. These talks were

closely and clearly connected to the staged performances. They addressed ideas and problems related to political issues.

Of course, the honeymoon of brotherhood passed very quickly and internal divisions emerged, and these are still apparent today in things like Landsbergis not being awarded the Medal of Freedom.

DIDŽGALVIS: To me that period was a time of public spirited action or citizenship, rather than political action. Politically the time was not ripe yet! It was still too early. To amplify the topic and context into political demands, and serious political demands, well, I don't know. Those words "freedom" or "free elections" – those things that are political in nature – these didn't happen then. They really didn't. At that time no one was speaking about political action. Did someone demand free elections? No, believe me. Did someone demand freedom of speech? No. Political slogans really didn't exist. The fact that, in the minds of most people, Lithuanian religiosity was understood as opposition is quite a different thing.

The Atmosphere of *Atgaiva*

On nine successive nights beginning on December 12, eight Lithuanian plays and one evening of Lithuanian folk music were presented, followed on the tenth evening by a festival-closing public symposium on "The Role and Tasks of the Lithuanian Theater in the Process of Cultural Rebirth." Each of the plays staged expressed some form of anti-Soviet protest or carried liminal messages about the captive position of colonized cultures under Soviet hegemony. Along with the evening performances, the daily program of Morning Reflections (Ryto mintys) – lectures and discussions led by writers, artists and professors – analyzed Lithuanian history and culture through the lens of current political conditions. And every night at midnight, actors from the plays returned to the stage to participate in Night Poetry (Nakties poezija) – a series of exhilarating dramatic readings from works by classic Lithuanian poets.

During the festival the word "atgaiva," conceived and publicized by Padegimas, became a force in its own right. Formal meanings of the festival name include "refreshment" or "renewal," but in December 1988 the word acquired associations that included concepts like revival, recovery, rebirth, resurgence – and resurrection. For Šiauliai actor Antanas Venckus, it meant "a renewal of the soul." Many have agreed that the name was significant, that in "atgaiva" Padegimas created an apt structure of feeling that galvanized society in late-glasnost Lithuania.

DIDŽGALVIS: One of the basic, essential components of *Atgaiva* was "to say what it had been forbidden to say." The main thing a play had to do was to enable certain things to be said, so that people would hear them. And about the aesthetics of the theater? Well, all that was important was saying certain things. To everyone except Tuminas,[3] by the way. Everyone wanted to express themselves. To use dramaturgy as a mouthpiece. About Lithuanianness, about Catholicism, about freedom, about anything that was beyond the norm. Because suddenly that possibility existed.

If you want to generalize and to put it bluntly, it was *euphoria*. *Euphoria*, because it was suddenly permitted to say things. But the question of what to say? Well, a collection of clichés. Nationality. Patriotism. Catholicism. Freedom – though what freedom actually meant wasn't clear. The big thing was just to say the word. What kind of freedom? Freedom why? Freedom for whom? Freedom from what? And what do you think about it? No one said. It mattered only that we could say freedom.

But I'll give you an alternative: the Morning Reflections. There the thoughtful people spoke. Believe me, I was there. That was where the serious discussion took place.

Yes, Škėma's play, staged by Padegimas, resonated in our society in a colossal way. It goes without saying. Of course it did.

[3] *Čia nebus mirties* [*There'll Be No Death Here*], by Rimas Tuminas and Valdas Kukulas, was unanimously voted Best Drama of the *Atgaiva* Festival by the festival awards committee. The play is about sociopolitical conditions in Lithuania during the 1940s as reflected in the life of folk-poet Paulius Širvys.

Škėma was never heard of until then! And that type of mysticism, my God, it was something in those times. He had emigrated, and that was such a big deal then. Wow. Everyone was pleased and all of that. Elated. People were elated. You've seen the pictures, good God, with the candles, with the national flags, with the Hail Marys, and the like. You see, people enjoy playing the victim. It frees you of all responsibility. "They wronged us for so long." It's so fun to be a victim.

PADEGIMAS: Maybe I could put it this way: there was a great euphoria felt at the time. In Šiauliai from early in the morning people were standing in long lines at the newspaper kiosks. In the newspaper they wanted to find out what was happening in Vilnius, in Moscow, in Šiauliai. People had been arrested, the streets were crowded, I remember I was chosen to chair the project to erect the monument to Povilas Višinskis. For a number of years that Višinskis monument idea went nowhere. I put out a call, and people, from grandmothers to the mafia, brought in 10,000 rubles and we collected the money in one day. In one day! And yes, of course, I bloodied my fists a little bit, took too much on myself, but I viewed that festival with reverence and high regard. I may have offended some, but I was making an attempt, getting up in front of people and speaking. It was a time when everything you had inside just poured out.

And, aside from the plays, what I'll never forget what was the totality of *Atgaiva*. It was like a great, tirelessly-working, moving ant colony. For in the theater we moved as in dreams, we lived in some ways separately, in a place where young beautiful people greeted guests, and we decided who was going to walk this older person to his hotel, who is going to get coffee, sometimes like service work. It was very, in a word, interesting. And no one refused to help; everyone did everything that was asked. Everyone come together.

Most of the people in Šiauliai didn't just attend the plays and discuss them publicly. They also invited the actors and the intellectuals into their homes, to have dinner, to speak off the record, perhaps even to spend the night. They were participating

Students on the floor of the little theater for Night Poetry.

in a citizens' movement! They couldn't yet freely vote, they weren't yet free to do business for themselves, but here they all, everyone, got the chance to participate in their society! Not only passively but intellectually. Everyone shared in it.

Disagreement Between Padegimas and Didžgalvis

In 1988, Atgaiva *had been widely celebrated as a turning point in Lithuanian theater history and a catalyst to cultural renewal in the Glasnost era. That view, however, depended on one's understanding of the spirit and essence of Lithuanian culture, the place of that culture in the modern world, and the role of the theater as an expression of ethnicity.*

Undoubtedly the great success of the festival was a product of, and impossible without, the separate contributions of Padegimas and Didžgalvis. In our interviews, we discovered much about the disparate personalities that had ignited Atgaiva *with their talents*

and passion, but who fundamentally disagreed about theater aesthetics and the relation of art to politics. Within this debate about the meaning of festival there are implied and explicit insights about the period of perestroika and after, about the achievement of Lithuanian independence and its repercussions, and about issues of cultural identity that remain globally relevant.

DIDŽGALVIS: During the festival the three of us – Juškus,[4] Padegimas and I – talked quite a lot. We put together the program of events. And I can tell you something that I was against, categorically against, though my opinion about it wasn't asked: I was against the fact that [at *Atgaiva*] the role of critics was practically eliminated. I'll explain what I mean. It was customary then to, right after a production, have discussions. The critics came together and talked over the production. This practice was completely repudiated at *Atgaiva*, and it was repudiated by Gytis Padegimas. I would guess it was due to his ambition.

Padegimas had more or less this idea, and it went something like this: "We don't work for critics but for the audience." There was such a maxim. And from that, there later arose this idea that was even announced on posters, "What the spectators want." And what happened? For all practical purposes what happened was that the critics were in fact pitted *against* the audience, playgoers.

And so for the first time in many years we chose that very difficult option of having critics review the play just after seeing it and printing the review the next day in the *Bulletin*. Believe me that wasn't easy! Customarily the performance takes place, the critics come together and discuss the production and share opinions about it. This would also have helped the festival prize committee's deliberations, by the way. And it had been absolutely normal to do it like this. After discussing the performance, they'd go home and think about things, then bring in a draft about a week later, then revise it a little later. But this time they

[4] Antanas Juškus, Executive Director of the Šiauliai Theater during the *Atgaiva* festival.

had to do it at once, right away. So that you would feel the course of the festival directly, sense it directly [in the festival bulletin], feel it in your skin. But the result was that critical consensus was practically removed from the process.

[*Interviewer asks why Padegimas's production of Škėma's* Žvakidė *did not get any Prize Committee awards or votes for Best Production.*]

Well, we need to discuss the wider context. I wasn't on the Prize Committee, but I'll give you my personal opinion of *Žvakidė*. I think that to most people, or to me at least, and I think for certain colleagues of mine who were critics, there were several things about it that were hard to stomach. Not so much in what Škėma wrote, I want to stress this, but in the manner by which it was presented stylistically. In the festival's general stylistic approach as well.

I have in mind – to put it mildly – such exaggerated and exalted "clericalism" – a superficial but highly exalted demonstration of religiosity. Think about it, you've seen the photos. Sacraments everywhere, and priests, and the views of priests taken as absolute word on everything. The singing of *Ave Maria* all the time. Holy candles for every occasion. Look at the stage designs of the productions: crucifixes, incense, etc. everything set to the theme of the church. It was over-emphasized, and that influenced the reception of the play in Škėma's case. And that was a legitimate reaction. What was done with the play wasn't necessary.

I'll grant that there is in Škėma a certain religious mysticism. We can't deny that. But there is butter on one's bread, and then there's butter on the butter. And the reaction to this was legitimate. The production was, to tell the truth, absolutely tiresome. The only play that was worse was *Žilvinas*, also directed by Padegimas. You can quote me on that. This is one of the essential facts about *Atgaiva*. In *Žilvinas*, and in Škėma's play, and to some extent in all of the plays except for that of Tuminas, the important thing was just to say something provocative for the audience, especially if the statement was something not heard before. And

no one gave a damn about the forms and precepts of the theater. Honestly, there was no directing going on!

What we need to reconsider is this concept of "national theater" itself. . . a concept that was and is, in my view, absurd. For him [Padegimas] the essential component of national theater was religiosity, namely Catholicism. But as I've said, if one wants to create a good play, one shouldn't be thinking in terms of national or not national. Or, is it cosmopolitan? Or is it Christian? You need to be thinking, "Is it a good play?" Does it have all the elements of a good play? – directing, set design, acting, a good text, a musical score. That's what you need to consider. Then later, it will become apparent that the play is truly "national" – if it's good! But if you just go out on stage and proclaim your ethnicity or nationality. Well, forgive me.

Lithuanian national theater is almost an oxymoron, and the reason is very simple: Yes, we suffered for so long. We were oppressed. By whom? To put it mildly, we were oppressed by the East. At that time no one said "the Russians." That wasn't in our vocabulary. But everyone knew what we were talking about when we said, "oppressed by the East." But people who know history understand clearly that Lithuania's theater in the twentieth century was the theater of a province, deep within the Russian Empire. Every director – and excuse me I'm a theater historian so I know something about this – every director learned in St. Petersburg or Moscow and then came here to create our professional theater. If not for the Russian theater, only amateurism would remain. And to reject the legacy of Russian theater would be foolish, a meaningless gesture. *Because it is an absolutely creative influence.* At that time we looked at it differently though.

There's another reason the *Atgaiva Bulletin* published negative reviews of Padegimas's work. I had promised all of the critics that there would be no censorship. I kept my word. And after that I had to say goodbye to the theater.

[*Interviewer notes that Padegimas nevertheless received an award for organizing (the festival) and for upholding and nurturing (puoselėjimas) of Lithuanian theater.*]

Valentinas Didžgalvis at the Atgaiva *Festival, December, 1988.*

That's great that he got that. It goes without saying. He deserved that, it goes without saying. To have put together such an event, I certainly take off my hat to Padegimas, and Juškus and all the others on the team who worked with me. Because there had never before been such a happening! It was the first, and probably the last.

But at that time Padegimas was an endlessly active, public-spirited person. He was everywhere. And to some extent he confused work in the theater with work on behalf of society. That would be my judgment. In work for society, political proclamations mean a lot. But in terms of the aesthetics of theater, they're like a blunt object to the forehead.

At *Atgaiva*, all the productions really just added up to a single production. You understand, everyone came here, sat down to watch, and we wanted to show and demonstrate our potential, our "national theater" and all of that. But for a theater critic, there was very little to talk about. One play out of ten was worth discussing. So what's really the situation if there's just one play?

You know, I just wouldn't call that "atgaiva". From a theater standpoint there was really no atgaiva. I truly want to stress that.

The Morning Reflections talks were much more my style. In the theaters, everyone was crying, playing the victim card and making human sacrifices of themselves, with the nation as a victim too. But alongside this, there was a much more sober view saying, "Here's what's happening and an attempt to consider it and reflect on it. Are things really as they appear to be?"

PADEGIMAS: What more can I say? I'll say openly that I do still feel that I've been treated unjustly. And though there's a lot in my life I'd change if I could, I wouldn't change what I did to reach this point – because that time in 1988 was really my hour of fame. And when it comes to the Šiauliai Theater, I'll say, there were really no theater troupes who did not join together in support of our idea. And *Sąjūdis* was the source of this feeling. It wasn't a formal thing that happened because of conferences and meetings, but because the spirit of the time permeated the theater. Even those who had been communists, or who were afraid to act, they all participated in *Atgaiva* very enthusiastically. Even the priest, Father Milašius spoke to us – he's now deceased – he participated in the discussions, and this was really unusual and unexpected for him to enter into discussions with communist critics. Such things really happened, and he offered a perspective sharply oppositional to the status quo.

And I felt things deeply, and yes there was some tension, for example, between Didžgalvis and me. But I'd like to say this: many in *Sąjūdis*, after *Atgaiva*, nevertheless stuck to the conservative idea of Lithuanian ethnicity and national identity. But I was already saying then that I am a Lithuanian *and a European.* I was, for example, the first Lithuanian director who staged plays in the West, in Salzburg. And some accused me of doing something wrong. But it's strange that as a director I do stage the most Lithuanian plays, but I also was the only director who staged western playwrights like Yeats, Pinter, etc., and quite a lot of Western theater.

I do this because I am convinced that Lithuania never really left Europe. I think it's possible to find that balance, that synthesis of cultures: Lithuanian, Western, Eastern, like they used to say before the war. I am not stuck in any kind of conservative nationalism, probably because I've traveled so much, then and now, and I've worked abroad, and I speak Russian and English, and I have many friends in the East and the West. So while remaining a Lithuanian I'm nevertheless, at the same time, a citizen of the world. I'll never emigrate, but I'll never take xenophobic positions either, not anti-Semitism, not anti-immigration and the like. Nevertheless I believe and will always believe that, essentially, our society's deepest problems of identity can be explored and addressed by means of our national dramaturgy. Because when you interpret Shakespeare, and interpret Pinter and Chekhov, you inevitably reveal much about the present day. Though there are always gaps that can be filled only by those like Jozaitis, Ivaškevičius, Parulskis, Saja, those who live in the here and now, today, who eat the same bread we do and experience the same problems – alcoholism for example. Lithuania again ranks first in this problem, and in suicide – the same problems we need to talk about and to speak about in the voices of those living today, including both actors and directors.

And therefore, that idea of *Atgaiva* – a dramaturgy of Lithuanian identity – remains a constant for me, only transformed for a different time. It's not expressed in the same way as that original time though; it includes a new and wider world and new teachings from all over.

At *Atgaiva* I was, essentially, a pivotal person in a pivotal time. The time was ripe for my idea, which had reached a tipping point. If I hadn't done it, perhaps someone else would have. Because everyone wanted this, everyone was glad it was happening – except for the Ministry and Party officials. All of the theaters wanted it. Everyone was very enthusiastic.

Again I want to say that it wasn't just a theater festival. Now when we have festivals, the groups come, perform, and leave,

Atgaiva *Festival opening at the Šiauliai Theater.*

sometimes not even seeing the other plays. But there in Šiauliai, for the first time we strived to make it so that everyone would live there and stay for the ten days. Artists and students were together so there was a lot of personal contact. It became a meeting of personalities among all the theater people. For example, Kęstutis Genys, an actor from Kaunas, no longer alive, a dissident; he read poetry aloud for the first time there. Now he's a legend, and he debuted at *Atgaiva*. There are many examples of this.

And I've often thought about everything that was expressed at those Morning Reflections sessions. The things said at the time by our politicians, philosophers and others. If those things had been realized and put into being, things would be very different now in Lithuania.

But there was a major conflict between me and Didžgalvis. As for me, I still can't quite understand Didžgalvis. I just know he is not the type of person I can work with. Because, well, about Didžgalvis I don't want to say anything bad, our opinions simply

differ. Ever since *Atgaiva*, he has spoken of *Atgaiva*, and of me also, very negatively. Some have even wondered if maybe he is purposely being troublesome. I really don't know.

At *Atgaiva* we had a certain agreed-upon vision. But he is less of an advocate of "national" culture than me. And I think that the more radical idea of Lithuanian national theater is just alien to him.

Perhaps at that time I was too passionate, but I wanted nevertheless for him to be loyal to the vision of *Atgaiva*. As it's turned out, he's on the other side of the barricade. Overall I think our conflict was more ideological than personal. But it hasn't gone away.

The Significance of the "Protest-Appeal" of September 19, 1988

Less than three months before Atgaiva *was scheduled to begin, Gytis Padegimas, along with thirty-two members of his Šiauliai drama troupe, sent to the LTSR Ministry of Culture a tersely worded "Protest Appeal." The Appeal referred to a decision at the presidium of the Union of Lithuanian Theater Professionals to postpone the festival until March 1989 and merge it with that year's traditional Soviet "Theater Day" celebration. Dated September 19, 1988, the protest stated that the Šiauliai festival "must take place this year and only this year" and argued that the festival would advance needed change at a key moment: "The current social, political and cultural conditions in Lithuania, along with the position of creative intelligentsia with respect to issues of reform, make it necessary." Some of the protest's language was insolent: "The Festival is being organized not as an empty ceremony, but as an appraisal of actual conditions in Lithuanian theater and dramaturgy" – and some was defiant: "The Šiauliai Drama Theater hereby refuses to hold a National Drama Festival in March of 1989." Holding the event immediately, the dramatists said, was "a question of honor and national consciousness."*

We brought physical copies of the "Protest-Appeal" to our interviews and asked about the origins, purpose and significance of the document.

DIDŽGALVIS: I'll tell you honestly, it seems the meaning of that [the Protest-Appeal] is exaggerated. I'm sure of that. I read your article, and this seemed to me the most disputable part. No one talked about the protest. No words were spoken about it. I do remember editing it a little. The head of the communications section edits texts; that was my job. Who added this protest to the historical record I don't know, maybe Padegimas himself. I didn't write these words. At that time things like this were the fashion and maybe it was a stunt.

Three months this way or that really didn't have any meaning. The festival would have happened anyway. But I'm judging this in a simple way: It's in Gytis Padegimas's character, his traits as a person. He is first and foremost a play director. And if he gets an idea in his head, he goes all out with it, to the end. This is a specific trait of his. And he got the idea that he needed to do this [the festival], at a certain time on certain dates, etc. And that was it; he plowed through it like a ship breaking through the ice. This is a trait of his.

But mentioning a postponement is one thing. Whether it actually happened is another. I doubt that there was a written decision to postpone. Maybe there were inquiries about it. Perhaps there were suggestions relating to it. But I wouldn't talk about a decision to postpone unless I saw some kind of document saying so.

I can imaginatively formulate a situation from my experience. It would go like this: Probably he found out that in the Ministry of Culture this decision was being considered. And maybe there was some kind of word-of-mouth statement about it. Maybe someone called him and said perhaps let's postpone it. But I repeat: Don't say that there was a decision made to postpone the festival until you find it in writing. Then we can talk.

PADEGIMAS: Obviously we wrote the Protest-Appeal because there was conflict. We clashed with, you know, I can't identify people by name now, but I remember that there began to be something like censorship. There were those who attempted to marginalize the festival.

Who did this I don't clearly remember anymore. Probably it was officials of the Ministry of Culture and the Theater Union. It's lucky that my colleague Giedrius Kuprevičius,[5] vice-minister, was there at the time. They claimed that there wasn't enough time to get the festival ready. But this is what I knew: it was now or never. Soon it would be too late. There would arise different ideas, different issues, and we might not rise to the moment and might lose our enthusiasm. I was absolutely correct about this, because soon after *Atgaiva*, things started happening in the streets and the theater was no longer of interest to people.

They wanted to postpone it until the spring. But the concept was ripe at that moment, everything was boiling at that moment. Heck, who knows what could happen by spring, perhaps Gorbachev could call in troops and we'd all be in jail by the spring!

No one knew what would happen. Were there lists already made up? Lists of people who were to be arrested or perhaps shot? Now it seems to everyone that everything was so easy, but it was then dangerous and difficult. Postponing the festival would certainly have robbed it of meaning and importance. Once that was done, perhaps it would never have happened at all. They probably thought maybe we'd forget it, wouldn't want it after all, that something else would come along.

[5] Giedrius Kuprevičius, First Deputy Minister and Cultural Affairs, received the Šiauliai Protest-Appeal on September 23 and wrote on the document "Pritariu! (I approve!)" above his signature. In an email of June 2013, Padegimas explained that other Ministry officials feared to take the responsibility of addressing the protest and "appealed to the Deputy Minister. Kuprevičius, being a man of culture, wrote 'I approve!' and the festival was held in the fall." (Gytis Padegimas email, June 14, 2013). Kuprevičius confirmed this version of events in a separate letter to the author.

THE INTERVIEW CONCLUDED WITH THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGE, RENDERED HERE VERBATIM:

[*Interviewer, presenting a copy of the Protest-Appeal: Who wrote this? Whose words are these?*]

Did you ask Didžgalvis this question?

[*Interviewer: Yes, he said he edited it.*]

He edited it. Well, if he edited it, that means I wrote it. [Laughs]

[*Interviewer: My opinion is that this is a very important declaration for that time.*]

You know, I want to say that since this was at the beginning, before everything, and only after it came the festival, and with all the newspaper articles, and the reviews, and the debates and discussions, I had forgotten about it. After it there was so much of everything. I truly had forgotten about it. But Giedrius Kuprevičius, he remembered it right away. This document was discussed in the Ministry. It was discussed and he [Kuprevičius] categorically took the stance that the festival had to happen as it happened.

[*Interviewer: So is that opinion, that this document is very important, unjustified?*]

No. If it weren't important and necessary, we wouldn't have written it.

The Historical Significance of *Atgaiva*

During the economically and politically tumultuous period after Atgaiva*, the event and its significance to Lithuania were largely forgotten, victims of the severe disillusionments that followed swiftly upon the realization of independence in 1990. Though* Atgaiva *had bolstered the country's self-assurance at a key moment, that confidence had weakened during the crises of national identity that*

preoccupied Lithuania in the 1990s and beyond. With the festival's thirtieth anniversary approaching, we wanted, as researchers, to take stock of Atgaiva *as a cultural moment with long-term repercussions, an event that foreshadowed, and perhaps contributed to, both the restoration of Lithuanian autonomy and the break-up of the USSR.*

Each interview concluded with queries about how Atgaiva *had changed cultural conditions and political views in Šiauliai, in Lithuania and beyond. We mentioned Lolita Tirvaitė's headline about* Atgaiva *in the January 1, 1989 issue of* Literatūra ir Menas – "Ten Days That Shook Šiauliai" – *noting its clever and ironic echoing of* Ten Days that Shook the World, *the famous book by John Reed about the advent of the Bolshevik Revolution. Was it possible to say that* Atgaiva *not only "shook" Lithuania but helped subvert an obsolete Soviet regime in its dying days – the same regime Reed's book had welcomed into existence in its first days? Here are responses to our final interview question, "After almost thirty years, how would you now describe or evaluate the significance of the* Atgaiva *festival?"*

DIDŽGALVIS: Calling the festival "Ten Days That Shook Lithuania," that's from John Reed! [Laughs] But I understand it, it's a metaphor. It's a literary trope.

But did it truly shake Lithuania? I'm rather a skeptic. It certainly shook Šiauliai, and it went beyond Šiauliai. After the festival I spoke somewhat with the critics, and with Valdas Vasiliauskas in the Ministry, and the repercussions were very significant. That's a fact. The repercussions were major.

There truly was a political impact and more. Just look at the authors of the papers in the Morning Reflections, philosophers, writers, etc. So from a perspective of societal impact, it *shook*, without a doubt. And it was truly positive. It taught us to speak openly and to organize. It showed what was possible. This is a fact, there's no doubt about it. And that those somewhat esoteric subjects like philosophy, culture studies, etc. were given such

a forum! This doesn't happen every day. So the impact was not limited to Šiauliai. It was concentrated there, but it spread.

PADEGIMAS: I believe *Atgaiva* truly provided a strong stimulus, to the notion of our identity, to our theater culture, and to our broader culture and society. As I've said, in the revitalization of our theater, and all forms of Lithuanian independence, and all national culture, we had to work very hard to quickly rebuild what had been destroyed in the Soviet period. And while we were rebuilding, it suddenly became clear that our thought model itself had to undergo its own revision and rebuilding – in response to globalization and membership in the European Union. So much so, that there was not even time to propagate and bring to fruition our original model.

Nevertheless *Atgaiva*, as a manifestation of the will to freedom brought about not from above but from below, among the creators and spectators themselves, was very important. It serves as a reminder that the people have, despite everything, a belief in themselves, in their historical and cultural memory, and that they have a desire to realize this – and they can. It stands as an example of what a festival can be.

A sequel to something like *Atgaiva* just isn't possible because it was so dependent on specific emotions. Of course, looking at it from a perspective of today, I'm older and I might do things more rationally and calmly. But that's just how it seems now. In the atmosphere of that time, it couldn't have been any other way. I was then just 36, you know? And everyone was possessed with that desire, to go! To do! To make things happen! So we couldn't wait even one more day to have that festival! It was like wine that was ready to drink; if we waited it would sour. You need to drink it when it's time!

Certainly it was euphoria. But euphoria can be like a river – suddenly the rapids carry you! And it carries many things with it and devours much too. Later it becomes smooth and slow, but when it settles down it's less interesting. Not long ago Arvydas Juozaitis brought me a relic of *Atgaiva* for me to autograph. We

Gytis Padegimas (center) at Atgaiva*, December 1988.*

were sitting in a café here near the front window, and it must have been of interest to the people passing. I said "Arvydas, during that time of *Atgaiva*, I believed that after we won our independence, everything would change. There would be no more lies, no more petty crime, all would work together conscientiously." And many people believed that. They believed that conscience, ethics, moral values, would lead the way, for all as one, as at home, in a family. And it didn't turn out this way. As it turned out, that old Soviet surface or foundation was covered over with a new capitalist one. Like [Pope] John Paul said eloquently: "Socialism and capitalism in equal part debase the dignity of humanity, only from opposite sides."

I would agree fully that it was "Ten Days That Shook Lithuania." Great numbers of people attended from other towns and cities and wrote very much about it; it was not just in Šiauliai. It was Lithuania's festival, the country's. Maybe it's immodest but I think it's true. And looking back on that period, I don't regret anything.

Without a doubt it impacted Lithuanian culture. The cultural community at that time played a very big role. All of the *Sąjūdis* people were cultural workers and it's sad that their influence eventually waned. And what you wrote in your article, that Lithuanian cultural independence was declared in Šiauliai before the actual independence in Vilnius, is probably a fair assessment.

Atgaiva has been unjustifiably forgotten in part for reasons that are objective: the Lithuanian theater could not continue to develop primarily in the direction of "national" dramaturgy because we were moving toward unification with the European Union and the larger world. And from the other side, the people of our society could not change so quickly; they were the same people, and it became clear that great numbers of them remained loyal to the communist order, even to this day. Some are against new ideas, and they persecute, directly and indirectly.

But on the other hand – how should I say this? – life speeded up so markedly, with so many varied events, that everything piled up and, well, if I myself tried to bring attention to *Atgaiva*, they'd say I was completely crazy. So suddenly when you [he refers to the interviewer] looked on from the outside and found its value, that was very important, because many of our people now, the young people and other scholars, are beginning to look into it more and return to the topic. It's becoming clear that it had a great influence that hasn't been fully explored. That happens a lot. Often big things happen that are disregarded at the time, and later we suddenly realize, "Wow, that was the beginning."

Works Cited

Andrašiūnaitė, Rasa. "Kultūros šventė – *Atgaiva* [The Cultural Festival *Atgaiva*]." Interview with Gytis Padegimas, *Komjaunimo Tiesa,* 10 December 1988. Lithuanian National Literature and Art Archive, Vilnius, File 342, Folder 3876.

Didžgalvis, Valentinas. Personal interview with the author and Jonė Gorytė. November 24, 2015.

Padegimas, Gytis. Personal interview with the author and Jonė Gorytė. November 25, 2015.

Tirvaitė, Lolita. "10 dienų, kurios sukrėtė Šiaulius" [Ten Days that Shook Šiauliai]. *Literatūra ir Menas*, January 1, 1989.

The Atgaiva *Oral History Archive continues to collect and preserve interviews from all who wish to share personal memories of the festival. The archive website is scheduled to be opened in 2017.*

CONTACT:
Jonė Gorytė at the Šiauliai Povilas Višinskis Public Library.
email: j.goryte@savb.lt

I would like to thank Jonė GORYTĖ and Roma BARISTAITĖ for their generous help, without which this project would not have been possible.

Memories of Dependence: Lithuanian Case Revisited*

ALMANTAS SAMALAVIČIUS

Remembering and Rewriting the Past

While diagnosing the most essential problems of the current social period, a strange decay of communal identity and collective memory should be taken into consideration – moreover so because recently it has become somewhat more expressed in the Lithuanian society than ever before. The problem of social memory has always been relevant in different historical contexts; however it became of the utmost importance in the Soviet era when the ruling regime applied powerful mechanisms of oppression, social engineering, and control in order to change the past, to recreate the history of occupied and colonized countries to fit the imposed myth that it was the Soviet Union that liberated its the other punctuation missing neighbors from their own oppressors. Accordingly a complex program of re-education was generated in order to alter Lithuanian national identity and eventually to replace it with a newly-coined Soviet identity and loyalty to the doctrines of the ruling Communist party and its values.

It is well known that there were different forms of destruction of national identity during the period of dependence: the severe ones (physical extermination, imprisonment, deportation to gulags, systematic persecution of dissidents, etc.) and, especially

* The article is based on an invited paper given at the international workshop (Collective) Memory of Communism in Post-Communist Europe: Social Practices, Research, Communication, held by Nicolaus Kopernicus University in Torun, Poland on May 20–21, 2016.

during the later period of Soviet rule – more subtle methods – creation and dissemination of new versions of the past, and the infusion of new values with the help of educational systems, mass media, public organizations, art, and other instruments of mass propaganda. Almost all totalitarian regimes, no matter what ideologies they adhered to, behaved in the same way: control over the present and the future involved the goal of suppressing collective memories and nurturing new generations of people with the help of state-controlled ideological doctrines. Thus the old institutions, traditions, cultural legacies and the feelings of the communal bond had to be destroyed and new versions of the historical past were supplied instead of these. The construction of a society without memory, without a recognizable past, without an authentic history – was the ideal of social engineering applied by totalitarian regimes. To that matter, Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa has given insightful comments on the extinction of the history of his ancestors – the Incas. According to Llosa, it is no longer possible to reconstruct the history of this ancient people because the past was destroyed not only by European colonizers, but also by the country's own emperors who, as soon as they advanced onto the throne, immediately gave orders to the scribes to rewrite the past so that all merits of any predecessor were to be attributed to the new ruler that had ascended to the throne. Finally, rewritten history turned into a fiction that contained no recognizable references to any real events.

The problem of reconstructing the memory of the period of dependence was hardly an issue in Lithuania a couple decades ago, when society to a certain degree still shared a communal bond that became very strong during the period of national resurgence, but these days attitudes toward the past have become a pressing problem to anyone who maintains faith in the future of Lithuania. A lot of time has passed since the time when mass rallies were the expression of naturally awakened national and civic solidarity. Many of the changes that occurred during the last decade were marked by painful losses. During this period, Lithuanian society experienced various upheavals and traumas:

numerous outbursts of endless trust along with an equal amount of disillusionment toward former political idols, parties, and charismatic personalities that had ascended with the "velvet revolution". Since then, Lithuanian society has constantly wandered between love and hate, hysteria and apathy, naïve belief in political saviors and distrust, as well as between other opposites. During these years Lithuanian society experienced the influence of new instruments of post-modern social engineering. Among other things, its mental habits for interpreting reality were more strongly than ever affected by the mass communications media. This media aroused the instincts of the mob, manipulated people's feelings and minds, and in the long run reduced all civic and political activities to the level of public spectacles and entertainment for a consumer society.

To many post-communist Lithuanian people – disillusioned, impoverished, marginalized – the past like many other formerly important things seems to have lost relevance: even simple and clear words like consciousness, truth, responsibility have on many occasions been reduced to the level of personal, subjective, and thus unstable beliefs. Moreover, during this period a number of controversial narratives about the not too distant Soviet and post-Soviet past were created by political parties and their leaders. So, it becomes difficult to distinguish between truth and lies, between the things that really happened and the accounts given by ideologically biased interpreters of history.

The Unbearable Lightness of Postcommunist Memories

The de-colonized Lithuanian society of 1990 was still united by feelings of a common historical fate, common suffering, strife for common values and unreserved fidelity to the idea of independence that had been so miraculously reawakened. Meanwhile, a quarter of a century later, society is becoming consolidated for short moments only because of the hatred directed towards var-

ious forms of power and capital that in their own turn have become much more closely associated than ever before with profiting from the impoverishment of large layers of society. But in spite of syndromes indicating constant fluctuations from social hysteria to anemia, and in spite of the rise of cynical attitudes towards the common welfare, other developments are also to be taken into consideration: recently the number of people who are sick and tired of a permanently transitory state, moral corruption, and a cynical view of society has become significantly larger. Due to restrictions of size, this essay will limit its scope to the problem of collective memory – a memory of utmost importance to a transitory post-communist society gradually transforming itself into a more mature civic form. Many authors who from various points of view have analyzed problems of collective memory, acknowledge that it is closely associated with individual memories: in fact they even make up the bulk of what is considered as important in someone's life and what gradually falls into oblivion. According to Tzvetan Todorov who published a memorable book about the memoirs of people who survived concentration camps, memory has no power to reconstruct the totality of the past. It only manages to store those elements that are considered most essential. Thus persons who have remained faithful to the totalitarian regime despite its final collapse, always select only those facts of the past that fit their outlook or are most useful to them. Likewise, their enemies provide totally different accounts of the past events. But, "neither wants simply to restore the past, both want somehow to make use of it in the present. There is, however, no necessary correlation between how we tell of the past and how we use it; that it is our moral obligation to reconstruct the past does not mean that all the uses we make of it are equally legitimate."[1] His statement as I understand it, also implies that a use can be made of even those moments that are silenced or forgotten.

[1] Tzvetan Todorov, *Facing the Extreme*, 257.

One could essentially agree with how Tzvetan Todorov interprets collective memory. Another thinker who reconsidered this important issue, philosopher Theodore Plantinga, maintains that memories of the past, even those that are considered personal, are not and never can be absolutely independent because they need to be supported and confirmed in various ways by other members of society. Plantinga has offered an extremely useful category – "edited memories", that allows an understanding of how people remember things. In the same way as a text is prepared for publication, being edited, cleaned up, and normalized from the point of view of grammar and style, memories of the past are adjusted so that they cohere with each other and make a more harmonious picture.[2] Besides, attitudes toward the past constantly change as time goes by; environment and happenstance leave a mark on our memories in their own way. He notes insightfully: "embarrassing and shameful episodes are forgotten all the more readily, especially when our fellow 'rememberers' are no longer around to remind us. Or, in many cases, such episodes are gradually altered so that we come to stand in a better light."[3]

These observations can be considered rather universal; they define how people's attitudes toward the past change under usual circumstances. However they are especially significant to post-communist culture in which the relation to the past becomes very problematic. Memories are corrected not only by separate individuals but also by different groups, communities, and society at large. In a special way, the memories are "edited" by those who experienced sufferings under the communist regime, who lost their close relatives, or were otherwise persecuted. Those who were oppressed for a long period usually remember moments that are treated as heroic from the present perspective. Such an attitude allows one to compensate psychologically for

[2] Theodore Plantinga, *How Memory Shapes Narratives*, 189.
[3] Ibid., 8.

the past, to see oneself as more dignified, stronger than could be under the given conditions. Researchers of Holocaust memoirs, have shown that the past is usually reconstructed and recorded in the same mode by the people who shared the same painful experiences. The same is true of the people who were tortured, imprisoned, or exiled during the first decades of the Soviet regime during which law enforcement was extremely brutal. Sometimes the form of the memoirs itself speaks out. An individual who writes down a dozen pages of supposed dialogues that were spoken half a century ago is more likely to provide an edited and adjusted version of the past that coheres with his or her current attitude toward the past and the present rather than depicting true reality. These reminiscences inevitably make him introduce subtle or not so subtle changes in the memoirs. This is true of the individuals who survived different forms of totalitarianism – Nazi or Communist. In both cases, the memory stores and preserves only a part of the episodes from the past, some of which for various reasons maintain more importance, while others become insignificant and are accordingly forgotten.

Numerous examples can serve to illustrate this observation. While reconsidering the issue of memory, I remember an episode from almost twenty years ago while riding a train in the Soviet Union from Tashkent to Moscow in the nineties. Two elderly Russian ladies shared the same cabin with me and my friends. They were friendly, kind, and hospitable women. Throughout the whole journey, that took almost three days and nights, they were chatting for hours. At one moment I noticed that one of these women had a tattoo on her arm – six numbers or so as I recall. It struck me as very odd, since during those days tattoos were worn mostly by criminals, former inmates or soldiers of the Soviet army, and this nice, elderly woman seemed to have nothing in common with either of these rough worlds of men. While they were chatting one of them asked her fellow passenger what she did during World War II. Her companion answered that she spent four years in Auschwitz. “Was it so bad as they say?” – inquired the old lady. Her talkative companion became

unusually silent and did not say a word for a long time. After a pause, they started talking among themselves about insignificant everyday things and never came back to the subject. It is the unbearable memories that the elderly woman refused to put into words. She chose silence instead of speaking out about something that was too painful to be remembered.

Likewise the people who under Soviet rule got along with the regime and not only were reconciled themselves with the humiliation, but reported on their neighbors, colleagues, and personal acquaintances or in some other way participated in their persecution, choose to remain silent, of course, for different reasons. It is quite natural that reminiscences of shameful, disgraceful, or even offensive acts change their original contents in individual memories and become less significant, less dramatic as time goes by. They give way to the present view of oneself, changing one's memory so that a person looks more favorably at his or her own past. As a rule, one finds many excuses for actions committed in the past. Thomas Scheff and Susanne Retzinger have provided insight into the psychological attitudes of Albert Speer, Germany's chief architect under the Nazi regime and personal friend of Adolf Hitler, who refused to admit his guilt even after twenty years of imprisonment.[4] These are the feelings of those who neither actively supported the communist regime nor were its executive instruments, but who were to a certain degree involved in various misdoings because of their job or social status. Moreover many posts and positions openly had the nature of a compromise. Loyalty was demanded to the ruling Communist party and official state institutions. Thus many people demonstrated real or feigned devotion to Soviet power for decades. Even membership in the Communist party helped in receiving state honors or bribes given to officials in order to get housing or many other minor trifles. This still brings back unpleasant and humiliating memories. Many conformists of this

[4] See, Thomas Scheff, Susanne Retzinger, *Emotions and Violence: Shame and Rage in Destructive Conflicts*, Lexington: Lexington Books, 1991.

period – journalists, intellectuals, scholars, present-day politicians among them – are still active. Many of them managed to maintain their institutional positions or to change previous "symbolic capital" into its present equivalents of power. In order to secure a new image of the self which inevitably falls into conflict with the old one that existed in the years of subjugation, some memories of the past needed to be destroyed in order to forget indecent or disgraceful acts or episodes. Perhaps because of that, many individuals who boldly demonstrated an atheistic outlook that signified loyalty to communist ideology, at present show the same faith in the Roman Catholic Church. Members of the former *nomenklatura*, cultural activists, and writers from the older generation contend with their fellows for state orders and other awards that independent Lithuania now allots. Such situations are neither comic nor a caricature though they might seem to be. It is not only a public spectacle but also a conscious, semi-conscious or sometimes subconscious personal program of re-writing biography. Many people would like to remain in the memories of their children, relatives, or acquaintances, not as collaborators with the regime, sneaks or time-servers, but as dignified, noble, and responsible persons who did a great service for their homeland. The old mirrors of the past are accordingly replaced by new ones which show none of the "notches" acquired in the past. In the same way, the collective memory of younger generations is altered: the past seems to look less awful, less humiliating, less dramatic than it really was. It is even treated as somewhat comic and exotic.

Sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel has emphasized the difference between personal (or in his own words autobiographical) and collective (or socio-biographical) memory. In spite of the fact that everything that people remember is not limited to what they experienced personally – since memory is influenced and adjusted by many social groups, different organizations, nation and other mnemonic communities) – the memory of a group is something more than simply the total sum of individual memories. It is comprised only of those elements that are common

to the whole community. Thus, "collective memory" is not only shared but jointly remembered. This is why, according to Zerubavel, battles over memory are fought while trying to impose "truthful" ways of interpreting the past.[5] He noticed insightfully that censorship over the past can become a policy of long-standing state programs with a political goal. For example, during the last decade of the past century, Israeli authorities forbade TV and radio broadcasters to refer to the Arabic names of the present territory of Israel. The idea was implanted that in spite of the historical facts, it is possible to relocate them to a "prehistoric" period that is no longer relevant.[6] It can be concluded that memory that is censored for a long time becomes distorted, because one or another interpretation of the past dominates over large mnemonic groups. It even at last seems as if it is truthful and resistant to any alterations. Generations of young people who are educated in such a climate no longer have to get confused about personal memories and social realities: their attitudes toward the communal past are based on clear and unquestionable versions of the censored history.

Getting back to recent Lithuanian context, a peculiar tendency that surfaced during the second decade after the reestablishment of independence might be called an "assault on memory", has become visible. A number of former members of the Communist government and ideological institutions – though the majority of them most likely have never read any writings of George Orwell – nevertheless seem to have discovered the idea that the one who controls social memory exerts a stronger influence upon society at large. It is no surprise that after the first phase of upheaval in collective memory that contained a powerful impetus of rethinking the Soviet experience, after more than a decade, a flow of new kinds of memories surfaced. Now the memoirs were written by those who were top ideological or state

[5] Eviatar Zerubavel, *Social Mindscapes*, 90–98.
[6] Ibid., 85.

functionaries during the Soviet era. Through their individual narratives, these authors, nevertheless, contribute to public discourse by presenting attempts at justification of the Soviet regime as well as creating a distorted and often deliberately false image of its repressive practices, as well as in an indirect way by legitimizing some political parties that have strong roots with the Communist establishment of the Soviet era.

Beyond Social Amnesia

Rewriting memory in post-communist Lithuania is associated with other aspects of individual and collective memory. During the last years of the Soviet era, most of its population (except small groups of dissidents) was first by force, later by other more subtle means, integrated into what can be termed as the Soviet way of life and made to adjust to its social organization. Many problems surface while trying to evaluate the experiences of this period. This statement can be supported by the obvious fact that there is so little academic interest in the analysis of the period that was called "mature socialism" (hereby I refer to the official "label" of the last decades of the Soviet rule), in its mental legacy and forms of collaboration. Many questions are still to be asked. Does the life lived during the last decade of independence and the current loyalty to the new values bear any relation to the past? Is it possible to erect cognitive and meaningful bridges between these two periods? And which image of the self is more truthful: the old Soviet one or the newly acquired? None of these questions has so far been sufficiently reconsidered by the local social scientists or historians, not to mention a few exceptions that only prove the validity of the observation.

And yet in order to rewrite the history of the Soviet period, a conscious collective amnesia is not sufficient. This is why revisionists who lately interpret it as an era of "progress" that eventually developed into a striving toward national independence, are doing lip-service to the Communist party that in the

last decade has transformed itself into new political conglomerations. But, they have no chance in succeeding in totally rewriting history. Many other mnemonic groups who are conscious of sufferings experienced under Soviet regime provide society with different memories. And yet, some of the attempts to introduce new versions of the past are alarming. During the last years a lot of attempts were made to destroy the archives, especially the visual ones. Leszek Kolakowski who explored the problem of historical memory in a different dimension – one of national identity – has emphasized that in order to secure communal feeling the understanding of the past is not sufficient in itself: society needs real or imagined memories that will transcend the past. And this includes not only historical knowledge, but symbols, particularities of the language, heritage, sanctuaries, etc.[7]

When one refers to other kinds of group identity, the relation of a particular group or community to symbols, might be revised. Those who served the communist party have managed to destroy not only archives, but also remaining visual symbols – monuments to the Soviet power. This destruction of the symbols of the past can be interpreted as a conscious amnesia: they are demolished because they bring shameful recollections and because they do not fit as mirrors for reflecting the present selves as if these "selves" share nothing with the roles they performed under Soviet subjugation. This explains why public campaigns were launched for a few years against the construction of Grutas park – a large privately owned open-air museum exhibiting Soviet monuments. These campaigns manipulated naïve citizens who suffered under the communist regime. It also explains why and how monuments glorifying Soviet power were either demolished or replaced by national memorabilia during the last decade. The past is reconstructed by destroying archives. Visual archives of the past are brought down as well.

On the other hand, rewriting the past can be based on symbols of another type: certain historical figures that personify a con-

[7] Leszek Kolakowski, "On Collective Identity".

tinuation and meaning that evolves in time and joins different traditions. These figures help to erase some episodes of the past and bring into focus others. Recent attempts to rehabilitate Antanas Sniečkus (1903–1974), the authoritarian leader of the postwar Lithuanian Communist party who was more or less successfully mythologized throughout several decades, can be classified as belonging to this particular type. It's no wonder his admirers and former associates made special efforts to canonize this figure. Even some academic publications and conferences sought to impose the image that the past was confronted "objectively", without any emotions. The efforts to rehabilitate this idol of totalitarian believers, however, finally ended in failure. This burnt-out campaign proved that no matter how much social bonds and the feelings of collective identity have declined during the last years, post-communist society is perhaps not so subject to total amnesia as far as the Communist era is concerned. It still maintains a feeling for the truthful view of the past, and at least occasionally remains resistant to ideological manipulations.

Development of Inquiry into Collective Memory Issues

During the first years of the post-Soviet decade, despite some notable exceptions as for, e.g., articles based on sociological empirical research[8], there were essentially no scholarly attempts focused at studying systematically the emerging problems in collective (and individual) memory, though it became obvious that the previous balance in the collective memory of the Soviet

[8] Vladas Gaidys, Dalia Tureikytė, Irena Šutinienė, "Istorinė lietuvių atmintis (empirinės charakteristikos)," *Filosofija. Sociologija,* 1991, nr. 1 (4). The article was based on empirical research conducted using the so-called open question formulated by sociology professor Howard Schuman of Michigan University, Ann Arbor, and first presented for a representative questionnaire as early as 1985, and which has since then been used in various countries.

past was changing rapidly. Memories that had been previously kept secret even to intimate friends and family members were now being shared publicly in different ways. During this rather brief but equally exciting period of national upheaval, people were mediating their memories to journalists as well as during various public meetings or rallies. Lithuanian writers who were making regular trips all over the country to meet their readers in their own way, triggered an interest in the importance of personal memories and narratives of the Soviet period, especially those traumatic moments as deportation, imprisonment, persecutions and haunting memories of the war after the war (i.e. guerilla resistance that broke out in Lithuania shortly before the end of WWII and lasted until 1953). A number of published memoirs, especially those dealing with the period of exiles, deportations, and the Gulag experience, grew exponentially during the years of national resurgence and the first few years following the reestablishment of independence and yet, despite the abundance of the published material there were almost no timely attempts to study the emerging forms of public consciousness and outbursts of memory. The publication of the shockingly open memoirs of a former Gulag prisoner and deportee, Dalia Grinkevičiūtė, that were published before the collapse of the regime as early as 1988 in Lithuania's then largest and leading literary journal, "Pergalė" (now published under the title of "Metai" but considered to be culturally less important than in the late Soviet era) opened the door to this type of revelatory documentary literature, and though hardly any author could match her concise, yet exclusively literate, powerful and revealing narrative, numerous volumes of memoirs dealing with the themes of exile, deportation and suffering in Siberian gulags eventually appeared in public. People who keep their painful memories to themselves during several decades of dependence were sharing them openly with their fellow citizens. But since the majority of these narratives, unlike Grinkevičiūtė's or a few others could hardly be called literary masterpieces and were dealing with similar issues the public in-

terest after some years of national upheaval started to fade away. Besides, a growing number of urgent economic problems accompanied the first post-Soviet decade. The inability of the new inexperienced governments to deal with them adequately, soon ended with the comeback of former Communists disguised under a new name, and the political pendulum swung back. All the turbulences of the prolonged transitory period soon ended a short and spectacular period of the "rage of memory". Other social issues took over the sphere previously occupied by the need to remember the evils of the Soviet regime and thus marginalized some of the previously important aspects of traumatic memories. As early as 2003, an editor of one of the pioneering book-length sociological inquiries into the issue of collective memory of the Soviet era, concluded that "Attention paid to social memory in social and cultural theories both in Lithuania and outside so far is less important than its importance in the life of society; there are far more numerous empirical studies of various phenomena and aspects of memory than there are theoretical ones."[9]

Memories of Dependence

The scholarly interest in the issues of collective (or social) as well as cultural memory and its different aspects became more openly expressed in the second decade after reestablishment of Lithuania's independence. A collective monograph under the title *Social Memory: Commemorations and Oblivion*, researched and co-written by sociologists Eugenija Krukauskienė, Irena Šutinienė, Inija Trinkūnienė and Angelė Vosyliūtė was published in 2003 and became one of the first more or less systematic studies of collective memory of the Soviet era in the local context.[10] This concise yet important book presented the attempts to discuss the theoretical framework of collective memory issues as well as to present the

[9] *Socialinė atmintis: minėjimai ir užmarštys*, 9.
[10] Ibid.

research done by the team of authors each working on a particular theme. From the point of view of postcommunist collective memory studies, the lengthy article of Irena Šutinienė "The Peculiarities of Social Memory of the Soviet Period in Contemporary Lithuania. Memory of Traumatic Events" deserves special mention. The editor of this important volume admitted that:

> There is a certain confusion and uncertainty: sometimes such categories as collective memory, social memory, historical consciousness, historical memory, public memory, "live history", etc., are used as synonyms. The notion of memory covers multiple and multidimensional phenomena both in everyday and scholarly usage. These phenomena are the object of interdisciplinary study not only because of their origin, but even research within the framework of one discipline reveals their controversial character and diversity.[11]

The editor of this book admitted that:

> The reestablishment of independence resulted in regaining formerly forbidden and manipulated memory as well as a new "oblivion". The main function of the past during the national resurgence period was national and civic identity, and in the attempt to support the recovery of an independent state, the past was invoked in an idealized and ideologized way, and in this effort an important role was played by heroic myths of the nation's past and especially the memory of pre-war Lithuania and Soviet occupation. After political independence was reestablished, the function of constructing and supporting collective as well as personal identities remains, but there is no longer any important collective goal demanding unanimous actions such as the reestablishment of the state. Thus, national identities shift and become heterogeneous, identities of other groups gain importance together with the local and regional legacy as well as histories including the histories of families and other groups.[12]

Some of the sociologists who conducted this research, however, admitted that silencing plays an important role in render-

11 Ibid., 7.
12 Ibid., 8–9.

ing the past. According to Šutinienė, "In cases of greater collaboration with the system, the experience of several decades is silenced or not admitted to. It seems that a large number of people who experienced the Soviet period are not yet ready to rethink and asses freely and critically the experience and memory of the Soviet period."[13] Other researchers into the issues of social and cultural memory, though lacking empirical evidence to back their viewpoints and insights, still have speculatively suggested that there has been too few attempts to study the period of dependence, especially the role of the policies of Sovietisation that had and continue to have their impact upon images of the period in citizens' memories. For example, writer, political analyst and cultural critic Vytautas Rubavičius insisted that "There is an essential peculiarity in our society that should be associated with the paradox of silencing – there is a loathing of talking about and discussing the recent past."[14] According to Rubavičius, this somewhat strange tendency could be explained by certain conscious or unconscious strategies adopted by those belonging to the present power elite which has its roots in the previous regime: "The elite that matured in the Soviet period prefers to deal with the past in such a way that its present situation and power is justified and provides a legitimate ground."[15]

Nevertheless some of the most socially painful memories – those of first post-war decade (including deportation, gulag and guerilla experience) have already been studied from various angles, including sociological investigations and, more recently study of memoir material.[16] Adding to the broad spectrum of

13 Ibid., 64.

14 Vytautas Rubavičius. *Vėluojanti savastis*, 116.

15 Ibid., 137.

16 For some recent interpretations of the theme, see *Maps of Memory: Trauma, Identity and Exile in Deportation Memoirs from the Baltic Sea*, editors Violeta Davoliūtė and Tomas Balkelis. Vilnius: LLTI, 2012. It should be mentioned though, that more comprehensive studies of most local research, like those of, say, Irena Šutinienė, so far remain unavailable to English readers.

memory studies, some research has been done to make a comparative analysis of how men and women remember traumatic events.[17] Sociologist Vladas Gaidys in his recent article "The Studies of the Collective Memory in Lithuania" concluded that in comparison to research done in 1989 it can be concluded that the events of the period 1939–1953 during recent decades have become less impregnated in people's memory.[18]

More recently there had been a revived interest in approaching a relatively new phenomenon or aspect of public collective memory – one of nostalgia for some of the aspects of the Soviet period. This nostalgia did not exist in the first decade of independence. This social trend has been studied by a number Lithuania's sociologists and anthropologists who have conducted their research projects well aware of interests currently becoming manifest in both local and international disciplinary fields. Anthropologist Neringa Klumbytė suggested the phenomenon of the "Soviet sausage renaissance".[19] Klumbytė, a Lithuanian anthropologist currently teaching in Miami University, Ohio, has also conducted some field research in Lithuania focused on memories of the post-war period specific to local village communities and more lately on some aspects of emerging (or imagined) nostalgia.[20] Sociologist Irena Šutinienė is one of the few researchers, who has been continuously studying shifts in collective memory over a longer period, presented her findings in a lengthy article published a few years ago discussing results of a study

[17] See, Dalia Leinartė, "Lietuvių moterų ir vyrų trauminė patirtis sovietų lageriuose ir tremtyje", *Kultūros barai*, 2012, No 2.

[18] Vladas Gaidys,"Kolektyvinės atminties tyrimai Lietuvoje 1989–2009 metais", 327–336.

[19] Neringa Klumbytė, "The Soviet Sausage Renaissance," 22–37.

[20] See, Neringa Klumbytė, "People at the Margins of History: Memories of Soviet Times and Experiences of the Present in Village Communities," *Politologija,* 2004, 3 (35), p. 63–83 and Neringa Klumbytė, "Post-socialist Sensations: Nostalgia, the Self, and Alterity in Lithuania," *Lietuvos etnologija*, 2009, 9 (18), p. 93–116.

focused on the emergence of nostalgia while dealing with the recent past.[21] Though she admitted her research suggests some ambivalence in remembering and re-imagining the Soviet period, she insists that "Qualitative studies of postcommunist nostalgia prove that people are longing not for the very reality of the Communist period, but for those ideas and fantasies that structured it in the past – hopes, discourses and feelings that while being projected into the Communist past, provide meaning to their experience of the present".[22] According to the sociologist, nostalgia for the period of dependence manifests itself as a "longing for a safe, stable life, in paternalistic custody of the state" and these feelings are expressed in "various forms of nostalgia – as a longing for a pre-planned script of life, a traditional habitus, and forms of a socially, "simple" quiet life with provided subsistence."[23] The studies of nostalgia and especially theorizing about some of its supposed findings, have been recently criticized by some scholars. In any case, this issue still needs further research.

Conclusions

Summing up this concise analysis, it could be concluded that so far traumatic post-war memories of deportations, exile, gulag experience and guerilla actions, have been more or less adequately studied in the Lithuanian context, though their images in various media (especially anonymous comments on the internet) remain mixed. This early period of Soviet colonization has now been researched rather substantially (especially as far as empirical sociological studies are concerned) and the correlation be-

21 Irena Šutinienė, "Sovietmečio atmintis šiuolaikinėje Lietuvoje: ambivalentiškumas ar nostalgija," 152–175.

22 Ibid., 160.

23 Ibid., 161.

tween scholarly research and collective memories might be seen as largely balanced. Other aspects of collective memory, however, remain sufficiently uncovered and some of the present "targets" of research are highly selective and to some degree reflect some of the recent shifts in Lithuanian politics and trends of state-funded research. The recently targeted issue of Soviet nostalgia remains a particularly interesting and curious case that might be more complex and complicated than present researchers are ready to admit. The very focus on some particular research issues and aspects of life, in a certain way makes them privileged among many other possible spheres of scholarly interest, and last but not least contributes to the artificial ascent of the importance of some social problems. One should not forget that collective, social and cultural memory in the present society has a direct or indirect link to the politics of history and politics of memory which is deployed not only by society at large but adopted by its political elites. Though issues of postwar memory (despite a certain ambivalence in rendering some events), seem no longer urgently problematic in contemporary Lithuania, memory of the later Soviet period (especially its last decade or decades) remains far more complex, confused, and complicated; moreover so since the structuring mainstream politics of memory is an open-ended process contested by several competing mnemonic groups who have their own interest in maintaining one or another image of the late Soviet era. Unlike in some neighboring East European countries where manipulation of collective memory seems to be made by some right-wing political groupings, this sphere has not been subjected to radical revisions imposed by far right-wing parties. There is quite a different though no less alarming tendency to manipulate collective memory from a moderate perspective that contains some hints of a phenomena known in the Northern European hemisphere as *Finlandisation* – though this tendency is serious enough to require a separate discussion.

Works Cited

Davoliūtė, Violeta and Tomas Balkelis, eds., *Trauma, Identity and Exile in Deportation Memoirs from the Baltic Sea*. Vilnius: LLTI, 2012.

Gaidys, Vladas, Dalia Tureikytė, Irena Šutinienė. "Istorinė lietuvių atmintis (empirinės charakteristikos)," *Filosofija. Sociologija*, 1991, 1 (4).

Gaidys, Vladas. "Kolektyvinės atminties tyrimai Lietuvoje 1989–2009 metais." In *Nuo Basanavičiaus, Vytauto Didžiojo iki Molotovo ir Ribbentropo pakto: atminties ir atminimo kultūrų trasnformacijos XX–XXI amžiuje*. Vilnius: LII, 2011.

Klumbytė, Neringa. "People at the Margins of History: Memories of Soviet Times and Experiences of the Present Village Communities," *Politologija*, 2004, 3 (35).

Klumbytė, Neringa. "Post-socialist Sensations: Nostalgia, the Self and Alterity in Lithuania," *Lietuvos etnologija*, 2009, 9 (18).

Klumbytė, Neringa. "The Soviet Sausage Renaissance," *American Anthropologist*, 2010, 112 (1).

Kolakowski, Leszek. *On Collective memory*, *Partisan Review*, 2001, No 1.

Krukauskienė, Eugenija, Šutinienė, Irena, Trinkūnienė, Inija, Vosyliūtė, Anelė. *Socialinė atmintis: minėjimai ir užmaršty*s. Sudarytoja Irena Šutinienė. Vilnius: Eugrimas, 2003.

Leinartė, Dalia. *Lietuvių moterų ir vyrų trauminė patirtis sovietų lageriuose ir tremtyje*, *Kultūros barai*, 2012, No 2.

Plantinga, Theodore. *How Memory Shapes Narratives: A Philosophical Essay on Redeeming the Past*, Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1982.

Rubavičius, Vytautas. *Vėluojanti savastis*, Vilnius: LRS leidykla, 2014.

Todorov, Tzvetan. *Facing the Extreme: Moral Life in Concentration Camps*. Transl. by Arthur Denner and Abigal Pollack. New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996.

Scheff, Thomas, Suzanne Retzinger. *Emotions and Violence: Shame and Rage in Destructive Conflicts*. Lexington: Lexington books, 1991.

Šutinienė, Irena. „Sovietmečio atmintis šiuolaikinėje Lietuvoje: ambivalentiškumas ar nostalgija," *Sociologija. Mintis ir veiksmas*, 2013 (32).

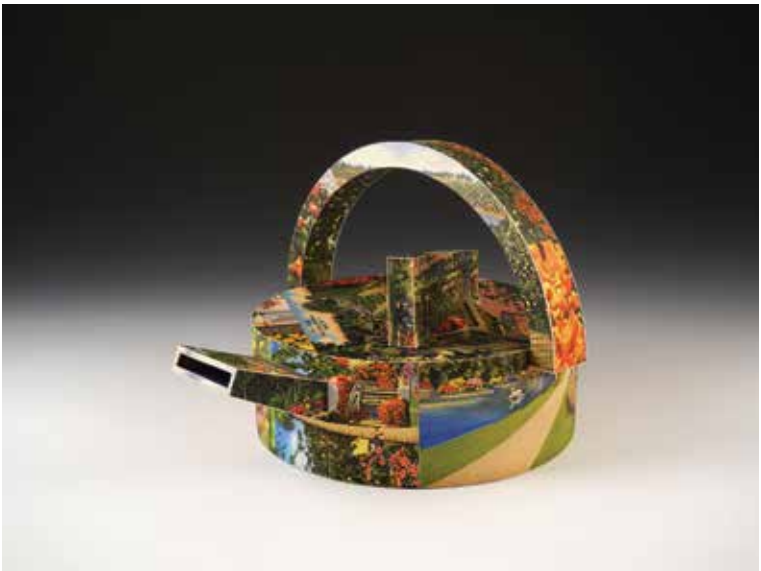
Zerubavel, Eviatar. *Social Mindscapes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Billie Theide

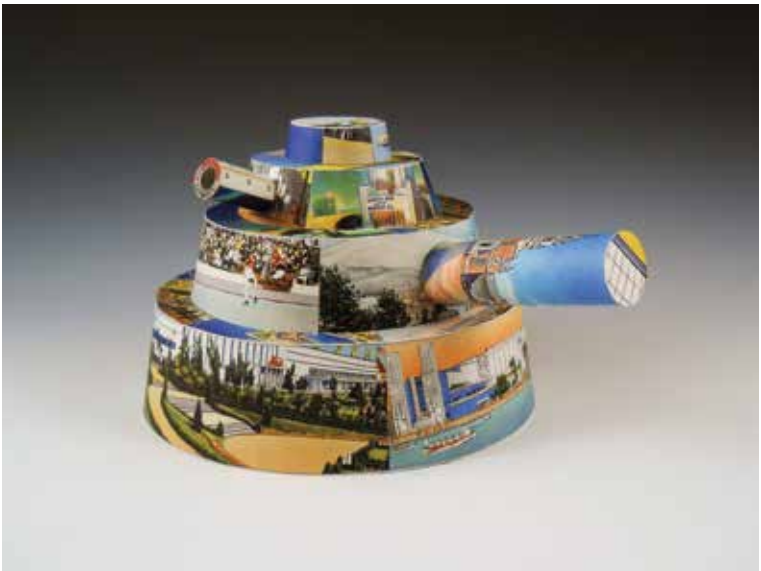
Billie Theide is best described as a contemporary fine-craft artist. She says this about her work: "I see beauty in the seemingly mundane. My creative practice is driven by a passion for history and collecting, an interest in hybridization, the absurd, and the human propensity for excess and ornamentation." Her artwork has been included in over 450 curator-invited, competitive, group, and one-person exhibitions. The work is in many national and international museums, including the de Young in San Francisco; Museum of Art & Design in New York City; the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian; Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague; the Porcelain Museum in Riga, Latvia; and the Civic Gallery in Panevėžys, Lithuania.

Billie Theide holds a MFA from Indiana University in Bloomington and a BFA from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. She is the recipient of a Visual Arts Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and five Artists Fellowship Grants from the Illinois Arts Council. She is a Distinguished Member and Past-President of the Society of North American Goldsmiths. Currently, she is Professor of Art in the School of Art + Design at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

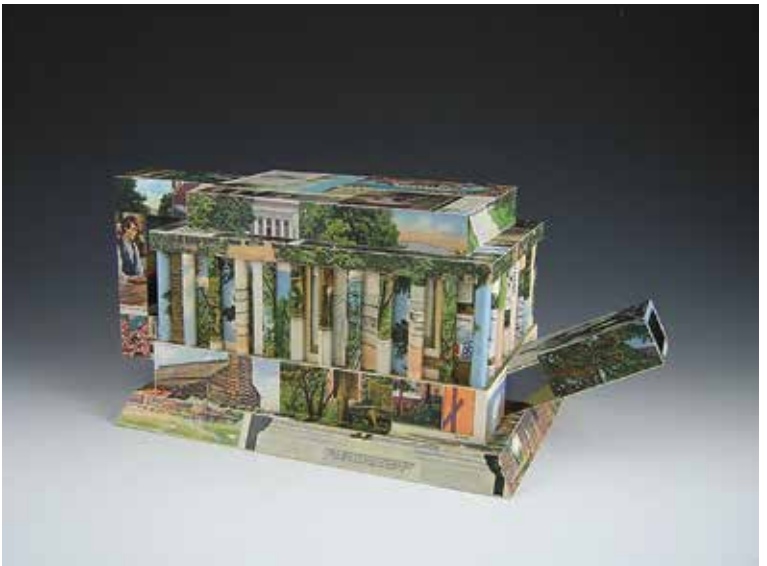
Billie's Lithuanian heritage stems from her Lithuania born grandparents, John (Jonas) Chappas and Mary (Maria) Auzbikaitytе, who met in the United States. They married and settled in Des Moines, Iowa where they raised four children. Billie's mother, Helen Theide, nee Chappas, was an accountant. Billie's father, Walter Theide, was an engineer for Montgomery Elevators. Billie attributes her mechanical propensity to the Saturday mornings she spent with her father in the metal shop with "the guys" making things. In 2002, Billie connected with her Lithuanian relatives, who live in Vilnius and Panevėžys. She visits them as time allows.



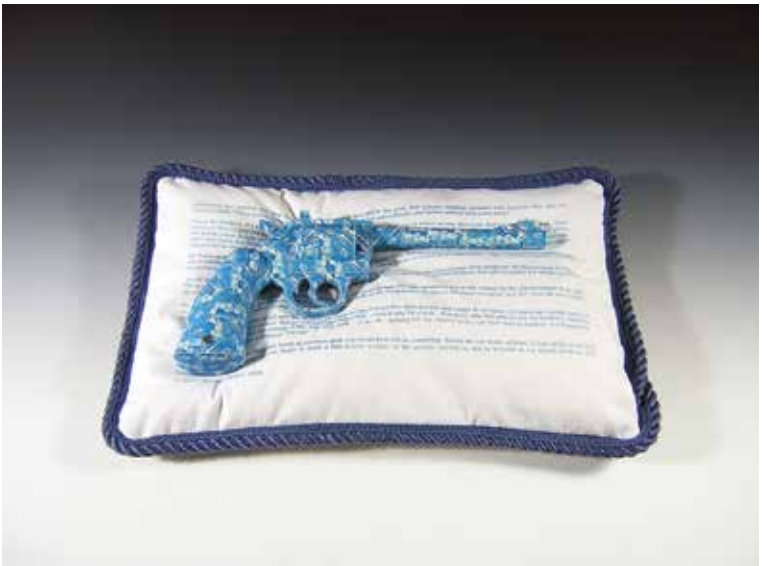
Billie THEIDE. *C.T. Art-Colortone: Tropical Florida* – 2015.
Vintage linen postcards, birch
5.25″ × 7.5″ × 6.75″ (133 mm × 191 mm × 171 mm)
Collection of David Charak



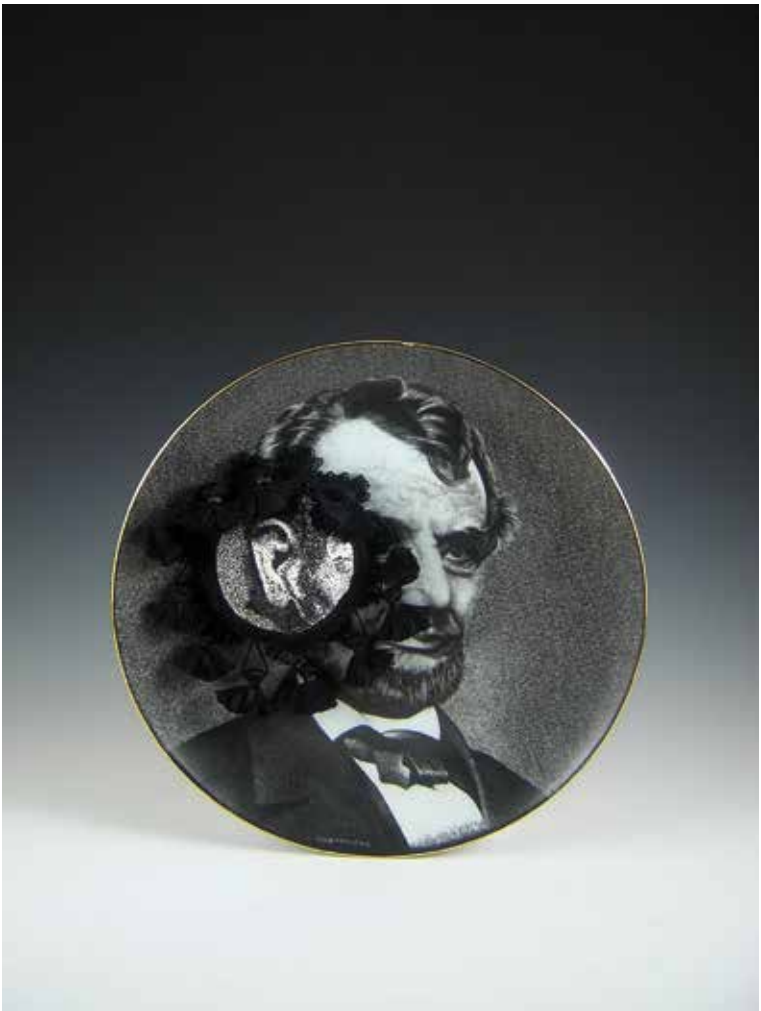
Billie THEIDE. *C.T. Art-Colortone: Chicago World's Fair* – 2015.
C.T. Art-Colortone: Chicago World's Fair.
4.5″ × 8.25″ × 6.25″ (114 mm × 210 mm × 159 mm)
Collection of Sonny and Gloria Kamm



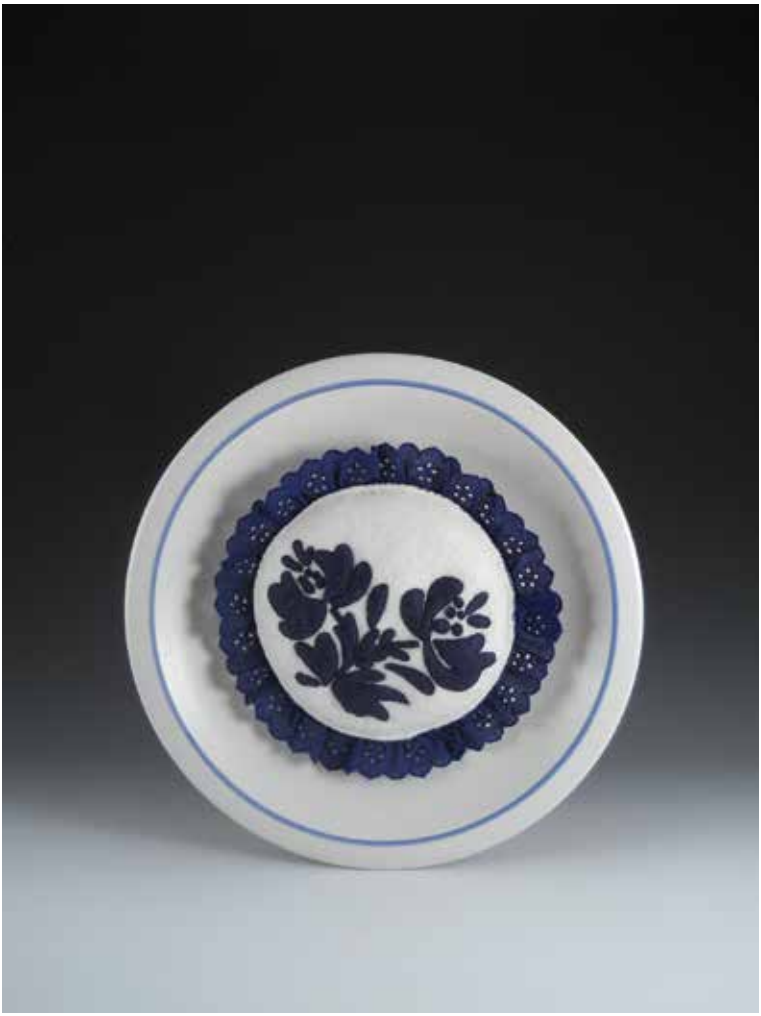
Billie THEIDE. *C.T. Art-Colortone: Lincoln* – 2016
Vintage linen postcards, birch
5″ × 12″ × 6″ (127 mm × 305 mm × 152 mm)



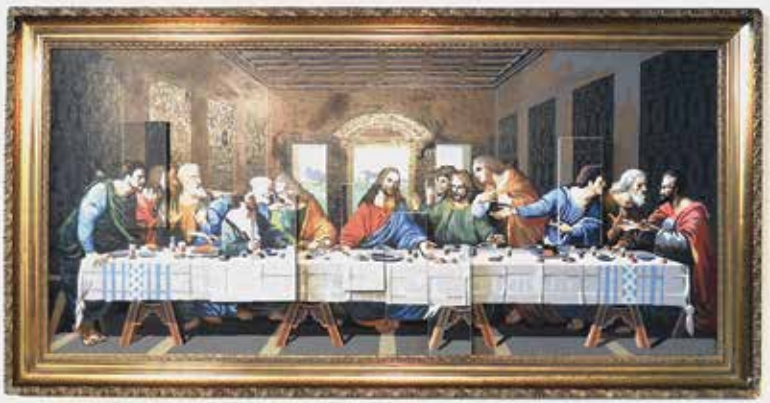
Billie THEIDE. *…shame and sorry…* – 2016
Iver Johnson Model 57 revolver,
US commemorative postage stamps, cotton, trim
3″ × 16″ × 10″ (76 mm × 406 mm × 254 mm)



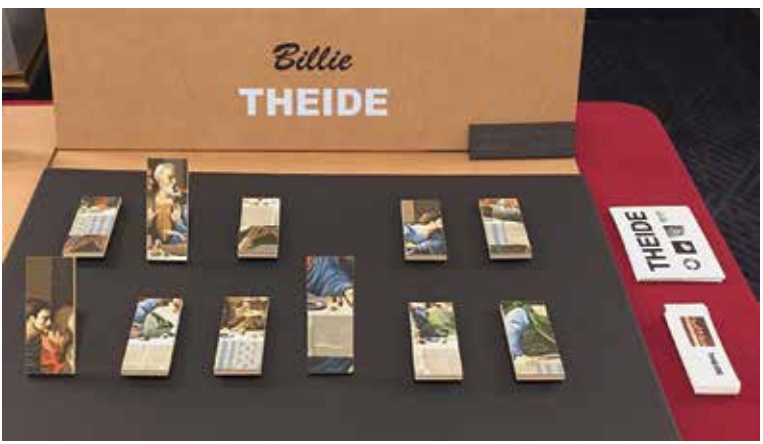
Billie THEIDE. *Guise: Abraham Lincoln* – 2014
Collectible commemorative plate and brooch
Plate, cotton and synthetic fabrics, sterling silver
10.25″ diameter (260 mm diameter)



Billie THEIDE. *Guise: Pfaltzgraff Yorktowne* – 2016
Plate and companion brooch
Plate, cotton and synthetic fabrics, sterling silver
10.25″ diameter (260 mm diameter)



Billie THEIDE. *Last Supper* – 2015
Vintage paint by number, birch, sterling silver
Brooches 5″ × 2″ × .5″ (approximate size of each brooch)
(127 mm × 51 mm × 13 mm)



Billie THEIDE. *Last Supper* – 2015
Brooches, detail

Ring XIX

I think of you as a warm
summer's day
I remember you
attached to my arms
falling back entirely body into soul
you stretched out like the world
I remember the day so vividly

that day is strange
that day is you
wrapped in my sleep
clothed in my thoughts
my emotions, my fullness
even my emptiness
is without you
pressing against all resistance
a buoyant breeze that fills the valley

in summer
you around me
me inside your existence

CHRISTIAN NARKIEWICZ-LAINE is a Finnish/Lithuanian/American architect, critic, painter, sculptor and poet. He is a Founding President and director of the Chicago Atheneum Museum of Architecture and Design. In spirit, he is a Baltic phenomenon, influenced greatly by both Lithuanian and Nordic literature and traditions.

and my troubled night's sleep with a whir
it all goes around
a reflection in your pool
a swim in your summer lake
a lull in your hot afternoon
is it not spreading
is it not compelling
compressed by the memories
and summer's splendid fullness

I remember you
as if you were that summer
you entering
and leaving
your presence in the corridors
and rooms around the house
across that moment
compressed and compounded
by all the memories experienced

these days of sun and warmth
and the feelings of being around you

I felt around for you
two doors
opening and closing
shutting, back and forth
responding to the last summer air
and wheels of what will be
wind to shadows

is it not spreading
is it not compelling
your resounding heart
and my broken beat

two doors, no windows
slamming back and forth

summer's final wind
an empty mattress in a tiny room
a lone tree in the landscape
the slight chill returning to the night
wheels of what will be
a complicated breeze
that turns to shadow

Ring LIX

the returning bird
never forgets
tomorrow is an illusion
and so was yesterday
the sea, the bird,
this runaway wind
only the returning bird
remembers

the returning bird
never forgets
today is the day
of your burning
everything you have
ever written
every word, every feeling
every emotion
strangers pass by and
ignite the fires

the returning bird
never forgets
a lover's dream, a caress
whoever wants to stand
or stalk, scarcely lingers

allow them
the returning bird
never forgets
the feel of the wind
under the wing
the salt of the sea
the scent of a rain on the fields
the love of a sparrow
that sudden surprise
of discovery

the returning bird
never forgets

Ring XCV

harsh prison
I blessed its dampness
I blessed its tiger
I blessed the crevice of light
I blessed my old, suffering body
I blessed the darkness and the stone

Ring CXXI

hail to profound complexities
hail to unresolved mystery
hail to my ship as it circles the cyclone
hail to the journey at the start before its beginning
hail to awaking in that morning of uneasy dreams
hail to the afternoons and evenings
when I realized that I did not possess
the type of life I had lived, knew, or wanted
hail to the millions of eyes looking at you
and you don't really know what they think

hail to the nostalgia, supernatural, and fantastic
hail to the beauty of going to heaven
hail to the plagues, epidemics, the insomnia
hail to the imprisoned and quarantined
hail to the prophets, seers, believers, non believers
hail to the smell of truth
on that journey from island to island
hail to the antecedents in everyday things
hail to the torrents of inspiration
hail to the dreams we see as part of life in general
hail to scientific knowledge, laws of gravity

hail to the sense of no frontiers or borders
hail to the heart that eliminates the bad
but magnifies the good
hail to building on sand if it were stone
hail to all fires that consume
hail to those simple pleasures, idle details, and moments
when man finds out, for once and all, who he is
hail to the broken will, sad art, fiction
for reality is not always probable, or likely
hail to what is divine, terrible, incomprehensible
hail to what guides the dream
hail to defeat rather than victory
hail to the universe that turns to a mighty stranger
hail to all else perished, and he remained
that I should still continue to exist
hail to he who were annihilated, eternal rocks beneath
visible delight, pleasure, and state of being

Ring CXXV

the long European winter
a thick frozen cream covers the fields
now by this lake
in the darkened soil

the lapse of what is old
falling mould, branching roots
emerging life and memory mocks us
the white smoke from the Sistine Chapel
I see your world behind
the landscape's caress
coins of foam, lightning ash
your place, beyond our brittle light
running visions melt the coldness down

under a dripping roof
I tell you, who you are
how you are loved
how the old houses lean
holding hands across the winter whence
taking that first and last deep breath

so in a one man Europe I sit here
broken wings and in the cold
and the monumental stone
we are perfect sacrifice to nothing
condemned to a beginning and an end

our character lost in predestined death
crown of the ultimate paradox
the Universe's dark energy
enmeshing everything
in ice and fire
bleeding secrets
till a coming Spring
destiny never listens
not at least
to tonight's frozen sleet
sheeting down

(Kražiai, Lithuania)

BOOK REWIEWS

Jurgis Kunčinas. *Tūla*. Translated by Elizabeth Novickas.
Pica Pica Press, 2016. 232 pages.
ISBN 978-0996630412

"**S**ometimes it seems to me that I invented you myself, Tūla; that you actually never even existed. I created you out of air, water, algae, sparks and the quiet rumbling of the hills of Vilnius. I'm grateful to you that we lived together for only one week; that that week took the place of – for me, of course, just me! – many years. After all, even then, when it was only just over, I realized with horror that I would miss you, Tūla, for a long time, maybe even for the rest of my life, even on the other side of life, where more and more today our, the transient's, eyes turn with such curiosity and longing. That's just what happened – even now it's hard to believe it! But you aren't, in any event, intended or imagined; I have my own hard evidence. There are a few short letters, a broken tile from your old abode, and finally there's the photography your brother took: almost all of your face in the shadow; in the dusk, one leg in flowery pants is carelessly thrown over the other. Only someone who knew you so well could confirm: Yes, that's Tūla." (p. 95). This short extract from the novel of Jurgis Kunčinas translated and published by Novickas – most probably one of the best he had ever written – might give some idea of the style of his prose that sometimes is poetic, sometimes matter-of-fact, sometimes detached, and occasionally colored with irony. The reading of *Tūla*, provides an opportunity both to experience his masterful narrative written in the first person and

centered around a love story, and mentally re-imagine the atmosphere of Vilnius in the Soviet era slowly going into an oblivion.

Jurgis Kunčinas (1947–2002) was one of the most notable Lithuanian prose writers of the late Soviet period and first decade of post-dependence. Though during recent years, general and critical interest in Kunčinas' prose has somewhat declined, he undoubtedly still remains a towering figure of this period being surpassed perhaps only by another loner – Ričardas Gavelis who remains to this very day the most important and almost iconic Lithuanian prose writer of his generation. Both were highly independent and individualistic authors and each created a literary world of his own that remains unmistakingly recognizable after reading a few pages. Both, embedded in urban rather than rural culture, shared a very critical view of Soviet Lithuanian society and its culture. Gavelis, however, was more skeptical of the society's post-Soviet transformations and employed biting irony while reflecting upon it – and this attitude made him less popular among the readers of the post-Soviet era; meanwhile, Kunčinas was far less critical and far more optimistic in this respect, and reserved irony and growing sarcasm for his depiction of the last decades of Soviet life in Lithuania.

Starting his literary career as a poet, within a decade he shifted to writing prose and made his living as a translator from German, introducing a number of authors such as Heinrich Boll, Günther Grass, Elias Canetti, Ernst Junger, Friedrich Durrenmatt as well as lesser German and Austrian literary figures to Lithuanian readership. Being something of an outcast in the Soviet times and making a living from various odd jobs, Jurgis Kunčinas dwelled upon this experience in his novels and short-stories, the protagonists of which were mostly vagabonds, social marginals, dissenting artists and/or often alcoholics that did not fit into an official picture of Soviet society.

He was one of the few Lithuanian prose writers (together with Gavelis and Ivanauskaitė) who abandoned rural narratives and switched to writing urban prose. All of them – often discussed as a distinct trio of writers by the literary critics of the

late Soviet and early post-Soviet period – were treated as the usual suspects though Jurga Ivanauskaitė was marginalized to a lesser degree due to her family ties to academician Kostas Korsakas – the director of the Institute of Lithuanian Language and Literature – an important cultural functionary in the hierarchical world of Soviet Lithuanian literary institutions. In a sense, Kunčinas was the most marginalized during the era of dependence – more than Ivanauskaitė or, say, Gavelis, who started his career as a promising physicist and worked for a few years in a research institution. After a few years spent studying German philology at Vilnius University, he never obtained a degree and made his living on the margins of Soviet institutions; however, such a way of life enabled him to have a vital experience around people who chose to remain outside the social system and thus were often treated as criminals or potential infringers or were persecuted, detained, or put into psychiatric institutions or centers for the treatment of alcoholics. This experience was used and reflected upon in his numerous prose writings – novels, *Glisono Kilpa* (The Loop of Glison, 1992); *Tūla* (1993); *Blancisserrie arba Žvėrynas-Užupis* (Blanchisserie or Žvėrynas-Užupis, 1997); *Kilnojamos Rontgeno stotys* (Portable Roentgen Stations, 1998); and later ones, as well as seven collections of short stories.

After the reestablishment of independence, Kunčinas could breathe in fresh air and became extremely prolific, publishing his own novels, collections of short stories, and translated books almost every year or sometimes several of them annually. Paradoxically, despite being acknowledged as one of the most important prose writers of the first part of the post-Soviet decade, he only received minor literary prizes, with the exception of winning a prestigious annual award from the Lithuanian Writers' Union. Quite ironically, an important state prize he hoped to win shortly before his premature death went to a literary critic – a well-known former Soviet functionary.

Many literary critics and readers would possibly agree with the present reviewer that *Tūla* which was published as early as 1991, the second novel Kunčinas wrote after giving up poetry to

become a prose writer, remains his highest literary achievement and remains one of the most notable novels published immediately after the reestablishment of independence. In the succeeding years, his prose became more and more ironic, acquiring some features of postmodernist narrative, though his focus on the experience of the late Soviet period never faded away. He was and remains one of the more perceptive, urban Lithuanian writers who cared much about the city's cultural topography and historical heritage. In one recent interview, his wife Rasa admits that the "Exceptional memory of Jurgis accumulated everything. He could tell where the Olympic games were held since 1896, who won a Gold medal, and was himself surprised whenever on occasion he failed to remember some particular detail. He knew geography, history, and urban architecture well. He loved to deal with people. All this became a part of his stories, and the stories – a part of himself." The narrative of *Tūla* mediated through the eyes of the main protagonist turned into a bat, and while hovering over the city he exhibits his masterful dealing with details as well as his love for the city's topography: "By then, Domine, I was already lying in the Second Section – I've mentioned it rather vaguely. Vasaros, Rudens and Olandų streets, right up to the varying elevations of the Polocko line on the Southeast, were its natural boundaries, where I made myself at home for almost two months. On the east side rose a steep, pine-covered slope, which, when climbed, opened onto the valley of Butterfield Cemetery. On sleepless nights, Domine, I would fly over it to the corner of Filaretų, and there, making a turn to the west, I would be fluttering into Malūnų Street..." (p. 109).

While concluding this brief and inevitably fragmented review, it can only be added that Elizabeth Novickas has done a very good if not an excellent job in masterfully rendering the style of Kunčinas' prose, and also enlarging the range of Lithuanian modern as well as postmodern prose writings now available in the English language.

MARIUS GAUČYS

ABSTRACTS

SHOKO TANAKA

Between Fiction and Reality: Trauma and Otherness in the Lithuanian Memory of the Soviet Deportations

The aim of this article is to unpack, by analyzing the reception of a novel *Between Shades of Gray* written by Ruta Sepetys, the phenomena of Lithuania's historical consciousness and cultural trauma rooted in the Soviet deportations. Departing from Rindzevičiūtė's remark on the novel: "the first major novel about Soviet deportations of Lithuanians was written not by a native Lithuanian writer, but by the American novelist Ruta Sepetys", the article observes and responds to how Sepetys' Otherness is relevant to the reception of the novel and, to the textual approach to the Lithuanian memory of the Soviet deportations. By employing sources that are made available in English, the article looks into the shaping of culture and identity in the Lithuanian context presented to the eye of Other.

PATRICK CHURA

Gytis Padegimas and Valentinas Didžgalvis Debate the Legacy of the 1988 *Atgaiva* Drama Festival

The stated goals of the *Atgaiva* Drama Festival, held in Šiauliai from December 12–21, 1988, were "to produce the best Lithuanian classic and contemporary dramatic works, and to stimulate the participation of theater professionals in the rebirth of Lithuanian national culture." The euphoric response to the festival in its

immediate context clearly indicated that it had lived up to these hopes. This article presents translated excerpts from a recent interview with *Atgaiva* creator and primary organizer Gytis Padegimas, alongside the views of Valentinas Didžgalvis, who was deeply involved in the festival as communications director for the Šiauliai Theater. Padegimas and Didžgalvis discuss the long-term legacy of *Atgaiva* while also assessing the festival's impact as a catalyst to cultural renewal in the Glasnost era.

ALMANTAS SAMALAVIČIUS

Memories of Dependence: Lithuanian Case Revisited

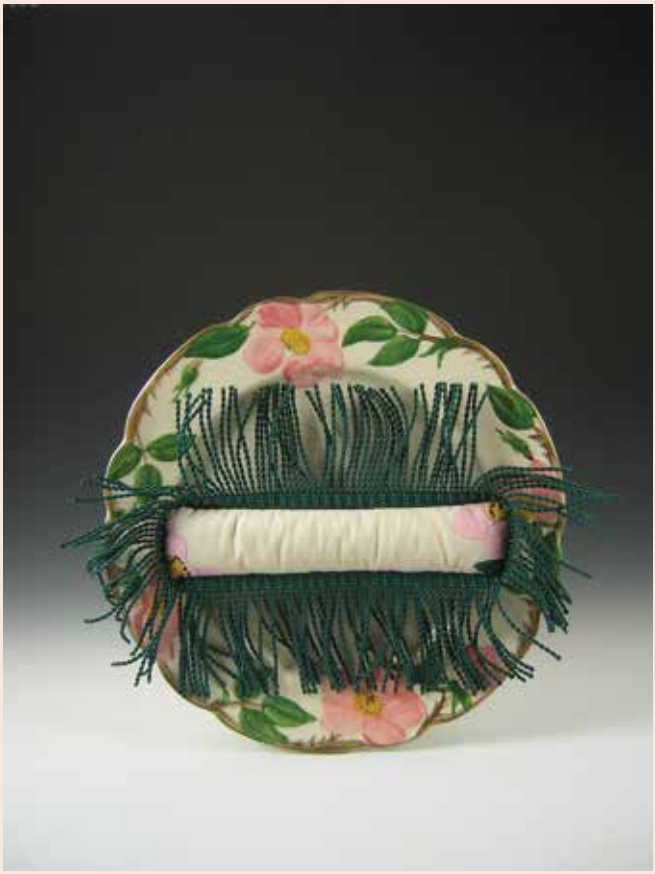
During the firsts years of post-Soviet period there were essentially no adequate scholarly attempts focused at studying systematically the emerging problems in collective (and individual) memory. The scholarly interest in the issues of collective (social) as well as cultural memory became more significantly expressed in the second decade after the reestablishment of Lithuania's independence. The author of the article discusses the problems related to recent collective memory studies and attempts to assess how far the studies of collective memory of the Soviet era have progressed in Lithuania.

ERRATUM

Apologies to BIRUTE P TAUTVYDAS who should be credited as translator of essays by Liutauras Degėsys published in *Lituanus* issue no 2, 2017.

The Editors

LITUANUS
47 West Polk Street, Suite 100-300
Chicago, IL 60605-2000
www.lituanus.org



Billie THEIDE. *Guise: Pfaltzgraff.* Plate and companion brooch, 2012
Plate, cotton, sterling silver, 10.5" diameter (267 mm diameter)

MOVING?
We need your old as well as your new address, to correct our records.

FRONT COVER: The Dominican Church of the Holy Spirit in Vilnius
Photo by Almantas Samalavičius