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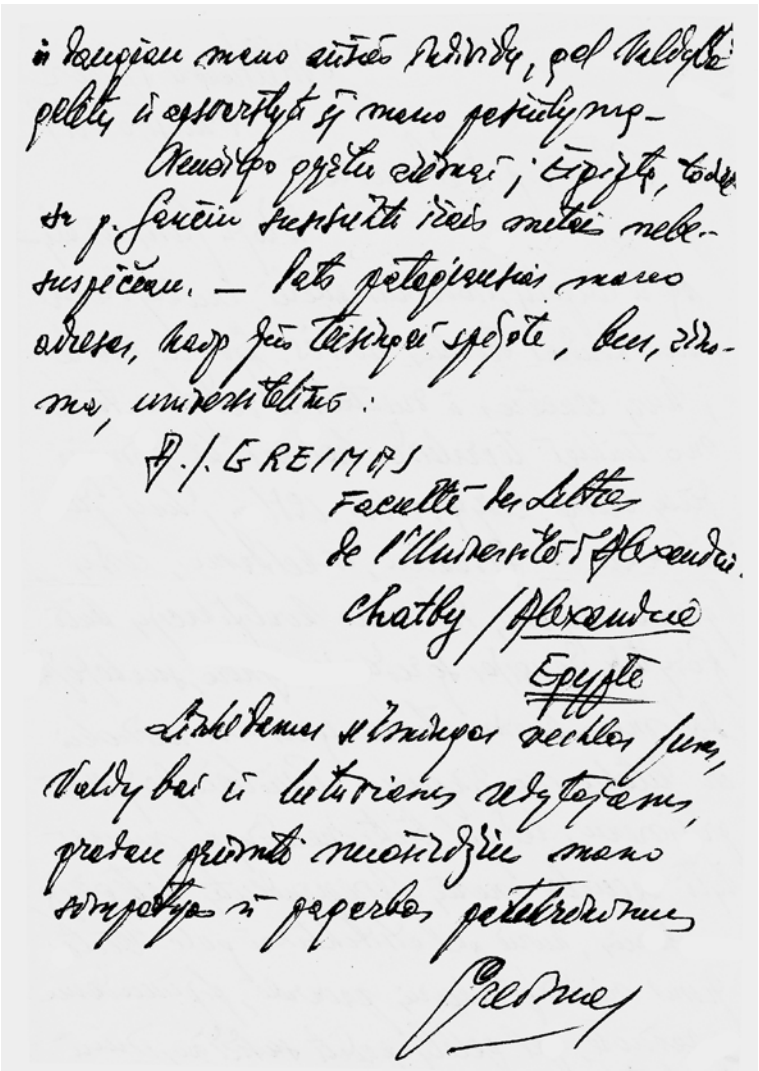

Letter of Algirdas Julius Greimas to Benediktas Babrauskas, LWA chairman, September 4, 1954. See article on page 23

Dissemination of Propaganda and Image-Building in Lithuania in 1915–1940

VYGANTAS VAREIKIS

The term "propaganda," much like the neologism "fake news," is widely used today not just in political discourse but also in daily social communication. Fake news, or propaganda messages which purport themselves to represent an objective position, have become subjects of everyday consumption comparable to personal hygiene products. Almost every day, we receive information related to the hybrid war, which combines conventional warfare with such elements as propaganda messages or continuous building of the enemy's image. Mass media funded by the government of Russia continuously broadcast propaganda messages to the country's internal audience about an imagined enemy: America and the Ukraine.

This type of organized propaganda system was established during World War I, when, for the first time in history, in order to achieve military victory, nations were forced to accumulate the collective power of the entire population, thus exploiting the individual for the realization of military goals, and turning propaganda into an effective weapon of psychological warfare. This was the time when unprecedented propagandist clichés, which demonized the enemy ("fake news" appeared about children who were supposedly killed by the Germans in Belgium and the

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horrific atrocities committed by the Russian Cossacks in East Prussia), were gaining prominence. Emphasis was constantly placed on the "rightful" goals of the fighting side, thus mobilizing the country's resources for military purposes. At the end of the Great War, when peace was established in Lithuania, propagandist messages on potential enemies in the case of war were purposefully disseminated, building the images of native-foreign and friend-foe.

This article explores the forms which were used in order to disseminate propaganda in Lithuania during World War I and after it and how the image of the enemy was constructed and built in Lithuania during the interwar period.

As noted by the British historian Eric Hobsbawm, the twentieth century

> was marked by war. It lived and thought in terms of world war, even when guns were silent and the bombs were not exploding. Its history and, more specifically, the history of its initial age of break-down and catastrophe, must begin with that of thirty-one years' world war.[1]

Aggressive military propaganda during and after the Great War became the turning point in the history of not just propaganda itself but also of its research in Europe. This war marked the time when the impact of propaganda on society was highlighted and became increasingly pronounced as the military conflict kept expanding further into Western and Eastern Europe. During the war, various aspects of social, political, and economic life were combined with the growing impact of the media, creating a united system. A German priest observed, "if before the war the newspaper was the friend of the house, now it is its ruler, for it determines the content of almost every conversation among family and friends".[2] For the first time, writers and poets were utilised in the composition of propagandist leaflets and texts, while professional artists worked on propaganda posters.

[1] Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, 22.

[2] Hastings, *Catastrophe. Europe Goes to War,* 434.

The population's aim to receive the news using the new means of communication was controlled and regulated by the governments and the military leadership, who could manipulate the information by disseminating written and oral knowledge as well as various visual production.

World War I and the German Control in Lithuania

Even though Lithuania as a country was never a collectively and actively functioning participant of the Great War, the Lithuanian casualties were honoured in various ceremonies, while the remains of the trenches became a long-standing element of the Lithuanian landscape. Re-building of the ravaged cities took a decade, while the memories of Germans who wore "horrible headgear with spikes" and ate everything "like dragons"[3] are laconic and metaphorical representations of what many Lithuanians experienced during the German occupation. In the autumn of 1914, the German army started invading the territory of Lithuania and, in 1915, entrenched itself in Suwałki. By the spring of the same year, it occupied Samogitia and Courland, while August saw the fall of Kaunas Fortress, which was the most modern of its kind in the West of the Russian Empire. On September 19, 1915, the Germans captured Vilnius. The Kaiser's army's entrance into Lithuania was a kind of civilizational collision (it can be described as ontological) between two different worlds: the patriarchal and agricultural East and the modern industrial West. Before the Great War, many of the squares and streets in the towns of Lithuania had seen almost no mechanization or any sort of motor transport. The roads were occasionally traversed by horse-drawn carriages of manor lords, mail coaches, rare convoys of the Russian army, and wagons belonging to Jews or farmers who transported agricultural products and homemade wares to the Sunday market. During wartime,

[3] Gudaitis, *Vargo paukščiai,* 23.

German propaganda sought to emphasise the importance of *Deutschtum* in Lithuania and portrayed the Russian Empire as a strange and exotic place which had little in common with Germany and Western civilization. The Germans prepared various publications with photos of Lithuanian nature, villages and cities, churches, everyday scenes and images of the local population that not only have value today as iconographic material but also demonstrate the occupying government's view of Lithuania and Lithuanians as a former Russian "Asian land", as an *Unkultur* and *Unordnung* (empty areas, disorder, dirt, threat) territories.[4]

During World War I, the population of Lithuania experienced German-imposed militarisation of all areas of everyday civilian life, forced labour, rationalization and control of product distribution, and stringent regulations. This system, which was created by the Germans, was meant to maximize production in agriculture, forestry, and industry, and to create an infrastructure (highways and railways) for effective transportation of food and timber to Germany. Simultaneously, an intensive cultural program was introduced in order to conquer the occupied areas both politically and mentally and to distance the locals from the influence of Russia. For this purpose, propaganda and an organized Ober Ost government information policy were utilised. Thus, after occupying a land which was ethnically, culturally and linguistically foreign to them, the Germans had to not only create new mechanisms of territorial control but also to establish a new system of communicating information. The primary goal of German propaganda in the region, to quote an article published in *Kownoer Zeitung* in 1916, was for Germans and local civilians to "view the Germans not as the conquerors but rather as the heralds of a rebirth of the land that bleeds from wartime wounds".[5]

During the occupation, because of the spying mania which took hold of the Germans, the freedom of both communication and correspondence was highly restricted, and martial law was

[4] Vareikis, "Reflections of the First World War," 15–18.
[5] Barthel,"The Cultivation of *Deutschtum*," 222.

imposed in the cities of Lithuania that were overseen by military commandants. Notices on billboards in the streets and market squares of cities and towns became information sources controlled by the German government via the Ober Ost press office and were the place where the Ober Ost orders and rulings were announced. Since a large portion of the population in Lithuania was illiterate, oral communication became an important measure as well – during church service, the priests were ordered to read the orders or mandates of the occupational government to Lithuania's residents.

German Press in Lithuania and Dissemination of Propaganda

Having occupied Lithuania, the Germans started publishing newspapers that were primarily meant for the German army stationed in Lithuania and Ober Ost but also partially for the local population. They faced difficulties here because Lithuania did not have a single dominant language. As a result, they were forced to publish newspapers in Lithuanian and Belorussian. Because of censorship control, the news of food shortage in Germany (in spite of the fact that it was reported by the central German press) were suppressed in order to avoid fuelling the occupied populations' mistrust in the German forces. Until the end of 1915, press publishing and propaganda dissemination were regulated by the occupying government's Law on Press (*Verordnung über die Presse*), which governed the publishing of periodicals, books, postcards and other printed material. In order to publish a publication, the permission from the Supreme Commander in the East (*Oberbefehlshaber Ost*) was required, while the content of a newspaper had to be reviewed by two censors before reaching the printing house. Military and political censors reviewed all newspapers and periodicals in advance, and they could be distributed only through German newspaper distribution institutions (*Deutsche Zetungsvertiebsstellen*). Throughout almost the entire period of the

German occupation, the newspapers in Ober Ost were published by the military administration, while Lithuanian newspapers published by Lithuanians themselves appeared only in late 1917, when the Germans were changing their position in the occupied countries. In order to affect the views of the Lithuanian residents of the occupied land, making them more favourable towards the Germans and more hostile towards the Russians, the Germans published a newspaper, *Dabartis*, from September 1915 until the end of World War I. The Lithuanians of Prussia, such as Vydūnas or Dovas Zaunius, who later became defenders of Lithuanian language and culture, were as fluent in German as they were in their native language and served in key positions in the Ober Ost press. The Lithuanian edition of *Dabartis* was meant to demonstrate a shift in cultural policies, in contrast to the Russian Empire, which had imposed a long-term ban on Lithuanian publications that used the Latin alphabet. During the war, the Germans intended to allow the Lithuanians to publish a bilingual, German-Lithuanian newspaper. According to the idea's proponents, in the absence of official literary Lithuanian language, such a newspaper would have presented an opportunity for Lithuanians to learn the German language. However, this idea did not receive support, as such plans could have caused the population to mistrust the policies of the Germans, whose colonial goals could have been revealed in such a way.[6] *Dabartis* printed a censor-approved survey on the situation and events in the front lines, typically prepared by Vydūnas, political reviews, information on the orders of the German government, and local news, building a favourable image of the German occupying government as a promoter of culture in the Eastern lands. Despite the country's economic difficulties, *Dabartis* urged the people to submit to the occupying government and to follow all of its orders, to rely on "the support of the German culture" and to learn the German language. The principal goal of *Dabartis* was reflected in the words of its editor, Wilhelm Steputat:

[6] Urbšienė "Vokiečių karo meto spauda," 150.

> so that the Lithuanian would unbind himself from the internal ties that connected him to Russia, would recognize that the attachment (*Anschluss*) to Germany is in Lithuania's interest for the future, and, finally, would understand that the victory of the German weaponry is certain.[7]

A clearly pro-German support of the occupying government started emerging in the pages of *Dabartis* when Lithuanian politicians in the Lithuanian Council declared demands for independence in 1918. Generally, due to its clear orientation towards the occupying government and its pro-German stance, *Dabartis* did not gain a lot of popularity among Lithuanian readers.

During the years of the occupation, German-language newspapers for the soldiers were published in Lithuania. *Zeitung der 10*, a publication for the soldiers, was published in Vilnius. *Wilnaer Zeitung*, whose intended audience was both the army and the civilians, was popular among the local population due to its informative texts, interesting photos and pictures, and illustrated extras. On January 1, 1916, the newspaper *Kownoer Zeitung* appeared in Kaunas, whose editorial introduced the goal to present information "in accordance with German conventions and the German spirit (*deutscher Art und deutschen Wesens*)". The specificity of German propaganda was defined in the aim to present "the achievements of our brave army" to the population, and to help the soldiers in the occupied lands of the enemy to establish a spiritual connection with their homeland. The first editorial of *Kownoer Zeitung* provided the quintessence of the cultural work (*Kultur Arbeit*) carried out by the German press in the occupied territories: "it has to be the bearer of German thought, communicating the meaning of the German spirit and the German work to those foreign lands (*deutschen Geistes und deutscher Arbeit uebermitteln helfen*)".[8] *Kownoer Zeitung* distinguished itself clearly from other propaganda publications by presenting all types of material: not just articles on the situation

[7] Ibid., 157.

[8] "Eine neu Zeitung," 1.

in the occupied land but also informative texts on the local culture, history, geography, and science. This was done in order "to link Germans and occupied civilians through a common medium" and to educate and condition the values of Germans in occupied Lithuania.[9]

When World War I ended, the Germans' political aims in the Baltic states fell apart. Nevertheless, the re-established state of Lithuania still witnessed utilisation of both new means of propaganda dissemination (newspapers, leaflets, posters) and propaganda methods.

The Scars Left by the Great War in Lithuania

At first glance, it would seem that the war and the struggles for independence in Lithuania were followed by a peaceful process of state development. However, in the words of Hobsbawm, it, too, "was marked by war". In the first half of 1919, the young Republic of Lithuania did not yet possess all characteristics typical of a state. The state and military institutions of Lithuania did not have effective control over the territory of the country, in which multiple nations' armies were stationed and various types of military divisions were poorly organized. For most of the year 1919, a military protectorate of Germany existed in Lithuania, but neither the German civil service nor the German army had territorial supremacy in Lithuania. Germany's actions in Lithuania were managed by the Entente and the government of Lithuania, which, as it was establishing the state apparatus and the military, became gradually less and less dependent on Germany.

It is worth noting that martial law, which impacted the development of the state and the society, was imposed in Lithuania almost continuously for two decades: throughout the entire existence of the Republic of Lithuania. The military of Lithuania and the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union in 1919 persistently em-

[9] Barthel, "The Cultivation of *Deutschtum*," 227.

phasised mobilisation of the society in case of military conflict. As a result, military rhetoric was widespread among various groups of the population in Lithuania. During the entire interwar period, even under the conditions of peacetime, there was an active and purposeful dissemination of military propaganda (about the country's defence and protection, motivation).

The conflict between the great nations and the results of the Great War, as the leaders of Lithuania emphasised, provided Lithuania with the opportunity to achieve independence. However, those who had experienced war were also more fearful of political crises that tended to arise in Europe and remembered the period of 1914–1918 as *annus horribilis*. In the context of propaganda, there was a focus on the necessity of the geopolitical survival and political manoeuvring of the small countries, the military preparation of a small state in the face of its enemies. As tensions arose in Europe and Germany's revanchist goals were becoming evident, the memory of the past war forced people to consider potential threats. The President of Lithuania, Antanas Smetona, concluded astutely in his speech during the meeting of the Nationalists' Union in 1935 that, if freedom was regained during the war, "then it could be lost during the war, if it broke out again"[10].

In the years of the Great War, the population of Lithuania was affected by the propaganda of two opposing forces – Germany and Russia. However, once the war was over, the stream of propaganda, which meant to influence the public opinion, did not stop. The state institutions of Lithuania and Poland, established in the ruins of these empires, their military and paramilitary structures; and so did the Bolsheviks that flooded Lithuania, seeking to mobilize the population and carrying out campaigns, publishing leaflets and other publications. In the years of the interwar, the people of Lithuania were influenced by two European processes related to propaganda infiltration and dissemi-

[10] "Tautos vado kalba," 129.

nation: the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and the development of communist ideas and the national-socialist policies of Germany after 1933. After reviewing archival materials, it becomes clear that communist propaganda was spread among various social strata of Lithuania throughout the entire interwar, encompassing various fields of activity. However, the propaganda of the LCP had one special target, namely, the military of Lithuania.[11] During the Bolshevik incursion into Lithuania, communist activism and propaganda received rapid responses in the form of counter-propaganda measures. It could be concluded that in 1919, during the conflict with the Bolsheviks, when the residents were mobilised in the army, new and effective mobilizing techniques and forms of propaganda were developed in Lithuania.

In the second case, in the early 1930s, Nazi Germany chose the residents of the Klaipėda Region as targets for its propaganda, attempted to build a negative image of Lithuania as a persecutor of the ethnic group of Germans in Europe, and sought to influence the political orientation of the Klaipėda Region's population (ethnic Germans and Lithuanians). And it must be said that, at least partially, these goals were achieved: in late March 1939, most residents of the Klaipėda Region greeted "the return to the Reich" with enthusiasm.

"Perpetual Enemy": The Image of a Pole in the Propaganda of Interwar Lithuania

The conflict with Poland, which began in 1919, reached its peak during General Lucjan Żeligowski's advance towards Vilnius in 1920. Military clashes between Lithuanian and Polish paramilitary groups continued in "the neutral zone" in the Vilnius Region until the spring of 1923. Even after 1923, when "the neutral zone" was divided by a demarcation line between the countries, the

[11] Jokubauskas, *Netiesioginis poveikis*, 135–179.

tension did not decrease: there were frequent gunfights, which resulted in casualties for both sides. Lithuania and Poland remained in a state of war with one another until the end of 1927, while diplomatic relations between them were established only in March of 1938.

Following the collapse of the German military government in Eastern Europe in November of 1918, independence of the country of Lithuania was declared in Vilnius and in its surrounding area, but it did not have support of the majority of its population (Poles, Jews, and Belarusians). Even though a symbolic act was performed on January 1, 1919 and a Lithuanian flag was raised in Gediminas Tower, Bolshevik troops occupied Vilnius that month and started governing the region using councils created by the Bolsheviks. In April 1919, Polish military units managed to drive the Bolsheviks out and occupy Vilnius Region. Spring of 1919 marked the start of military conflict between Lithuanians and Poles, accompanied by intensifying propaganda from both sides, which built up the image of the enemy. In 1919–1920, Polish politicians did not grasp how strongly Lithuanians were determined to build an independent nation rather than a joint "Commonwealth of Two Nations", considering such a wish to be a "narrow national aspiration". Polish propaganda sought to emphasise that the state of Lithuania ("Kaunas' Lithuania") was a *fake state* protected and supported by the Germans. The goal was clear: to discredit the state of Lithuania internationally and to raise doubts in the Western allies that were working on establishing order in Eastern Europe. In many caricatures in *Mucha*, a Polish magazine which was somewhat analogous to *Charlie Hebdo*, Lithuanians were depicted as primitive and poorly dressed peasants who were incited by the Germans and the Bolsheviks to act against the Poles. Stereotypical drawings in which Lithuania is portrayed as an agent and ally of Germany were very widespread in Poland. Notably, the Polish drawings and propaganda did not depict the conflict which occurred during the interwar between Germany and Lithuania regarding the

Klaipėda Region, because it did not fit in with the coverage of the conflict between Poland and Lithuania.[12] Sometime between 1920–1922, the final possibilities of political normalization between Poland and Lithuania disappeared, and thus this marked the period when a particularly strong flow of negative propaganda was noted from both sides of the conflict, along with the creation of the respective enemies' images. In the Polish caricatures of the interwar, Lithuanians were portrayed as immature children who did not have their own political position and were ordered around by Germans, Soviets, or generally both Germans and Soviets.[13]

Hostility toward the Poles during the interwar was also an important element in the national consolidation of Lithuanians, because the issue of the Vilnius Region after 1920 became a subject which elicited a lot of emotions and feelings for most Lithuanians. Lithuania's conflict with Poland was long-term in nature, and the negative image of Poland and Poles, which has also manifested itself in various forms during the twenty-first century, has become deeply ingrained in the collective memory of Lithuanians.

A special part in the anti-Polish propaganda campaign, which continued until the spring of 1938, was played by the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, which was founded in 1919. Since state institutions could not actively and openly build a negative image of a Pole using various propaganda measures, this role was performed by the publications and posters of the Riflemen's Union.

In the riflemen's propaganda campaign, Poland, Polish politicians, and the Polish-speaking residents of Lithuania who did not support Kaunas' political line were considered to be the enemies of the independence of Lithuania. Despite shared historical and cultural commonalities, for the entire interwar period, Poles were assigned the main image of the "perpetual" enemy in the riflemen's propaganda. In October of 1923, the editorial in

[12] Bömelburg, "Die litausche Unabhängigkeit," 147–151.
[13] Ibid., 151.

the Riflemen's Union's publication *Trimitas*, titled "Lithuanian, Who is Your Biggest Enemy?", emphasised the cultural and political persecution of Lithuanians in the Vilnius Region and ended with the following words: "Every morning and evening, let's repeat in the voice of a trumpet: 'Lithuanian, who is your biggest enemy?'. And then an echo of the spirits from the hill of the Gediminas Castle will respond in our hearts: 'Your biggest enemy is the Pole'."[14] The propaganda sometimes also made artificial connections between the events of World War I and the contemporary political realities and the issue of Vilnius. This way, writing about the anniversary of the capture of Kaunas Fortress in 1935, the author of the text connected the wartime events with the gathering of the Lithuanian Diaspora which was taking place in Kaunas at the time, and with the examples of Kaunas' re-building, which demonstrated the need to "not give up and keep fighting and working". The text ended with a propagandist motto, "With our fight and work, we will liberate Vilnius too!"[15]

Articles were constantly printed about atrocities committed by the Poles in the Vilnius Region, publications and posters were published in which Poles were depicted stereotypically, "in the invaded Vilnius". In 1925, a poster created by Petras Rimša for the Riflemen's Union portrayed a pig with a Polish hat and piglets who were destroying a small Lithuanian garden near Gediminas Tower. Of course, this stereotyped symbolism trivialised and simplified the essence of the tragic Vilnius dispute between Lithuanians and Poles and was hurtful not just to Poland but to the Poles of Lithuania as well.

In 1930, Lithuania organised an extensive commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the capture of Vilnius. At the time, radical sentiments had died down a little, thus the event went by without offensive propagandist connotations. In the garden of the Military Museum in Kaunas, Professor Juozapas Herbačiauskas read a lecture about the issue of Vilnius, which was followed

[14] R. Š. "Lietuvi kas tavo didžiausias priešas," 3.
[15] U. "Kaip vokiečiai paėmė Kauną," 595–596.

by a concert. There were no recreational events on that day in Lithuania, the restaurants did not play music, the cinemas showed movies with heroic/patriotic content, while the State Theatre showed the play "Vytautas the Great". In the 1940s, as a result of the change in the political situation and the conflict with Germany regarding Klaipėda Region, manifestations of anti-Polish sentiments subsided in Lithuania.

On March 17, 1938, Lithuania accepted Poland's ultimatum and established diplomatic relations with the neighbouring country, thus waiving its claim for Vilnius Region. This was a severe blow to the previously dominant anti-Polish ideology and propaganda. The rhetoric of the Lithuanian government was rapidly changing. In the summer of 1938, a ruling was passed according to which "the occupied part of Lithuania" was to be called "Vilnius Region"; on November 25, 1938, the "Union for the Liberation of Vilnius" was dissolved; the motto "We will not calm down without Vilnius!" was prohibited by law; and the patriotic song "To Vilnius, to Vilnius, whoever can go…" was no longer performed.

In September 1939, World War II broke out. Poland was crushed and shared between the Soviet Union and Germany. After the collapse of the Republic of Poland, on October 10, 1939, Vilnius was given to the Republic of Lithuania in accordance with the agreement between Lithuania and the USSR. Lithuanian soldiers, officials, policemen, teachers and pupils who had moved to Vilnius were supposed to start implementing the policy of "re-Lithuanianizing" Vilnius. In the face of the threat of war, the image of the Pole as "the perpetual enemy" was no longer used in Lithuanian propaganda and gave way to the leitmotif of defending the homeland. In the autumn of 1939, Lithuania acted honourably by accepting thousands of Polish war refugees into its territory and interning officers of the Polish Army, who thus avoided the fate that their compatriots met in the forest of Katyn. The country of Lithuania gained the capital Vilnius, but there were only nine months remaining until the sunset…

"The Crusaders" and "Szemajten": Propagandist Struggles Between Lithuanians and Germans in the Klaipėda Region

During the interwar, the relations between Lithuanians and Germans were ambivalent. On one hand, after the Great War, Germany recognised the State of Lithuania and provided it with the necessary military aid along with financial support and credit in order to stop the Bolshevik forces in 1919. Moreover, the interests of Germany and Lithuania coincided regarding Poland. The regaining of Vilnius, which was occupied by Poland in 1920, became the main goal of Lithuania's foreign policy and practically all foreign policy actions were evaluated from that perspective. In Germany, the loss of German territories to Poland after World War I created a negative view of that country. In 1923, German politicians did not oppose the Lithuanians' advance towards the Klaipėda Region. On the other hand, in the 1930s, as the confrontation intensified in the Klaipėda Region and national-socialist rhetoric was spread by the Germans, the relations between the countries deteriorated.

Since Germany was an important economic partner of Lithuania, Lithuanian propaganda avoided using the same rhetoric that was employed to describe the Poles when discussing the Germans – with the exception of the particularly tense period of 1934–1935. In the caricatures of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union publication *Trimitas*, too, Germans were sometimes depicted as smart makers of high-quality products, in contrast to the "shabby" Poles.

The political issue of the integration of the Klaipėda Region into Lithuania, disputed during the interwar, was problematic. Lithuania implemented the policy of "Lithuanianization" in the Klaipėda Region by using economic, cultural, and propagandist measures. However, this policy did not yield fruitful results. Most of the Germans living in the region, as well as Klaipėda residents (Memellanders), supported German political parties and had started looking favourably towards national socialism

since the mid-1930s. Lithuania's fight against national socialism and the Kaunas process exacerbated the situation. Articles of newspapers published on the other side of Nemunas in Tilsit were flooded with insults directed at Lithuanians and especially the Lithuanian government (*Kownoer Gnomen*, *Pintscherstaat, Kownoer politische Liliputander, Stock–Litauer, asiatisch orientiertes Niveau Litauetums*, *Litauische Koter*).[16] Even the most radical Lithuanian newspapers and organizations did not use such a language when talking about the Germans and Germany. In the Lithuanian press, the Germans were usually compared to descendants of the crusaders who were continuing the *Drang nach Osten* policy. In 1934, using the pseudonym Jurgis Plieninis, writer Balys Sruoga published a political pamphlet, "The German Horror", which connected the tense political relations between Lithuania and Germany at the time with examples from World War I and the crusaders: "The Germans ravaged and massacred Lithuania in the Great War, and the goal was clear: the more Lithuanians are destroyed, the sooner and the more free spaces will be found for the German colonists <…> the old dream of the crusaders will be realized – all of Lithuania will be seized".[17]

Some of the Nazi theories of "racial purity" and blood ties were used in the propagandist fight, even in the speeches by some of the leaders of Lithuanian nationalist parties. On November 3, 1935, during the meeting of the organization *Jaunoji Lietuva* in Kaunas, a speech made by Martynas Gelžinis, head of the Klaipėda Region Lithuanian youth society *Santara*, was not much different from the terminology and rhetoric of the Nazis:

> Nationality is derived from the origin, the race, the blood. Thus, there are no three nationalities in the Klaipėda Region, no Lithuanians, Memellanders, and Germans, but just two families: Lithuanians and Germans. The nationality of Memellanders is simply the fruit of unhealthy thinking.[18]

16 Jonaitis, *La propagande Allemande*, 29.

17 *Vokiškasis siaubas*, 27.

18 "Santaros vado M. Gelžinio kalba," 450.

In the last decade before the war, political disputes erupted in the streets, markets and various gatherings in Klaipėda, sometimes turning into bloody clashes. Nationalism was seeping into the daily life, and the word "*Szemaiten*" acquired an offensive meaning. Germans used it to describe Lithuanians as people of a supposedly lower, backward, "Asian" culture. In March 1939, Germany tore Klaipėda Region away from Lithuania, and propagandist clichés disappeared from the pages of both Lithuanian and German press. Who won in this fight of images and propaganda? After the ravages of World War II, Lithuanians got Vilnius and Klaipėda back, but lost their own independence for a long period and fell prey to the Soviets; Klaipėda Region lost its local residents; the Germans were banished to the West while the Poles were forced to move from the Vilnius Region to the lands in East Prussia that were abandoned by the German residents. For a long time, Eastern Europe was covered by the Iron Curtain, and the totalitarian propaganda machine behind it operated even more vigorously than before the war.

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Translated by MARTYNAS GEDVILA

The Lithuanian Writers' Association in America as a Memory Institution of the Lithuanian Diaspora

ŽYDRONĖ KOLEVINSKIENĖ

Introduction. History

The Lithuanian Writers' Association, established at the Faculty of Humanities of the Vytautas Magnus University on February 21, 1932, was the first independent organization uniting Lithuanian writers, translators, literary researchers, and critics. Active in Lithuania until 1944, the organization was restored in Tübingen, Germany on January 25–26, 1946 by Lithuanian Second World War refugee writers who fled their homeland, escaping the second Soviet occupation, and was renamed the Lithuanian Refugee Authors' Association.

When the emigration from Germany began, a large number of writers chose the United States as their new home. On February 28, 1948, a poet Jonas Aistis and like-minded writers founded the Lithuanian Writers' Association of North America and became its chairman.

Therefore in 1948, there were two Lithuanian writers' organizations: the Lithuanian Refugee Authors' Association in Germany and the Lithuanian Writers' Association of North America in the US. The two organizations maintained friendly relations, regularly exchanging information and letters of greeting. At that time, the activities of the two were similar. They both continued their work and followed traditions established in the interwar period: publishing the organization's chronicles and

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Members of LWA on a literary trip

newsletters, and later, when conditions were favorable, the association's magazine, collections of the Lithuanian classics, and new literary works. They also organized literary evenings and book presentations, took care of translations from Lithuanian into English, and etc.

In the spring of 1950, a joint congress of the Lithuanian Refugee Authors' Association and the Lithuanian Writers' Association of North America was held in Boston. After deciding to merge the two organizations, the Lithuanian Writers' Association (LWA) was founded (or, to be precise, was restored). In 2020, we will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Lithuanian Writers' Association in the United States.

The Association began acting on the revised regulations of the Lithuanian Refugee Authors' Association and the pre-war Lithuanian Writers' Union. Thus, the Lithuanian Writers' Association in the United States was restored, already having a certain historical and cultural heritage which served as a starting

point for creating conditions for further development of historical and literary memory and new opportunities in the future. Throughout its history, the headquarters of the Association have changed, depending on the board. However, while the headquarters, board and presidents have constantly changed, the main goals and directions of the Association remained the same:

> The Lithuanian Writers' Association brings together people who care for fiction. Creativity is the link which helps to maintain the spiritual life of a nation and foster professional solidarity. The Lithuanian Writers' Association unite authors of all literary genres, poetry, fiction, criticism, literary science, translations, and etc. living in a free world.[1]

The Archive

The archives of the Lithuanian Writers' Association is housed at the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center's Lithuanian World Archive. Five boxes contain material (over 1,000 pages total) covering the period from 1946 to 1990. One box contains the documents of the Lithuanian Refugee Authors' Association from the DP camp period in Germany. The other four boxes present the activities of the Lithuanian Writers' Association in the United States since 1950. The archive of the Lithuanian Writers' Association holds various documents: the organization's annual reports, clippings from newspapers about the most important Association's events, information about the organization and its members, protocols, various sent and received documents, the voting protocols regarding the Association's literary award, programs of literary events, ballots, members' questionnaires, lists of members with their addresses, agenda of meetings and congresses, financial documents, bookkeeping books and photographs. Especially large is the epistolary legacy.

[1] From Leonardas Andriekus report to the members of the LWA, 1970. V.22. LTSC/PLA F.LRD.

Right after the restoration of the Association in 1946, all the organization's documents were kept by its president. Later, they were brought to the United States along with other documents from the German refugee camps. Afterwards, the documents were transferred to the Lithuanian World Archive in Chicago.

The Association – a Molder of the Revived Literature

The activities of the Lithuanian Writers' Association, the input of the board and its members, as well as literary "ups" and "downs" depended a lot on the communicative skills, authority, and energy of the president and the board. Numerous archival documents show that the first decade was the most fruitful in the history of the Association in the US (1950–1960). Very different in their temperament and leadership style, using different communication strategies than the then Soviet Lithuania and the Lithuanian Writers' Union, all the Association's presidents pursued a common goal: That

> the Lithuanian Writers' Association, as much as it can, plays an active role in the social sphere, which in one way or another is connected with literature and writers. The Association strives to inform writers' associations of other countries about our [Lithuanian] literature; seeks that Lithuanian literature is adequately represented in foreign encyclopedias and libraries; looks for the opportunities to preserve and publish works of its deceased members; writes letters of recommendations for their members in order to help them to secure a particular job; and annually awards the best literary work voted by the commission. [Although] There are many more areas where the Lithuanian Writers' Association can make itself useful, our main task is solidarity in creating and life itself.[2]

Also it noted that, "Seeing excellent books of Estonian poetry and prose translated into English and German, one wishes that

[2] Ibid.

Leonardas Andriekus, Bernardas Brazdžionis, Paulius Jurkus, Jonas Aistis and Reverend Petrėnas at the LWA event in Boston. May 1, 1952

the board would also seek people and contacts with publishing houses, so we will not fall behind in this area too."[3]

The Lithuanian Writers' Association continued with the tradition started in Germany—each year to award the best work of Lithuanian literature. The regulations stated that "the prize is awarded for the best original fiction written and published in a given year." From the very first days in the United States, the LWA board suffered from a shortage of money, especially in allocating the money for its annual literature award. Being short of money, the president and the board were forced to search for other ways to get funding. One way was to appeal to the more wealthy American-Lithuanians, patrons who founded a successful business, or simply to ordinary educated Lithuanians. The other way was to organize campaigns, various lotteries, balls, literary clubs, and etc. From 1950 to 1964, the annual literary award for the best book in Lithuanian literature

[3] From Kazys Bradūnas letter to the LWA board, September 19, 1954. LTSC/PLA F.LRD.

was $500; later, the prize was increased to $1,000. Subsequently, it has been raised to $2,000.

During the general meeting of the Lithuanian Writers' Association which took place in Chicago on April 14, 1951, the participants expressed concern regarding the quality of contemporary Lithuanian émigré literature and found its quality "lacking and unsatisfactory in our periodical press." They appealed to newspaper publishers and editors, "requesting that they improve it... so that the poor quality of literature, steadily provided to readers, would not dull their artistic taste or discourage them from reading literature."[4] The participants also asked the newspaper publishers to start paying royalties to writers.

The role of the Lithuanian Writers' Association, as a molder of the revived literature, can be already noted during its first years of existence in the United States. The Association published works of many Lithuanian classic authors, dealt with issues regarding deceased writers' inheritance, the disposition of their remains, and the erection of tombstones at the graves. From the very first year in America, the Association started publishing a newsletter, *The Lithuanian Writers' Association Announcements*, which kept the members up to date on its current activities and events.

However, there were disagreements, disputes, especially regarding literary awards. Benediktas Babrauskas's term as a president was not only productive, rich with various literary and cultural events, and stood out for its attempts to unite writers living in different cities, different states, or even on different continents. His presidency was also marked by various debates, and not always positive.

The stance of the president (and of the LWA board) regarding literary awards, its refusal to make contact with writers in Lithuania, and his views on the quality of literature, its renewal, and modernity, prompted the withdrawal of a large number of the Association's members. Some of them were expelled from the organization for publishing their works in Soviet Lithuania and

[4] LWA Newsletter. LTSC/PLA F.LRD.

for cooperation with the then Lithuanian SSR Writers' Union. The idea of a Lithuanian encyclopedia was revived in the United States by Lithuanian emigrants. Juozas Kapočius organized the editorial team and Vaclovas Biržiška again became the chief editor. Between 1953 and 1966, they published the 35-volume *Lietuvių enciklopedija* (often nicknamed the *Boston Encyclopedia* because it was published in Boston, Massachusetts) in the Lithuanian language. Two volumes of supplements and addenda were published in 1969 and in 1985. It is often believed that they were continuing the unfinished work of their first encyclopedia begun in their homeland. The undertaking was especially difficult because most of their materials and sources were left behind in Lithuania and were now unavailable – a result of the iron curtain. Between 1970 and 1978, the same group published the six-volume *Encyclopedia Lituanica*, an English-language encyclopedia on Lithuania and Lithuania-related topics. It remains the most comprehensive work on Lithuania in English.

In 1970, a Franciscan priest, Leonardas Andriekus, took over the leadership of the Association. One of his priorities was to pursue stronger ties based on literature with writers living in occupied Lithuania. This goal received both public and private reaction and criticisms. The Lithuanian Writers' Association was criticized for "strengthening ties" with the occupied country, or, in other words, the Soviet Union. Other members of the Association (at that time, it had over 80 members) were also vocal in condemning such a goal. Leonardas Andriekus took the initiative to invite young writers and critics to join the organization, even if some of them had not yet published a book. His purpose was not only to revive, but also to "rejuvenate" the Association, to bring together authors and literary critics of different generations with different perspectives, to broaden the field of Lithuanian culture and literature in exile. In addition, Andriekus invited former members to join the LWA, who for one or another reason left or were expelled from the organization. Because of such a policy, the number of the Association's members reached over 100. At that time, the board also

Board of LWA in 1963. All photos by the courtesy of the archives of Lithuanian Research and Studies Center

formulated and published rules of copyright, and sought to establish the Court of Honor.

Leonardas Andriekus supported the Association's relations with writers of other countries and writers' organizations, such as the International PEN Club. Under his leadership, writer Algirdas Landsbergis, vice-president of the board, was responsible for maintaining these relations. In 1975, he wrote a letter on behalf of the LWA to Alexander I. Solzhenitsyn, thanking the Nobel Prize laureate of 1970 for supporting the Lithuanian nation and voicing the opinion that non-Russian nations in the Soviet Union have the right to decide their own fate.

Paulius Jurkus's presidency is also very important in the history of the Lithuanian Writers' Association. The start of his term coincided with *perestroika* in the Soviet Union and political changes taking place in Lithuania. The new board began to pay more attention to contacts with writers in Lithuania and the organization representing them. As the exhibition created by the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania on the 70th anniversary of the LWA shows, one of its first steps in this area was a letter of greeting to Romualdas Lankauskas, president of the Lithuanian Writers' Union, sent on July 27, 1989 on the

occasion of formally separating the Lithuanians from the Union of Writers of the Soviet Union.

The board also discussed the possibility of inviting the Lithuanian delegation to the 54th Congress of the PEN Club in Canada, and later to organize a joint literary evening in New York. The meeting decided not only to send a formal invitation to the guests from Lithuania, which would facilitate their getting US visas, and to arrange the literary evening, but also to give them financial support by paying their registration fees for the Congress. The literary event with the visiting writers from Lithuania was held in New York on October 15, 1989. "It was the first such gathering. The evening's participants concluded that both organizations should cooperate more closely by allowing writers from Lithuania to participate in literary contests in the US and Lithuanian-Americans in the press in Lithuania," the board of directors later noted in its *Newsletter*.[5] Representatives of both organizations discussed the possibility of a merger, but it was decided not to rush into it. The merger has not taken place to this day…

Significant changes began taking place in the sphere of literary awards as well. The 1989 award went to poet Edita Nazaraitė, who emigrated (fled) to Canada (and later to the US) from the then Soviet Republic of Lithuania in 1984. Another important aspect of change within the Association at that time was the gender aspect. Since the establishment of the Lithuanian Writers' Association in Kaunas, the organization had never been led by a woman! In 1998, for the first time in the history of the Association, a woman took over the leadership. The new board elected Stasė Petersonienė to the post on May 30 of that year. During her term of office, poetry evenings and "Poetry Spring" were organized, and for the first time in the history of the LWA, in 2006, the literary award of 2005 went to Lithuania. The award went to Vincas Auryla, professor at the Vilnius Pedagogical University (now Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences), for the two-volume book *Children's and Youth Literature of the Li-*

[5] Newsletter, LTSC/PLA F. LRD No 1, August 15, 1990, LNMMB.

thuanian Exodus. Stasė Petersonienė was buried on November 30, 2016. Later the Association was led by her daughter, Daiva Petersonaitė. Nowadays the President of the Association is pastor Valdas Aušra.

Conclusions

The Lithuanian Writers' Association in the United States represents not only a traditional writers' organization, but also a memory institution of the Lithuanian diaspora. Neither Latvia or Estonia has such an umbrella organization which unites not only writers, literary critics, but also cultural and public figures and ordinary readers in exile. The International Estonian Writers' Union, established in Stockholm in 1945 and which aimed at uniting the Estonian exile writers, differed from the Lithuanian organization in its size and more narrow activities. [It is important to mention that an Estonian poet and translator Alexis Rannit was an active member of the Lithuanian Writers' Association from the very first years in exile.] Latvia also did not have such a large-scale organization of writers (the Latvian Writers' Union was founded only in 1940, much later than the Estonian and Lithuanian organizations which were active in the interwar period).

Therefore, the activities of the Lithuanian Writers' Association in the US in 1950–1990 can be called "communicative memory." The archival heritage that has been gathered by the Association (function of an archive), books that have been published and distributed (function of library and bookstore), publishing the newsletter (media function), and etc.—all of that can be described as an institutionalized distribution of memory (with the help of cultural intermediaries).

The documents show that the Lithuanian Writers' Association significantly contributed not only in dissemination but also in preservation of Lithuanian literary and cultural heritage in exile. Today, the Association's role and activities in the United States are rather symbolic. But perhaps in the future, the new wave of

Lithuanian emigrants will revive and continue its work which began 70 years ago.

Nowadays, the literary field in the United States is more actively filled not only by writers who left Lithuania after the restoration of independence and who write in Lithuanian, but also by those who were born in America and whose primary language is English. Thus, the Lithuanian Writers' Association in America has a real chance of survival. Or, if merged with the Lithuanian Writers' Union (as it was once foreseen in the regulations of the Association), work together in the literary and cultural field.

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Abbreviations

LTSC – Lithuanian Research and Studies Center (Lituanistikos tyrimo ir studijų centras)

PLA – World Lithuanian Archive (Pasaulio lietuvių archyvas)

LRD – Lithuanian Writers' Association (Lietuvių rašytojų draugija)

Translated by DALIA CIDZIKAITĖ

Expressing Lithuanian Identity in Diaspora's Academic Press: Lithuanian Quarterly Journal *Lituanus*

JOLANTA BUDRIŪNIENĖ

The formation of Lithuanian identity in exile and its expression in the Lithuanian émigré press, presents many untapped possibilities for research and analysis. In this context, a vast field of intellectual and academic press stands out, reflecting the efforts not only to define the essential signs of identity, but also to express it and represent it outside the diaspora.

In this field, the non-Lithuanian press, whose reader more often belonged to multicultural American and other foreign society, was assigned a special mission. The ongoing academic Lithuanian quarterly *Lituanus*, established in 1957 by the members of the Lithuanian Student Association which united the academic youth in the US, took up a leadership role. This article is aimed at defining the communicative strategy chosen by the journal's editors in 1957–1990, which was most closely related to the development of the concept of national identity.

The main attributes defining national identity: community, history, territory, citizenship, common values, and traditions, set out by the British sociologist and historian Anthony Smith, provide the theoretical framework for the article.[1]

[1] Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, 29.

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According to the British policy theorist professor David Miller,

> a nation is a community (1) constituted by shared belief and mutual commitment, (2) extended in history, (3) active in character, (4) connected to a particular territory, and (5) marked off from other communities by its distinct public culture. The modern idea of nationality is distinguished from older beliefs about cultural differences between peoples by its emphasis on collective self-determination. Although national identities involve elements of myth, this does not show that it is irrational to embrace them. Nor do they prevent individuals making their own choices about how to live.[2]

These theoretical insights are very important in examining the formation of Lithuanian identity in exile. They will be the starting point for analyzing the structure of the communication strategy of *Lituanus*.

The Beginning

In 1954, the members of the Lithuanian Student Association decided to start publishing a journal that would introduce non-Lithuanian readers to Lithuania and Lithuanians, and reflect the nation's historical origins and cultural foundations. The *Lituanus* Archive housed at the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center in Chicago, holds a document that highlights the journal's political commitment in counteracting tendentious texts on Lithuanian history, literature, and culture published in Soviet Lithuania.[3] The document asserts that the main function of the journal is political. The second function is the dissemination of Lithuanian culture. It also states that the articles published in the journal should be related to the broader context of the Baltic States and Eastern Europe, and it should also contain publications by non-Lithuanian authors.

[2] Miller, "Ethical Significance of Nationality," 648.

[3] Lituanus Archive at the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center, Chicago, US.

In the first issues, the Lithuanian occupation, and the methods, actions, and consequences of the Soviet aggression against a sovereign country received special attention. All this was laid out in the articles of the first *Lituanus* issue. Vytautas S. Žvirzdys in the article "The Fate of Lithuania" examined the rights of small nations, and the real possibilities of their self-determination and independence in the twentieth century; Vanda Sruogienė commemorated the 325th anniversary of the University of Vilnius; and Mykolas Vaitkus took on the painful past of Lithuania – the press ban of 1864–1904.

It is important to note that the structure of the publication, which was already formed in the first issues, paying the most attention to relevant topics in the field of politics and society, made room for thematic sections dedicated to fiction, arts, and book reviews. Therefore, in each issue *Lituanus* readers were presented with translations of Lithuanian literary classics, such as Maironis, Vincas Krėvė, and Vincas Kudirka, and of the representatives of the younger generation, for example, Jonas Mekas, Kostas Ostrauskas, Bernardas Brazdžionis, Algirdas Landsbergis, and Antanas Škėma.

In the review section, the latest English translations of the works by Lithuanian writers, such as *Crosses* by Vincas Ramonas and *The Forest of Anykščiai* by Antanas Baranauskas, were reviewed. Already in the March issue of 1958 (Vol. 4, No. 1), the translation of the short story "Fairer than the Sun" by Lithuanian writer Juozas Grušas, who lived behind the Iron Curtain, was published. It was an opportunity to get acquainted with the Lithuanian literary tradition of the occupied country. The topic was further developed in the articles of Vincas Trumpa and Vytautas Kavolis, who wrote about Soviet Lithuanian fiction.

Similarly, articles on visual arts and music were published along with the reviews of art by famous Lithuanian artists (Adomas Varnas and Mstislavas Dobužinskis). Texts about artists (Telesforas Valius, Vytautas Kašuba, Romas Viesulas, and Vytautas Kasiulis) also appeared.

In general, looking at the Lithuanian identity model in the pages of the journal and keeping in mind the theoretical insights of the aforementioned authors of political theory and sociology, the first decade of *Lituanus* can be described as a gradual introduction of the reader to:

- the former independent Lithuania − a sovereign national state − presenting the country's culture, its origins, emphasizing the lasting and glorious history of Lithuania, the economic development of the independent state, profound archaic folklore and language − one of the oldest languages in the Indo-European family;
- the national identity of an individual, the citizen of Lithuania, who was educated and was part of European / global culture. The construction of the national identity was realized by introducing the *Lituanus* readership to prominent figures such as Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis,[4] Maironis,[5] and Vincas Kudirka;[6] personalities, who could inspire and show the way;
- the concept of a Lithuanian living in exile (emigrant), describing its provisions, one of them being the absolute non-recognition of the occupation, and thus the choice of a voluntary exile. The concept also included efforts to preserve nationality and to pass this experience on to the younger generation, also to emphasize new cultural features emerging in emigration by revealing the names of new artists and scientists. Articles about artists and their works created in exile (Romas Viesulas, Vytautas Kasiulis, Adomas Galdikas, Vytautas Kašuba, Telesforas Valius, V.K. Jonynas, and Petras Kiaulėnas), writers, poets and playwrights (Jonas Mekas, Antanas Škėma, Kostas Ostrauskas, Jurgis Savickis, and Henrikas Radauskas) were published in the journal regularly. Articles by Lithuanian scientists working abroad, for exam-

[4] Rannit, "M.K. Čiurlionis," 14–21; Hanfmann, "M.K. Čiurlionis," 34–35.
[5] Tautvydaitė-Zubkienė, "Maironis," 22–23.
[6] Maciūnas, "Vincas Kudirka," 119–123.

ple, scientific publications by Justinas Pikūnas[7] and Marija Gimbutienė,[8] testified to their intellectual potential. *Lituanus* also featured articles about the activities of Lithuanian organizations that were restored in the diaspora.[9]

During this period, the constantly proclaimed inherently human right regarding the self-determination to be independent, was presented in Valdas Adamkavičius's [Adamkus] article about the visit of the Lithuanian Student Delegation and members of the American Lithuanian Council to the Vice President of the United States, Richard Nixon.[10] These beliefs were further accentuated by publications written by non-Lithuanian authors on the political situation in the Eastern countries and the policies of the Western states towards the latter.[11]

The aspirations of the Lithuanians who remained in Soviet Lithuania to disobey the occupying regime, were illustrated by articles on the Lithuanian resistance to the occupation regimes, and the activities of underground organizations and armed resistance groups.

Articles dealing with the peculiarities of the Soviet system reflected the journal's critical view of the transformation of the individual branches of the economy and the political and social system implemented by the occupant.[12] In the March issue of 1957 (No. 1(10)), *Lituanus* published Kazys Pakštas' article illustrating the attempts of the Soviet authorities to regulate the demographic situation of the occupied country. The author refers to the statistical data of 1942 and 1956, which clearly demonstrate the pronounced changes in the ethnic composition of the Soviet Lithuanian population.[13]

7 Vygantas, "Review," 32.
8 Ehrich, "Review," 63.
9 Čepėnaitė, "The First Lithuanian," 29–30.
10 Adamkavičius, "An Appeal for Justice," 1–2.
11 Lovett, "Peaceful Coexistence," 15–17; Žymantas, "Lithuania Militants," 1–4.
12 Rastenis, "Three Years after Stalin," 5–11; "Lithuania in 1958," 34–37.
13 Pakštas, "Changing Population," 16–19.

In the early period, contributors were university graduates of independent Lithuania, such as Vanda Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė, Juozas Brazaitis, Mykolas Vaitkus, Steponas Kolupaila, Karolis Drunga, Petras Jonikas, Petras Klimas, and Jonas Grinius. The journal also published articles by Vytautas S. Žvirzdys, Ina Čepėnaitė, Almus Šalčius, Saulius Šimoliūnas, Vytautas Kavolis, Rasa Gustaitytė, and Antanas Sužiedėlis, who studied at German or American universities.

Activities of the Lituanus Foundation

From 1954 until 1963, *Lituanus* was run by the Lithuanian Student Association. However, experiencing a shortage of funding and consequently trying to avoid problems in the future, it was decided to hand over the publishing of the journal to the Lituanus Foundation, founded in 1964, and to commission it to take care of the material base of the publication.

The transition phase was complicated not only because of *Lituanus'* financial instability, but also because of the selection criteria for the articles for the journal. Following the change of the editorial board, Tomas Remeikis, the new editor-in-chief, formulated the new direction of *Lituanus* – it is a science and arts journal that publishes articles dealing with the issues of Lithuania and the Baltic States, as well as Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. During this period, the thematic field concerning Soviet Lithuanian politics, economics, and social issues was expanded. The articles stood out for their analytical content. Their authors, such as V. Stanley Vardys,[14] Pranas Zundė,[15] Tomas Remeikis,[16] Julius Šmulkštys,[17] and Leonas Sabaliūnas,[18] were graduates of US universities.

[14] Vardys, "Soviet Colonialism," 5–23.
[15] Zundė, "Demographic Changes," 5–15.
[16] Remeikis, "Soviets Discover," 95–97.
[17] Šmulkštys, "Incorporation of the Baltic States," 19–44.
[18] Sabaliūnas, "Lithuanian Politics," 29–42.

The intention of covering the other two Baltic countries was realized by publishing articles written by Estonian[19] and Latvian[20] authors. The archival documents housed at the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center show *Lituanus'* active cooperation with the representatives of the Estonian and Latvian communities in the United States. They illustrate their involvement on a range of topics relevant to them and their role in shaping the journal's content. The articles by historian Tönu Parming on Estonian history, Estonian diplomat Johannes Kaiv on politics, and translations of the Estonian epic poem by George Kurman are among many worth mentioning. The summer issue of 1968 (Vol. No. 2) stood out because of its scope and detail. It contains articles analyzing the loss of Estonian independence and a collection of historical documents.[21]

As in the first decade, *Lituanus* published translations of Lithuanian authors' works and reviews of monographs or collections of works. The spring issue of 1964 (Vol. 10, No. 1) commemorated the 250th anniversary of the classic Lithuanian poet Kristijonas Donelaitis, the fall issue of 1965 (Vol. 11, No. 3) marked the tenth anniversary of death of the Lithuanian writer Vincas Krėvė, and the two issues of 1967 (No. 3 and No. 4) were dedicated to Lithuanian dramaturgy. During this period, there appeared bibliographic indices of publications by Lithuanian, Estonian, and Latvian authors living in exile that were published in the foreign press or released as separate books.[22]

The *Lituanus* editorial board did not stay away from the heated discussions concerning the disagreements between the "liberal" and "Catholic" Lithuanian diaspora which took place in the 1960s. The political views of the sponsors of the journal led to changes on the editorial board. Remeikis had to step down as the editor-in-chief. The linguist Antanas Klimas, who replaced

19 Purre, "New Deal," 67–70.

20 Anderson, "Toward the Baltic Union," 5–28; King, "Management of the Economy," 54–72.

21 Parming, "Negotiating in the Kremlin," 45–96.

22 "Baltic States," 71–77.

Remeikis in 1967, changed the concept of *Lituanus'* content by narrowing its topics to the field of humanities.

As the number of the journal's contributors diminished, many articles were written by the editor himself. Although the concept of Lithuanian identity in the pages of the journal was essentially formed on the basis of the most important assets of national culture, such as Lithuanian language, literature, and visual arts, not always were these attempts successful. Klimas was criticized for the less significant and not very relevant articles or even texts that were written in a popular style. He also received criticism for his attempts to lower the academic level of the articles by publishing texts "tailored to the average educated person".[23]

However, Estonian and Latvian literary translations and their analysis continued to be published during the Klimas term in *Lituanus*. In 1970, nine articles introducing the literature of the two Baltic countries (four on Estonian[24] and five on Latvian[25] literature) presented at the conference on Baltic literature at the University of Ohio on 31 January-1 February, 1970, were published in the journal.

In 1972, a few changes on the *Lituanus* editorial board took place and a different concept − an editor per one issue − was chosen. The new period had started. On the one hand, the editors coming from different scientific disciplines significantly expanded the range of topics covered in the journal. Therefore, a broader view of previously neglected branches of science, to which Lithuanian diaspora scientists working in such areas as philosophy,[26] psychology,[27] and medicine,[28] contributed a great deal,

[23] Dambriūnas, "Nauja Lituanus linkmė," 14.

[24] Terras, "Poetic Form," 7–21; Valgamäe, "The Ritual of the Absurd," 52–60; Kork, "Karl Ristikivi's," 20–28; Ivask, "Windows-Complex," 29–37.

[25] Salinš, "On Allegory," 22–32; Ivask, "'My Age-old," 33–42; Šķipsma, "A Tragedy," 512; Silenieks, "The Humanization," 49–56; Zieduonis, "Contemporary Themes," 51–75.

[26] Girnius, "Moral Philosophy," 13–29; "Some Problems," 30–43.

[27] Zaborskas, "Psychometric Intelligence," 39–54.

[28] Sidrys, "Medical Education," 32–42.

was presented. On the other hand, the number of *Lituanus* contributors increased.

More articles of Lithuanian and other Baltic diaspora scientists trained at US universities, especially the younger generation, as well as members of American academia were published. The number of non-Lithuanian researchers interested in Lithuanian topics grew. They researched in more detail, Lithuanian literature, history, art, and music. Among them were linguists Morton Benson and William R. Schmalstieg, historians William Urban, William Winter, and Edgar Anderson, musicologist Schmalstieg Emily Botdorf, and art historians Abraham Davidson and Rene Shapshak.

Articles by such exotic-sounding names of scholars who were interested in Lithuanian-related topics could also be mentioned here; for example, two studies by Chien-Ching Mo from the National Chengchi University about the Lithuanian language,[29] and an article by Suk Bong Suh, a researcher from the Korea Military Academy, about Lithuanian wedding traditions in Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle*.[30]

In the ninety-seventies and ninety-eighties, *Lituanus* used the opportunity of publishing the authentic testimonies of Soviet dissidents (Simas Kudirka,[31] Tomas Venclova,[32] and Jonas Jurašas[33]) about the Soviet regime and the underground activities of the Lithuanian Helsinki group members (Vytautas Skuodis,[34] Alfonsas Svarinskas,[35] and Ona Lukauskaitė-Poškienė[36]). The free world was once again reminded of the strong position of the Lithuanian nation, the unyielding desire to be independent and not to recognize the coerced power of the Soviets.

29 Mo, "Causative Construction," 5–18; "A Case Grammar," 43–59.
30 Suh, "Lithuanian Wedding," 5–17.
31 Kudirka, "Statement and Transaction," 72–79.
32 "Tomas Venclova," 54–64.
33 "Testimony of Jonas Jurašas," 53–68.
34 "Soviet Arrest," 88–91.
35 "The Trial," 38–49.
36 Girnius, "The Demise," 88–92.

During this period, articles of the representatives of the younger Lithuanian,[37] as well as Latvian[38] and Estonian[39] diaspora generation were published. They discussed the issues of national and ethnic identity and analyzed emigration processes. Even after almost half a century of the start of emigration, Lithuanians were concerned not only with integration into US society, but also with national self-awareness and self-identification issues.

Lituanus issues that were published in the ninety-eighties reflect the process of restoring the independence of the country. The journal published the secret protocols of Molotov and Ribbentrop, which once again reminded the world of the legitimate demands of a sovereign state and became an integral part of objective information in foreign media. After Lithuania regained its independence, the barriers to the dissemination of objective information disappeared. The *Lituanus* mission has become more focused on representing the works of Lithuanian researchers, publishing articles of authors working both in Lithuania and foreign countries (their geography has expanded considerably). A lot of attention is paid to presenting works by Lithuanian artists.

Dissemination of *Lituanus*

Since the journal's inception, much attention has been paid to its distribution beyond the Lithuanian diaspora. *Lituanus* was regularly sent to US government representatives, members of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Greeting telegrams sent to the journal's editorial board and the reprints from *Lituanus* in the official government media testify to the publication's importance. The journal was recognized and valued for its objective information by other outlets. Articles published in *Lituanus* were used in encyclo-

[37] Juškaitė, "The Contemporary Identity," 7–17; Gudelunas, "The Lithuanians of Pennsylvania's," 79–87.

[38] Karnups, "The Role," 18–24.

[39] Nomme, "The Adjustment," 32–38.

pedias, such as *Encyclopedia Britannica* and *The World Book Encyclopedia*. The fact that the publication has been officially recognized and included in the Publications of the Modern Language Association's Historical Abstracts database also shows its significance.

The journal was distributed to many US universities and city libraries, thus becoming a historiographical source for students studying social sciences or humanities. According to *Lituanus* data gathered in 1964, 2,000 libraries, 1,200 non-Lithuanians, 1,000 institutions, and 1,600 Lithuanians subscribed to the journal.[40]

The publisher strove for the readers from other countries (United Kingdom, Germany, France, Greece, Switzerland, India, Korea, Costa Rica, Chile, and New Zealand) to have access to the journal, thus opening boundaries for representing Lithuanian national identity in a wider geographical space and expanding the possibilities for dissemination of objective information prepared by competent authors. The Lithuanian Research and Studies Center contains a letter from Dal Hyun Choe, a representative of the Central Library of the Kyungpook National University, in which he expresses an interest in receiving *Lituanus* in Korea.[41]

The texts of Lithuanian literature published in the journal were reprinted in other collections presenting Baltic literature. For example, the Latvian writer Aleksis Rubulis contacted *Lituanus* asking for permission to publish the short story "The Last Lion's Day" by Vincas Krėvė in the textbook prepared by the University of Notre Dame. *The Hudson Review* reprinted poems by Henrikas Nagys (translated by Aldona and Robert Page) which appeared in the *Lituanus* fall issue of 1963 (Vol. 9, No. 3). The Lituanus Archive at the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center contains an offer by John B. Shipley, the editor of the Abstracts of English Studies (Chicago University), inviting *Lituanus* to co-operate in exchanging information.[42]

[40] Lituanus Archive at the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center, Chicago, US.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Lituanus Archive at the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center, Chicago, US.

Archival documents also show that *Lituanus'* editorial board had contacts with Soviet Lithuania. The Lituanus Archive contains a letter of Kostas Korsakas, a member of the Lithuanian SSSR Academy of Science and the chairman of the permanent Kristijonas Donelaitis Commission written in February 12, 1966 informing about the publications commemorating the anniversary of Donelaitis that were sent to the journal.[43]

Conclusions

The academic press of the Lithuanian exile, including the Lithuanian quarterly *Lituanus* discussed in this article, outlined a clear and substantiated definition of national identity within the diaspora. The journal aimed at representing the portrait of an **individual** – the Lithuanian who is equal to the representatives of all civilized nations, having all his creative and scientific potential.

Lituanus became a platform for showcasing Lithuanians who worked in academia. It showed the diverse scientific interests of both Lithuanian diaspora and Soviet Lithuanian academics by publishing their most significant works.

The journal also strove to present a generalized definition of a Lithuanian of Baltic identity to the non-Lithuanian reader. It was aimed at systematically shaping the identity of a Lithuanian who had characteristics of European and Western identity.

Lituanus engaged in bringing to light the relevance of Lithuania's independence. It focused on spreading knowledge about the country's illegal occupation, pointing to its legitimate aspirations and potential to be independent. In seeking objectivity, the scientific insights about the country's situation, its achievements, and all its potential were presented not only by Lithuanian authors living in the diaspora, but by Western researchers as well.

[43] Ibid.

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Translated by DALIA CIDZIKAITĖ

The Question of Identity: Lithuanian-American/Canadian Writers

LAIMA VINCĖ

Introduction

A life straddling two or more cultures and languages is second nature to those born into an ethnic diaspora. The children and grandchildren of refugees learn from a young age to hold two or three cultural perspectives and languages in balance. They are the keepers of their parents' lost nations' historical memory, and also their trauma. They are the older generation's cultural translators and carry the burden of explaining to majority cultures where their people came from and what they have suffered. That experience shapes them as individuals. Writers who emerge from these diasporas acquire a unique perspective, a global perspective, but at the same time, an immigrant perspective.

Since World War II, also including a wave of economic migration that has taken place since Lithuania became independent in 1991, the Lithuanian diaspora has managed for the most part to nurture and pass on the Lithuanian language and culture through an international network of schools, summer camps, churches, and other social organizations, while also embracing the languages and cultures of their adopted homelands, typically English and Spanish.

The Lithuanian diaspora has nurtured an unbroken literary tradition since World War II. In 1944 a second Soviet occupation of the Baltic States forced a third of the Baltic population (rough-

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ly three million—one million of those Lithuanians) to seek refuge in the democracies of the West.

Since the postwar era Lithuanian diasporas have existed in North America, South America, Australia, Europe, and now Asia. In North American literature (including both the United States and Canada) at least two generations of descendants of Lithuanian World War II refugees have emerged who write in English about Lithuania. Most notable is Rūta Šepetys, whose novel, *Between Shades of Gray*, has been published in 41 countries and translated into 23 languages, including Japanese and Chinese.

The Genesis of the Lithuanian Literary Diaspora

Lithuanian refugee poets, playwrights, and writers began publishing their work already in the displaced persons camps in the Allied territories of Germany as early as 1944. They held literary evenings, poetry readings, and performed plays and dance recitals. These publications and cultural events were a source of spiritual sustenance to those displaced by war, refugees who not only lost their country, but who had also lost their homes, members of their families, and everything they owned.

In an interview in Los Angeles with Angelė Raulinaitis (born January 11, 1925), a former war refugee and displaced person in Germany, she describes the very first literary evening that took place in a displaced persons camp in Germany.

> I attended the very first literary evening. The poets who read that night were Bernardas Brazdžionis, Stasys Santaras, Antanas Gustaitis, Pijus Andriušis, and Petronėlė Orintaitė. All the poems they read that night we already knew very well because they had been published in Lithuania. But it was interesting to hear their comments and to see them in person. After that there were many such literary evenings. The literary evenings were very important events for us. We would create songs out of the poems and we would sing them. We would stage plays.[1]

[1] Raulinaitis, Angelė. Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 21, 2017.

In an interview in Sparkill, New York with Nijolė Bražėnaitė-Lukšienė-Paronetto (born July 16, 1925), the widow of Juozas Lukša, one of the leaders of the Lithuanian resistance against the Soviet Union, Nijolė spoke about the importance to the émigré community of Lukša's memoir *Partizanai už geležinės uždangos* (*Partisans Behind the Iron Curtain*).

> When the memoir was first published the print run was only around 500. When excerpts from the memoir were read at readings in the DP camps, it made a huge impression. Most people found out for the first time that there was an organized resistance in Lithuania. There were many readings after that. There were three print runs of the book and all of them sold out. In the fifties and sixties every literary event ended with everyone gathered together singing the songs of resistance that Juozas had brought to the West from Lithuania.[2]

As the displaced persons camps emptied in the late forties and early fifties, and the refugees set sail on ships bound for Australia, South America, North America—and those whose lungs showed evidence of tuberculosis remained behind in Europe—through their literary work poets and writers became a link to the lost homeland for the émigré community. When asked if the spirit of those DP camp poetry readings carried over into their lives in the United States, Canada, Australia, and South America, Angelė Raulinaitis responded:

> The spirit became even stronger when we came to America. The poets began to write new work. We would collect their books. I have quite a large library. I can show you. The poets gave us strength and hope. They were refugees too and they had to work to survive. Bernardas Brazdžionis learned the printing trade in Germany and that enabled him to earn a living in America. My husband helped start an organization that made it possible to publish a collected works of Brazdžionis's poems. He helped edit and publish the book.[3]

[2] Paronetto, Nijolė. Interviewed by Laima Vince. July 6, 2016.
[3] Raulinaitis, Angelė. Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 21, 2017.

Whereas in the DP camps the displaced poets were still writing poetry primarily inspired by nature and the agricultural lifestyle they had left behind in Lithuania, in the diaspora they began to compose poetry about the loss of homeland that embodied the collective emotion of all the displaced persons. The poetry of Bernardas Brazdžionis (1907–2002) in particular became a symbol of longing for the lost homeland. His poetry was iconic for the refugees and their descendants because it expressed their trauma over being separated from their homeland by the Iron Curtain, as well as their fears that they would never return home, and that their country would be lost. Stories from Lithuania had reached the refugees, describing the torture and brutality those left behind experienced under the Soviet occupation. News reached North America about the deportations to Siberia. After the Soviet occupation of Lithuania, Russian was declared the official state language in the Baltic States. Russian was mandatory in school, and all workplace transactions were completed in Russian. The Lithuanian language was delegated to the home. Lithuanians in the diaspora feared that the Lithuanian language and culture would die under the Soviet occupation. They believed that it was necessary to preserve the Lithuanian language from extinction by passing it down the generations living abroad.

At the same time that the émigrés sought to preserve their language, writers feared that they were losing hold of their fluency in their native tongue. Algirdas Landsbergis expressed those fears in his personal essay "Vita Longa Breviter," found among his papers after his death:

> You'll keep writing, not only in Lithuanian but also in English. Wouldn't it be wiser to embrace one literary language and nurture it? This thought will cross your mind, but you won't be able to resist playing an additional linguistic instrument, without forgetting your native one. It won't be easy. Your Lithuanian language will begin to unravel at the edges, while literary English keeps seeming unreachable like grapes for the fox. And so the

> process of writing will become a race with time, words, and memory. You'll keep writing in both languages and thank God for able editors.[4]

Landsbergis's distress at the disintegration of his native language, his literary tool, slipping away, while at the same time finding himself unable to attain the deeper levels of fluency in English, is typical of his generation of émigrés.

As the decades of Soviet occupation slipped past, and new generations grew up in America, Canada, South America, Australia and elsewhere, those who'd lived their lives steeped in the language of literary Lithuanian passed away, while the younger generations, though able to converse, read and write at a basic level, could no longer fully delve into the more sophisticated literary Lithuanian necessary to fully immerse themselves in the work of the Lithuanian émigré writers. At the same time, these writers' and poets' work was banned in Soviet Lithuania.

In North America the Lithuanian émigré literary tradition began with the Lithuanian language as its predominant language. The Lithuanian émigré writers established publishing houses that published collections of poetry, prose, literary criticism; maintained journals, newspapers, radio programs, literary conferences and seminars. However, over the decades of the Cold War, the children and grandchildren of the émigrés began to write and publish in English within an American and Canadian literary context.

Methodology

Over the course of two years (2016–2017) I interviewed 17 Lithuanian-American/Canadian writers. I contacted these writers over email and asked them to fill out a questionnaire with 35 questions about Lithuanian language proficiency, reading pref-

[4] Landsbergis, "Vita Longa Breviter."

erences, literary influences, the literary themes they have explored in their writing, as well as their level of activity in the Lithuanian-American/Canadian emigre community, along with questions on citizenship, residence, and on their sense of their Lithuanian identity. The survey sought answers to the following questions, among others: What is the value of preserving the cultural and historical memory of a small nation within the canon of North American literature? What issues of identity are important to Lithuanian-American/Canadian writers? How do Lithuanian-American/Canadian writers self-identify? As American or Canadian writers? As Lithuanian writers? Or as Lithuanian-America/Canadian writers? The questions on identity lead to even more questions: How is cross-cultural identity expressed in the literature of the diaspora? What motivates this literature? How are the Lithuanian diaspora's identity issues unique to Lithuania? Or do they also reflect the experience of all nations that were occupied by the Soviet Union? I asked writers which Lithuanian writers influenced their work the most, and which American and/or international writers influenced them. They all provided a bibliography of essays, short stories, poems, novels, works of literary nonfiction, and plays that they have written on Lithuania, on the Lithuanian-America/Canadian identity, and on the Lithuanian community. The bibliography of published work turned out to be very long and publication dates ranged from the 1950s to 2018.

The questions I asked spiraled out to even bigger concerns: Does the work of Lithuanian-American and Lithuanian-Canadian literature belong to the national literature of Lithuania or North America? Or is it an outsider literature? Is literature about Lithuania's painful twentieth century history or the experience of Lithuanian émigrés and their children in North America only of interest as the collective memory of a single ethnic community? Does this literature speak to the experiences of all exile and emigre communities? The writers elaborated with their own personal thoughts, insights, and experiences.

The questionnaires were returned to me over email. I then followed up with a Skype interview, face to face interview, or telephone call that gave writers the opportunity to elaborate in more detail to their responses in the initial questionnaire. Most, though not all, participants participated in the second interview.

I did not include in this survey Lithuanian writers who had grown up and were educated in Lithuania and emigrated since Lithuania became independent in 1991. I sought out exclusively writers who were born outside of Lithuania in the diaspora and during the period of the Cold War when travel to Soviet-occupied Lithuania was limited. Although at the same time, this study relies on understanding the work and life situations of post-World War II Lithuanian émigré writers who laid the foundation for Lithuanian-American/Canadian writers writing in English. In order to gain insights on the émigré writers, I interviewed survivors and descendants of émigré writers. For instance, I interviewed Paul and Jon Landsbergis, sons of the émigré writer, Algirdas Landsbergis, who was the first displaced person émigré Lithuanian writer to transition into writing in English and embracing an American audience besides writing for the Lithuanian émigré community.

I included Litvak writers who closely identify with Lithuanian themes in their writing. I also included two writers who are American with no Lithuanian heritage, but who have either settled permanently in Lithuania or who have spent considerable time living in Lithuania full time. Both were Fulbright scholars in Lithuania and both married Lithuanian women. They were included because they have written a body of work about Lithuania. I strove to be inclusive and to create a broader context out of which I could tease out both commonalities and differences. I managed to locate 17 writers who fulfill this criteria. I did not include English writers or European writers writing about Lithuania because the scope of this project is to focus primarily on the North American émigré experience, how it shapes literary identity, and how these themes have entered mainstream American and Canadian literary contexts.

Criteria

In order to qualify to be interviewed, writers needed to have fulfilled the following criteria:

- Have published one or more books about Lithuania, set in Lithuania, on a Lithuanian historical theme, or about the Lithuanian diaspora abroad.
- Write predominantly in English.
- Have earned a MFA in Writing, or a PhD in English, Literature, Cultural Studies, Philosophy, or other subject in the Humanities related to Literature, or have received significant training in Creative Writing through participation in professional workshops and seminars.
- Have consciously made the decision to write about their Lithuanian identity and Lithuanian heritage and/or Lithuanian history as one of their major themes, if not their only major theme.
- Actively work in the field of the humanities, either by teaching Creative Writing, English, or as a literary critic, literary translator, editor, or in a related field.

Participants

The following writers were interviewed (Paul Landsbergis is not a writer, but was interviewed on behalf of his father, Algirdas Landsbergis):

Gint Aras (Karolis Gintaras Žukauskas) (born 1972)
Jocelyn Bartkevičius (born 1955)
James Joseph Brown (born 1970)
Ellen Cassady (born 1950)
Milda DeVoe (born 1968)
Irene Guilford (born 1950)
Kerry Shawn Keyes (born 1946)
Jon Landsbergis (born 1956)
Paul Landsbergis (born 1952)

Wendell Mayo (born 1953)
Daiva Markelis (born 1957)
Birutė Putrius (born 1944)
Rūta Šepetys (born 1967)
Antanas Šileika (born 1953)
Julija Šukys (born 1970)
Medeinė Liuda Tribenevičius (1979)
Rimas Užgiris (1970)
Lina Ramona Vitkauskas (1974)

Key Questions

The following key questions were central to the discussion:

1) Do you consider yourself a Lithuanian writer? Lithuanian-American or Lithuanian-Canadian writer? Or American writer? Or Canadian writer?
2) How would you feel about your work classified as Lithuanian-American/Canadian within a North American literary context?
3) What qualities make Lithuanian-American/Canadian writing different from American or Canadian writing?
4) Do you think that it would be accurate to argue that there are enough contemporary writers in North America of Lithuanian descent who are writing about the Lithuanian diaspora, Lithuania's history, Lithuania's trauma narrative, in order to justify the creation of a subcategory of American Multicultural Literature that would be specifically labeled as Lithuanian-American or Baltic American?

Heritage

The claim to a Lithuanian heritage varied among the writers who participated in this survey. The most common background was that of displaced person born abroad, child of displaced persons,

or grandchild of displaced persons. Each participant was asked to write a few words about their family background and how their family is connected to Lithuania.

Children and Grandchildren of Displaced Persons

Birutė Putrius (born 1946): I was born in Germany and came to Chicago when I was almost four. We were exiles who came out of desperation after World War II. My father was a volunteer in the war for independence in 1918, my grandfather was a book smuggler. My family was on the deportation list to Siberia, so they ran to the West.[5]

Irene Guilford (born 1950): My parents and grandparents came to Canada as displaced persons (DPs) in 1948. I was born in Toronto but raised Lithuanian.[6]

Paul Landsbergis (1952) and Jon Landsbergis (1956): My father and family were war refugees. Mom's family had been here for generations. My father was 20 when he left Lithuania. He came to the United States in 1949 at age 25. He was in DP camps for five years. He studied in Kaunas Jesuit High School, then took some university classes during the war. He tried one year of medical school, but it was not for him. He took classes in Germany from 1945–49. He took classes in whatever was available. When he came to the U.S. he enrolled in Brooklyn college and he had all his transcripts of courses from Germany. They gave him three years of college credit, but it meant he only needed one year of college to get a BA. That was a big deal for him. He got his BA from Brooklyn College in Literature. He got into Columbia for a Masters in Comparative Literature. He was there from 1953–56. I've seen the transcript, and the courses sound fascinating. He was fortunate to get a teaching job at Fairleigh Dickinson University teaching History. Someone helped him get that job. In 1973 he got tenure. It was the last year someone with only a Masters could get tenure.[7]

[5] Putrius, Birutė. Interviewed by Laima Vince. November 15, 2016.
[6] Guilford, Irene. Interviewed by Laima Vince. November 20, 1916.
[7] Landsbergis, Paul. Interviewed by Laima Vince. August 2, 2017.

Antanas Šileika (born 1953): My parents were postwar immigrants of the DP generation. One brother was born in Lithuania, one in Germany, and I in Canada.[8]

Daiva Markelis (born 1957): My parents both came to the States from Lithuania during the Second World War. They met in Chicago. My dad had been in one of the DP camps in Austria. My mother had been a student in Germany at the time, and then moved to Tubingen to be with the Lithuanian refugee committee. She also worked for the International Rescue Committee in Switzerland.[9]

Rūta Šepetys (born 1967): My father is a Lithuanian refugee. He came to the United States in 1949. My mother is the daughter of West Prussian immigrants. They came from the Meklenborg region. My maternal great-grandmother came from Germany.[10]

Milda DeVoe (1968): Both of my parents were war refugees. My father's parents were upper class: an internationally recognized opera soprano and her husband, a weapons engineer in the Lithuanian Army. When the Soviets took over, he immediately fled to avoid having to design weapons for the occupying nation. He took his wife and two small boys across the border on a faked visa that said that my grandmother was giving a concert in Austria. (She had turned down the opportunity—given the Anschluss.) They booked travel to the United States, traveling first class, but when they arrived, they had only what they could carry. My grandmother was not known in the States nor could she speak English. They lived in a basement apartment in East Chicago, Indiana for many years where she taught voice lessons and piano. My grandfather, an engineer and an officer in the Lithuanian Army, was unable to find work in Chicago and ended up taking a manual labor job on the rail roads. He was so angry they refused to promote him saying his English was too bad, that he regularly played the daily word games available in the local newspapers at the time: winning cash prizes to supplement his railroad worker pay.

[8] Šileika, Antanas. Interviewed by Laima Vince. December 30, 2016.

[9] Markelis, Daiva. Interviewed by Laima Vince. December 1, 2016.

[10] Šepetys, Rūta. Interviewed by Laima Vince. March 9, 2017.

My mother's family is from Šiauliai. My grandfather was born to a Lithuanian family with 10 children in a border town near Poland, when the Polish army drafted him, he ran away and came to my grandmother's orchard. Her parents were the wealthy landowners of the town, with many orchards and a thriving farm. My grandmother was the middle daughter of three, and had three brothers as well. My grandfather was 16 years older than her, the farm manager. She was sent away to a convent to be educated, and upon her return with a high school degree (very unusual at the time), they married and had two children. Three Nazis occupied their family home, cramming all the family into half the house and living in the master bedroom and threatening death to any who entered the room. My grandfather had joined the local Lithuanian police force as a radio operator in order to hear news of the Russian front's movements. My grandmother's family was packed to flee at a word from him, and finally the word came: the three sisters and their spouses and offspring piled into a wagon and the three brothers stayed to save the farm. My grandmother next saw her brothers when they were all in their 70s.

My father was 9 when he entered the United States and my mother was 6. Both families lived in DP camps for several years before securing a United States sponsor. After arrival in the United States, both parents' families ultimately lived in Chicago. My parents met at a Lithuanian Summer camp (Ateitininkai) and followed my father's career in research Chemistry to land in College Station, Texas. I was born there, the oldest child of four. Both parents spoke exclusively Lithuanian to me when I was a child and expected me to answer them in Lithuanian – this began to cause great strife once my third brother was born and children outnumbered parents![11]

Rimas Užgiris (1970): My grandparents were forced to flee World War II. My parents were small children then.[12]

Julija Šukys (1972): My parents were classic DPs. My mother arrived in Toronto as a child with her parents in the postwar period. They then moved to Ottawa where my grandfather worked as a lung specialist. My father arrived in the 1960s. He and his father and two

11 DeVoe, Milda. Interviewed by Laima Vince. November 20, 2016.

12 Užgiris, Rimas. Interviewed by Laima Vince. October 17, 2016.

sisters settled in Bradford, England, after the DP camps. My paternal grandmother was a Siberian deportee (June 1941 deportations). She arrived in Canada in 1965, after 17 years in Siberia and another 7 in Soviet Lithuania. My grandfather arrived from England in 1965.[13]

Gint Aras (Karolis Gintaras Žukauskas) (born 1972): My mother and father were the children of war refugees, and they both grew up in the enclave where they met. My father's family owned land and operated a manor in Stelmužė, which I'll guess you'll have heard of; there's a famous oak tree there. My paternal grandmother was in charge of that manor as a young woman; her husband, my grandfather, was an engineer and master of a variety of trades. My mother's family were a greater mix of social classes. My maternal grandmother was the daughter of Kaunas merchants, and her family ran "Kometa," the first cinema in Kaunas. My maternal grandfather, however, was a country boy, from Kapliai, though he ended up in the military academy in Kaunas and ended up working as an engineer. All of these people ended up in Cicero where a Lithuanian community already existed, with churches and schools built after World War I.[14]

Lina Ramona Vitkauskas (born 1974): My mother was born in Brazil. Her parents fled Lithuania (from Vilkaviškis) and they stayed briefly at a DP camp in Germany before arriving in Rio de Janeiro. My mother was born soon after and she went to school there until about age 10 or 11. Then the family moved to Hamilton, Canada, where my mother went to high school. Her last year of high school (Gage Park) the family moved to Chicago, where she graduated and met my father.

My father's parents were from Kaunas and Panevėžys. My great grandmother survived the war and stayed in then Soviet Lithuania until she died naturally in the 80s. My great-grandfather was a famous pediatrician and I believe he escaped being shipped off to a gulag more than once (he had many friends warning him). I believe he died in the 50s or 60s, in Soviet Lithuania. My grandmother, her sister, and two cousins fled to Germany during the war. They ended up captured and worked in camps (my grandmother was trained

13 Šukys, Julija. Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 17, 2017.

14 Žukauskas, Gintaras Aras (Gint Aras). Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 29, 2017.

as a nurse so she was valuable to German troops who needed medical care). They finally got out and came to Chicago to stay with an aunt already there.

My father was born in Memmingen, Germany in a DP camp. At age 3, he and his parents took the ship, the SS Heintzelman, to New York and then came to Chicago. My dad grew up in Cicero, Marquette Park, and Chicago Lawn. He went to St. Rita high school and met my mother in Lithuanian circles.[15]

Medeinė Liuda Tribenevičius (born 1979): I was born in Canada. My mother emigrated from Lithuania in 1969. She was 19 I think, and adopted by an aunt who was then reunited with her husband who had fled (emigrated) during World War II. My father's parents were refugees from World War II and married in a DP camp in Hamburg area. They had my father and one other child in the United Kingdom, and then emigrated to Canada.[16]

Descendants of the first wave of Lithuanian immigrants of the early twentieth century

The next type of family background was that of third and fourth generation Lithuanian-Americans whose grandparents or great-grandparents emigrated to the United States in the first wave of immigration out of Lithuania at the turn of the last century.

Ellen Cassady (born 1950): My mother's father, Jewish, immigrated to the United States from the Rokiškis area in 1911. Two of his sisters had immigrated before him. Brothers and half-brother either remained in Lithuania or emigrated to South Africa or the Soviet Union. Some died in the Holocaust, some survived the Holocaust.[17]

Jocelyn Bartkevičius (1955): My grandparents, father, and aunt are immigrants. My mother is not Lithuanian, and was born in the United States, as was I. My grandmother, according to her stories,

15 Vitkauskas, Lina Ramona. Interviewed by Laima Vince. January 10, 2017.
16 Tribenevičius, Medeinė Liuda. Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 23, 2017.
17 Cassady, Ellen. Interviewed by Laima Vince. February 1, 2017.

was deeply traumatized by her experiences during World War I, when troops from Russia and Prussia overran their farm in alternating skirmishes. She was a teenager during the war. The family often had to flee to the forest and survive on food they buried there. They witnessed starvation of those she called "city people," those who did not have farms to produce their own food that they could then hide. She maintained a deep distrust of Russia, and between the two world wars she made a great effort to get herself and her children to the United States. They saved enough money to send my grandfather to the US where he found work with some cousins. It took him three years to save the money for his wife and two children to join him. So, while my family were not war refugees by definition, I would say that it was World War I that set them on the course of leaving Lithuania.[18]

James Joseph Brown (born 1970): All of my great grandparents on my mother's side emigrated from Lithuania to Massachusetts. One pair of them returned to Lithuania and stayed there, along with the rest of their family, except for their son, my grandfather, who left Lithuania between World War I and World War II, by himself, married a Lithuanian-American woman, my grandmother, and had my mother and uncle.[19]

American Writers in Lithuania

Kerry Shawn Keys (1946): I'm from Harrisburg in central Pennsylvania. I grew up in a working class neighborhood. My grandparents were from the immediate countryside. We spent a lot of time there. I was an inner city boy with recent "redneck" background. My family had no college. Not one kid was Lithuanian in my high school. It was all government workers and Scotch Irish. Slavs and Balts were 80 miles away in the steel mill area. My ethnic background is a mix of English, Irish, Scottish, and Pennsylvania Dutch. My father's uncle spoke Pennsylvania Dutch. My first knowledge of Lithuania was when I was in the university and a friend from the coal regions told

[18] Bartkevičius, Jocelyn. Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 23, 2017.
[19] Brown, James Joseph. Interviewed by Laima Vince. November 1, 2016.

me about this gorgeous girl getting married. She was Lithuanian and he told me all Lithuanian women are beautiful.[20]

Wendell Mayo (1953): My maternal grandfather immigrated from Puerto Rico; my maternal great-grandmother immigrated from Vera Cruz, Mexico. A good many generations back, my father's parents came from Ireland. So—I'm part Hispanic and part Irish, a bit like an actor I like, Anthony Quinn. My father was a nuclear physicist and worked for NASA at the Lewis Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio, and so we were all strongly patriotic as Americans. There was not a Lithuanian presence I was aware of, at least until my first real girlfriend in high school, Amy Walunis (Lith: Valiunas), came along! I've traveled and worked extensively in Lithuania, and so my wife, Deborah, and her father, Edward, kind of 'depend' on me to bring back stories of Lithuania, land of their cultural heritage. (Deborah is Lithuanian-American, maiden name, Deborah Masonis [Lith: Masionis].)

I do not live in Lithuania. But I have lived in Lithuania the better parts of all summers from 1993 through 2001, sometimes working with the American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education (APPLE), sometimes with relatives of my wife's, and sometimes entirely on my own. I lived a year in Vilnius on a Fulbright, starting in the fall 2001. I traveled to Lithuania in 2003 for the release of *Vilko valanda* (Lithuanian translation of *In Lithuanian Wood*) at the Vilnius Book Fair, and in 2014 as lecturer and keynote speaker for APPLE in Kaunas.[21]

Self-Identification

Writers were asked to respond to the question: Do you consider yourself a Lithuanian writer? Lithuanian-American or Lithuanian-Canadian writer? Or a Lithuanian writer? Three categories emerged: American, Canadian, Lithuanian-American, but not Lithuanian-Canadian. The explanations that writers gave for their choices and the thinking behind them is even more interesting.

[20] Keys, Kerry Shawn. Interviewed by Laima Vince. October 19, 2016.
[21] Mayo, Wendell. Interviewed by Laima Vince. March 10, 2017.

How writers of Lithuanian descent and those residing full-time in Lithuania self-identified:

Lithuanian-American – Gint Aras, Jocelyn Bartkevičius, James Joseph Brown, Jon Landsbergis, Birutė Putrius, Rūta Šepetys, Lina Ramona Vitkauskas.

American – Ellen Cassady, Milda DeVoe, Kerry Shawn Keys (not of Lithuanian descent), Wendell Mayo (not of Lithuanian descent), Daiva Markelis, Rimas Užgiris.

Canadian – Irene Guilford, Antanas Šileika, Julija Šukys, Medeinė Liuda Tribenevičius

Writers of Lithuanian descent who were born in Canada, educated in Canada, and spent most of their lives in Canada, felt strongly that they were Canadian writers and did not even consider the thought of applying any other category to themselves. However, Antanas Šileika added that he was a Canadian writer of Lithuanian heritage. He further elaborated on his identity as follows:

> I hesitate to call myself a Lithuanian writer because I have lived outside the country for virtually my entire life and write in English. I have a window into Lithuania because of access to the language. But the question is complicated because I seem to become more and more Lithuanian with every passing year since I go there more and more often and my son and his family now live there.[22]

Canada is a neighbor of the United States of America, and although the two nations share a common language, English, (Canada's second state language is French) their systems of governance, social philosophies, and cultures could not be more different. While the United States is a purely capitalist nation, Canada has embraced European-style social democracy. While Canadians are heavily taxed, Canadians appreciate their generous health care system, available to all Canadian citizens, free

[22] Šileika, Antanas. Interviewed by Laima Vince. December 30, 2016.

high-quality education, and higher education at a nominal cost, as well as strong government support for the arts. Canada also embraces multiculturalism by honoring citizens' cultures of origin, while the United States see-saws between being openly hostile to immigrants or propagating a melting pot theory of rapid cultural assimilation that necessitates suppressing one's home culture and language. It could be that a more humanistic system of governance, and a more open society towards immigrants, compels Lithuanian-Canadian writers to identify more strongly with a Canadian identity.

Writers of Lithuanian descent born in the United States were much more conflicted about identity than Lithuanian-Canadian writers. They vacillated between self-identifying as Lithuanian-American writers, American writers, and even Lithuanian writers. Obviously, the two American writers who are not of Lithuanian descent, but who have resided in Lithuania, chose to self-identify as American writers.

Although Wendell Mayo does not consider himself a Lithuanian writer, he did have some interesting insights:

> ... I am proud that Lithuanian and Lithuanian-American reviewers of my works consider my fiction to have value for Lithuanian and Lithuanian-American readers.
>
> ...I've worked long and extra hard to understand my subject, but I would never presume to have the same formative and deeply personal experiences that someone of Lithuanian descent would have.[23]

However, even more interesting was that three writers who are of Lithuanian descent, but who did not grow up speaking Lithuanian in the home or in their community, Rūta Šepetys, Jocelyn Bartkevičius, and James Joseph Brown, chose to self-identify as Lithuanian-American, despite their deeper level of integration into mainstream American culture and only marginal association with Lithuanian émigré communities. They could

[23] Mayo, Wendell. Interviewed by Laima Vince. March 10, 2017.

have easily justified the self-identification of American writer. Among the writers interviewed these writers expressed the deepest level of patriotism for Lithuania, a strong sense of duty towards Lithuania, and the greatest desire to be accepted by today's Lithuania as part of that culture. All three have travelled to Lithuania several times since independence, stayed for an extended period of time, and James Joseph Brown and Jocelyn Bartkevičius took Lithuanian language courses for foreigners at Vilnius University. Therefore, one could argue that these writers' desire to be accepted as Lithuanian-American writers, despite having grown up outside of the typical urban diaspora communities of New York, Boston, Cleveland, Chicago, Toronto, Montreal, etc. is strong and does not exist in word only, but is expressed through choices and actions.

At the same time, the poet Rimas Užgiris, who has resided with his family in Lithuania for the past six years, and who grew up in a Lithuanian speaking household, did not wish to be categorized as a Lithuanian-American, or even a Lithuanian, writer. As a full-time resident of Lithuania and Lithuanian passport holder, and active poetry translator and poet, Užgiris has the right to claim himself as a Lithuanian writer, but chooses not to do so. He self-identifies as an American writer. Two other writers, Daiva Markelis, who grew up in the strong Chicago Lithuanian diaspora in the sixties and seventies, and Milda DeVoe, who grew up closely associated with the Chicago Lithuanian diaspora, both of whom spoke Lithuanian as their first language and only learned English upon entering American schools, and both of whom received a heavy dose of Lithuanian émigré culture, including Saturday language schools, summer camps, symposiums, theater, etc., chose to adopt a purely American identity as writers.

Finally, as no literary category of Lithuanian-American writer or Lithuanian-Canadian writer as of yet exists, except in the diaspora's imagination, these writers are all in fact American and Canadian writers. Every single one of them lacks the linguistic skills to write in Lithuanian and must of necessity have their work translated from English into Lithuanian when it is published in Lithuania.

A Category for Lithuanian-American Literature

Participants in the survey were asked the following question:

> Do you think that it would be accurate to argue that there are enough contemporary writers in North America of Lithuanian descent who are writing about the Lithuanian diaspora, history, or trauma narrative to justify the creation of a subcategory of American Multicultural Literature that would be specifically labeled as Lithuanian-American or Baltic American?

The responses suggest that more than half of the writers who participated in the survey believe that Lithuanian-American literature should have its own classification under the umbrella of American Multicultural Literature. Ten writers responded yes, and six no, with only one having no opinion.

Again, it was the writers who'd had the least amount of exposure to the Lithuanian emigre community who were most enthusiastic over the concept of a category of Lithuanian-American or Baltic-American literature within the American literary canon. Of all the respondents, Rūta Šepetys explained her vote for a Lithuanian-American literary category most eloquently:

> There are so many people who are writing about Lithuania that it would be important for us to be grouped into a category because it would strengthen the overall identity of the Baltic region. Bringing awareness is important. I meet people who say, "I love your book. I had no idea that happened in the BALKANS." I think it is important to continue to share the stories, art, music of the Baltic region. That voice is so beautifully unique. By having a category I see that as a positive and unifying thing. I have traveled extensively, and I feel that the Baltic region is so unique compared to other regions of Europe that it warrants its own category. [24]

Jocelyn Bartkevičius commented:

> Yes, I think it would be fruitful to create such a category. I'd probably push for Baltic-American. I think that when a category

[24] Šepetys, Rūta. Interviewed by Laima Vince. March 9, 2017.

> is created, publishers and readers are more open to the idea that there are diverse voices within it. They are thus less likely to make the assumption that if they've heard from one Lithuanian, they've heard from them all. I also think that recognizing such a category would make old-school scholars and theorists more aware of the diversity of experience within European ethnicities. White is not a monolithic category. Especially when, as in the publishing world as well as theoretical circles, white equals upper class Americans and Western Europeans.[25]

From a purely American perspective on this question, Wendell Mayo, who has lived and worked in Lithuania as a Fulbright and as part of the APPLE program, had this to say:

> Absolutely. Two waves of Lithuanian émigrés have left us with many great Lithuanian-American writers, such as Rūta Šepetys! I did want to add something else from my 20+ years of teaching in an MFA program. After the fall of the Soviets and the trend towards globalization (for better or worse), more and more new American writers are drawn to "global" subjects for their writing. Anthony Doerr is a perfect example; so much of his writing is set in overseas locales, from Lithuania, to World War II France and Germany, to Rome, to Tanzania, and more. The world is a smaller place and, as I've said, Lithuania's story ranks among the most compelling. While I was with APPLE, I brought six different MFA students to Lithuania to work with APPLE—Doer being one of them. All were intensely interested in Lithuania.[26]

At the same time, Lithuanian-American writers who'd grown up within the Lithuanian diaspora community, and who are fluent in Lithuanian, were least enthusiastic about a Lithuanian-American categorization. Rimas Užgiris replied curtly: "Probably not. Maybe we can ride on the coattails of Rūta Šepetys." Canadian writer, Antanas Šileika, quipped: "Too few Lithuanians, I think. I'd be happier with a group that included the old LDK (The Grand Duchy of Lithuania)—the Baltics (including Finland), Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine."

[25] Bartkevičius, Jocelyn. Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 23, 2017.
[26] Mayo, Wendell. Interviewed by Laima Vince. March 10, 2017.

Responses become even more interesting when the same writers were asked: How would you feel about your work being classified as Lithuanian-American/Canadian within a North American literary context? Now only seven writers agreed that they themselves would like to see their literary work placed within this category. This means that three who agreed that such a category is a good idea would not like to have their own literary work classified within it. Five writers answered, "no" and five had no opinion.

Daiva Markelis, author of the Lithuanian-American memoir, *White Field, Black Sheep: A Lithuanian-American Life*, refused to personally have anything to do with such a category or see her writing placed within it. She responded:

> I'm not crazy about being categorized, but I do think it would help a wider public to take Lithuanian-American writing seriously. On the other hand, what happens if we stop writing about Lithuanian themes? For example, I'm working on two different projects that have very little or nothing to do with being Lithuanian. So, I guess it's a mixed bag.[27]

Rimas Užgiris, who like Daiva Markelis, is a product of the Lithuanian diaspora, but who identifies as an American writer, when confronted with this question opened up another issue that plagues not only Lithuanian-American/Canadian writers, but the entire community. That issue is a deep confusion over identity. He responded: "I'm not sure I even want to be an American writer. I don't feel close to America even though I can't help but be American. My identity is conflicted."[28]

Milda DeVoe, who was raised in the Diaspora community and is fluent in Lithuanian, rejected the idea altogether: "I resist all categories, because I find that my writing tends to fall outside of categorization."[29]

[27] Markelis, Daiva. Interviewed by Laima Vince. December 1, 2016.
[28] Užgiris, Rimas. Interviewed by Laima Vince. October 17, 2016.
[29] DeVoe, Milda. Interviewed by Laima Vince. November 20, 2016.

Meanwhile, James Joseph Brown, who has written about his struggles with acceptance by the Lithuanian community, raised another doubt—that of acceptance. He responded: "I would completely embrace this category, if it would have me."[30]

What Makes Lithuanian-American Writing Lithuanian?

Participants were asked to consider: What qualities of the writing itself would make a Lithuanian-American category of writing different than mainstream American literature? The writers who participated in this survey had to consider what aspects of Lithuanian-American writing set it apart from mainstream American literature. Birutė Putrius viewed this question from an exclusively American multicultural position:

> Lithuanian-Americans have to tell their version of the kaleidoscope that is the American Dream. We have the Jewish version, the Irish, English, Turkish, Latin-American versions. Time to tell our version.[31]

The Chicago poet, Lina Ramona Vitkauskas, wrote about how an imagined literary category of Lithuanian-American literature would stand up compared to other cultural traditions. Her response:

> We are storytellers of a different kind. We are a little earthy (perhaps close to Native Americans in spirit at times). We are avant garde (we appreciate the absurd and ennui, perhaps like the French). We can be brutal. We are dichotomies. There is a stereotype of drinking and brooding (perhaps like the Irish). We are not as openly passionate (as the Italians). We can be simmering below the surface but we can be cold (we borrow from our Scandinavian brothers and sisters). We are complex and we suffer deeply, I believe, and I think that's what is attractive to others.[32]

[30] Brown, James Joseph. Interviewed by Laima Vince. November 1, 2016.
[31] Putrius, Birutė. Interviewed by Laima Vince. November 15, 2016.
[32] Vitkauskas, Lina Ramona. Interviewed by Laima Vince. January 10, 2017.

Milda DeVoe, like Rimas Užgiris, addressed the persistent feeling Lithuanian-Americans have as outsiders both in their native United States and in Lithuania.

> In my case the feeling of being an outsider is extreme. The use of hyperbole is common. There is a freedom to move from and within the natural and supernatural world that is unique. People who are raised Lithuanian have a physical connection to the spiritual. It seems real in a way that it isn't here. Animism is common. Personifying objects. It's not your typical spirituality. It's not Asian. It's realistic. It's pagan. There is this idea that nothing is too surreal to not be possible. There is an embracing of the scientific simultaneously. Technology is big. Forward thinking. Embracing of novelties, while also being superstitious.[33]

Rūta Šepetys responded with a theme that was perhaps the most important for the Lithuanian-American community during the years of the Soviet occupation, and that is a love of freedom, independence, and democratic principles. She commented:

> Again, to me it comes back to thematic elements. Beauty in captivity. Occupation. People who have Lithuanian heritage I suspect have a reverence for freedom and independence. That is not only who we are as writers, but as human beings. This is how we try to make a human contribution in this world. The history of Lithuania (and mind you I'm only reaching back to the 20th century) is so rich.[34]

James Joseph Brown sees Lithuanian-American literature as having an important story to tell, a story steeped in survivor's guilt and the need to preserve what was once perceived as a dying culture and language.

> In one sense there would be nothing different about it. All of the same themes would likely crop up, family tensions, generational differences, first loves, navigating different cultural contexts. But in Lithuanian-American writing I would expect to see more

[33] DeVoe, Milda. Interviewed by Laima Vince. November 20, 2016.
[34] Šepetys, Rūta. Interviewed by Laima Vince. March 9, 2017.

> dealing with what it means to know you are part of a small but scrappy group of survivors. More literature that questions the writer's and narrator's place in the world. Many Lithuanians I know seem to suffer a sort of unconscious survivor's guilt, knowing what has befallen so many from the Baltics in the very recent past. It would be interesting to see the many ways this plays out in different narratives. I would expect to see the regular cultural tensions between generations to also be loaded with questions of faith and spirituality and superstition owing to the multi-faceted religious traditions of Lithuania. I would expect to see much hand-wringing over the impulse to go out and explore the world being put into conflict the generational grip of obligation, suggesting Lithuanians to have a certain duty to preserve family traditions. Lithuanians all inherit a duty to not only preserve a language and a culture which were almost lost, but to adapt and embrace their rapidly changing place in the world. This makes us natural storytellers, since our culture and traditions are steeped in conflict and drama.[35]

Gint Aras sees Lithuanian-American writing as ripe with trauma, essentially as a trauma narrative. In that sense, the experience of Lithuanian-Americans to Gint Aras is no different than the suffering of many other migrant groups.

> Lithuanian-American writing is essentially a chapter in a migrant narrative, a shade in the story of war or economic conflict and class struggle. It suffers from a brand of sentimentality that's common to victim narratives, but it shines brilliant with a ferocious presence that's common to stories of identity collapse and resistance to brutality. Ultimately, the immigrant narrative tells one story of entrapment between planets, of belonging everywhere and nowhere. It's compelling because the migrant is aware of something that's true for everyone, but most people are just blind to it.[36]

Ellen Cassady, who has a Litvak background, took yet another position:

[35] Brown, James Joseph. Interviewed by Laima Vince. November 1, 2016.

[36] Žukauskas, Gintaras Aras (Gint Aras). Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 29, 2017.

> I like being included in the group of Lithuanian-American writers when that seems to imply that Jewish heritage is becoming a part of the Lithuanian narrative.[37]

Cassady further elaborated on how including Litvak writing within the canon of Lithuanian-American/Canadian writing could be a means of building tolerance between ethnic Lithuanians and Lithuanian Jews.

> It is a route toward promoting tolerance. I talk about my own Jewish-Lithuanian roots and my journey to open up to non-Jewish narratives in Lithuania as a vehicle for urging readers to undergo a similar journey of engaging with "the Other."[38]

The responses to this question were varied and yet pointed back to two major concerns: national trauma and confusion over identity. Both of these themes have their roots in the need for remembrance. This theme is especially painful for Lithuanians because their story was silenced for many decades.

Motivations for Remembrance

For the most part, and with few exceptions, American and Canadian writers of Lithuanian descent write about Lithuania, focusing mostly on Lithuania's traumatic historical experience of the twentieth century.

These writers have taken on the theme of Lithuania and its painful twentieth century history, despite the fact that most of them have only briefly visited Lithuania a few times since independence, and have not had the experience of living or working in Lithuania for any extended period of time. Some, like Rūta Šepetys, do not speak Lithuanian. Nonetheless, Šepetys dedicated her career as a writer to speaking out for Lithuania's Siberian exiles, whose stories had been forgotten for half a century, internationally revealing this largely unknown chapter in history.

[37] Cassady, Ellen. Interviewed by Laima Vince. February 1, 2017.
[38] Ibid.

By writing about Lithuanian historical events of the twentieth century, like deportation to Siberia or the postwar armed resistance against the Soviet Union, the Lithuanian-American and Lithuanian-Canadian writers are not writing from a place of lived experience, but recreate a reality from the stories they've heard from their elders, which they back up with research. Rūta Šepetys's young adult novel, *Between Shades of Gray,* about a sixteen-year-old girl exiled by Stalin to the Arctic region of Siberia, became a *New York Times* bestseller. Šepetys explained how her own family history inspired her to write *Between Shades of Gray:*

> So much of my father's experience as a child fleeing from Lithuania and living in the DP camps and coming to the US was a huge part of my family's identity. We were an immigrant family. We observed all of the Lithuanian customs and traditions and foods. It was a part of the fabric of my growing up. Both of my grandparents were in the Lithuanian military. My grandfather was a fierce Lithuanian patriot. He read the newspaper *Draugas* every day. Growing up with a Lithuanian name made a big influence. People would also ask, "What are you?" I would be forced to explain about my heritage. My brother and sister had English names and so their identities were a little different. You become an ambassador of your country. My name led me to write *Between Shades of Gray*. When I worked in the music industry I would ask people, "What's you story?" They would ask me, "What's your story, and I would say, 'I'm Lithuanian.' " That would lead to my telling them the story of Lithuania.[39]

It was the daily presence of survivor's guilt in Šepetys's household that left a profound impression on Šepetys, along with a strong Lithuanian ethic of honoring freedom, working hard, and giving to the community. Šepetys remembers:

> To be Lithuanian in our household meant that there is strength through struggle. There is meaning through hardship. My father and grandparents impressed upon us that they struggled and it was difficult, but suffering is not meaningless. It led them to

[39] Šepetys, Rūta. Interviewed by Laima Vince. March 9, 2017.

instill a work ethic in us. If you want something you had to work hard for it. The other value was patriotism. You had to know where you came from, have gratitude, and a work ethic. Freedom and democracy were integral to our views. My grandfather died in 1989 just prior to Lithuanian independence. It was something he dreamed of. We valued having freedom and democracy in the United States, but we also understood that Lithuania had freedom and democracy and lost it. Independence was something my father and grandfather focused on very much. We were very much aware of enjoying our freedoms and democracy in the United States, but were also very much aware that our extended families in Lithuania did not enjoy those freedoms. My grandfather and father were very much involved in Aid for Lithuania and several organizations out of Chicago. I have memories of going to big department stores with my grandfather and buying every single pair of Levis off the rack. Then we'd drive them to Chicago, where a group would be organizing a shipment to Lithuania. We have an entire suitcase filled with receipts for my grandfather's donations to Lithuania. He was well-known in the Lithuanian community. My grandfather was incredibly generous with his time and money. He was passionate. Now that I understand more about the complexity of Lithuanian history, I understand and have insights into my grandfather. For a military officer to have to leave his country must have been so incredibly difficult. My grandfather and his family left in 1940 at the time of the first Soviet occupation.[40]

Birutė Putrius's first collection of linked short stories, *Lost Birds*, describes the displaced persons community of her Chicago childhood. She was the first to write in English about the DP experience in Chicago from the point of view of a child. Her second novel, *The Book Smuggler*, hearkens back to the Czarist era ban on the Lithuanian alphabet, focusing on historical remembrance.

In her memoir, *We Are Here,* Ellen Cassady explores the branch of her family who died in the Holocaust in Lithuania. Historical remembrance motivated Cassady to attend Yiddish Language

[40] Šepetys, Rūta. Interviewed by Laima Vince. March 9, 2017.

courses at the Yiddish Language Institute in Vilnius, and to research her family history.

In her work, Julija Šukys also deals with the legacy of historical trauma, specifically with the tragic fate of Lithuania's Jews, the Litvaks.

> I write about the Vilna (Vilnius) Ghetto, about Siberian deportation, about the Nazi occupation of Lithuania, and about the mass killing of Jews in Lithuania. In the past, I've written in a more scholarly way about contemporary Lithuanian literature. I also write about family, matrilineage, memory, and the problems (for me) of inheritance, which (by virtue of who I am and who my family is) leads to Lithuanian themes.[41]

Gint Aras explores Lithuania's World War II legacy in his self-published novel, *Finding the Moon in Sugar*:

> The novel is about an American naïf who ends up following a Lithuanian internet bride to Vilnius. It was my way of dealing with a variety of things, including what I knew about Vilnius as a city with a real underground culture that's colorful. But I was also interested in exploring co-dependency. I write about displacement from a variety of points of view, not least of which is wartime displacement as experienced by World War II refugees. However, in my novel, *The Fugue,* the displaced are multi-ethnic. Displacement becomes a universal experience of war and tragedy.[42]

Antanas Šileika, whose novel, *Underground*, deals with the legacy of the postwar anti-soviet resistance, muses that the legacy of World War II haunts even his most recent work:

> I write for the sake of the sparks of drama between the hammer of Germany and the anvil of The Soviet Union. What follows from that period in history continues to inform even my most recent essay about a son and his family living in an increasingly precarious location.[43]

41 Šukys, Julija. Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 17, 2017.

42 Žukauskas, Gintaras Aras (Gint Aras). Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 29, 2017.

43 Šileika, Antanas. Interviewed by Laima Vince. December 30, 2016.

The drama of World War II, the Soviet occupation, Czarist oppression, are all themes that for these American and Canadian writers of Lithuanian descent are an ocean away. And yet they remain these writers' predominant themes. They feel strongly that these are historical stories that need to be told and shared with American readers.

At the same time, the history of Lithuanian immigrants in America is over a hundred years old. That history has shaped the identity and writing of James Joseph Brown. He responded:

> They are the themes that keep bubbling forth in the work because they have been obsessing me the longest. From the somewhat spooky church I grew up in, to the cast of characters that made up the Lithuanian community in my small, New England town, to the treasure trove of experience I gained from living in Lithuania right after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and then more recently, when it has become decidedly Western and European. Being able to truly recognize the differences between then and now and understand that I lived through them is something that will always inspire me to want to write more about Lithuania.[44]

Bartkevičius in her writing has explored the theme of trauma as it is experienced in the Lithuanian diaspora.

> I write about my grandmother's memories of pre-Soviet Lithuania, her experiences as a peasant farmer, her experiences hiding from invading armies in World War I. I also write about some of the research I conducted, family history I found out about, and experiences I had after my second-cousin who was raised in Soviet Lithuania visited me in the United States, and then I visited him in Lithuania. I am captivated by how little the average American knows about the Soviet occupation, and how little even some of us who are Lithuanian know about it—how secrets were kept, how trauma and survivor's guilt may have created shame, how strong the family bond remains despite years of exile. I have written about all of these things, but have so much more to explore and write about them.

[44] Brown, James Joseph. Interviewed by Laima Vince. November 1, 2016.

> However, my writing comes from my identity, my imagination, my self, my memory, and my surroundings. I will persist in writing about Lithuanian subject matter because it is an essential aspect of all of these aspects of who I am.
>
> There is a depth of historical witness in much Lithuanian-American writing that is absent from much American writing, for one thing. Lithuanian-American writers write from a diaspora, their work encompasses more than one country and generation. They have an insider's grasp of atrocity and suffering that only some of the other ethnic American writers have (such as Vietnamese-Americans, for example, a relatively new category that is opening the door to many writers and theorists whose voices have previously been marginalized).[45]

Among Brown's "ghosts," there is the ghost of the Lithuanian identity. Whether the writer was born in the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, or 1970s, they all write about how they grapple with the same challenge of coming to terms with a confused identity.

On Questions of Identity

Often writing in a style that is ripe with irony and paradox, Canadian writers Irene Guilford and Anatanas Šileika, and American writers Gint Aras (Karolis Gintaras Žukauskas), Daiva Markelis and Birutė Putrius, have created in their novels, stories, and memoirs an accurate representation of the North American Lithuanian diasporas (or ghettos) where tens of thousands of refugee children or their descendants grew up. The central theme in these works is confusion over identity.

Antanas Šileika was one of the first Canadian born descendants of Lithuanian refugees to publish a book in English in Canada about his and his brothers' experiences as first generation Canadians, the sons of refugees. *Buying on Time* gained popularity not only within the Lithuanian émigré community, but also

[45] Bartkevičius, Jocelyn. Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 23, 2017.

with Canadian and American readers, who appreciated Šileika's sense of humor. When asked what qualities are unique to Lithuanian-American writing, Šileika responded:

> East European writing sometimes shows more absurdity, more irony, more surrealism, as befitting a region where no good deed went unpunished and life sometimes echoed dark fairy tales like those of Hoffman or the Arabian Nights stories, in which vengeful genies might kill you for their sport. North American writing is more generally uplifting, or moral, or has a happy ending (less so in Canada). Obviously, these are generalities with many exceptions. Book clubs often complained to me that the ending of *Underground* was too sad. My response was that it was a happy ending by East European standards because not everyone died. The danger inherent for writers on Lithuanian themes is to make the work plaintive, beseeching understanding and respect. Yes, Lithuanians suffered, and they made others suffer, and many in the world suffer in similar or worse ways.[46]

The Lithuanian identity in the diaspora was largely formed by the teachings passed down by the émigrés in Saturday Schools, dance groups, and other ethnic organizations. Paul Landsbergis, son of the writer Algirdas Landsbergis, reflected on how Lithuanian identity was passed on through the institutions of family and Saturday Lithuanian language school.

> When I was growing up it wasn't something I thought a lot about, but it was always understood that Lithuanian was our identity, or least part of our identity. We were also growing up in the U.S. It was a dual identity but what does that mean? As a kid I felt comfortable being in both worlds. From 6 to 14 I went to the Lithuanian Saturday school in Brooklyn, but my grades were not great. My grammar suffered because I had two parents with two languages. I knew I would graduate that school to make my dad happy, but it was a struggle. At 14 I still felt that identity, but the language and grammar were difficult. My father helped as much as he could. I just always knew that this was important

[46] Šileika, Antanas. Interviewed by Laima Vince. December 30, 2016.

> for him, but there was no pressure. He didn't have to say it. It was understood. Because my father wasn't here as an economic refugee, that loss was ever present. They were taken from their country. They always talked about going back, but it didn't seem likely. That loss was communicated clearly. That was a bonding experience in the family and in the community. It was a reason to stay in school and continue to learn the language.[47]

Paul's brother, Jon, a poet and environmentalist, considered himself a "professional Lithuanian" growing up:

> We considered ourselves professional Lithuanians. We belonged to every Lithuanian group there was. I used to come to the Franciscan Monastery in Maine a lot. I started going to Neringa and Ateitininkai. I joined dance group. Growing up Lithuanian-American gave me an identity. It took over and I got so busy that my friends in the neighborhood were like, "What happened to you." It was by far the dominant force in my life.
>
> My father was happy when I went to Lithuanian camp because I'd meet kids whose parents were people he knew. He was able to connect with his community through my connection. His sense of being a displaced refugee was soothed by me being connected in the community.
>
> My parents didn't force me to participate. When I was little I was in Little League and all the local New York clubs and activities. My parents let me decide on my beliefs and everything. They never told me I had to be one way or the other. It came naturally.
>
> The Lithuanian-American Cultural Center came into existence in Brooklyn in the early seventies and there was so much going on at that time.[48]

Gint Aras, born almost twenty years later, similarly experienced having Lithuanian identity instilled in him through the institutions of Lithuanian Saturday School, dance, scouts, and other organizations. Not much had changed in those two decades. Gint Aras remembers:

[47] Landsbergis, Paul. Interviewed by Laima Vince. August 2, 2017.
[48] Landsbergis, Jon. Interviewed by Laima Vince. August 1, 2017.

> I also had my point of view affected dramatically by a dance group I belonged to. Lithuanian folk dancing, and the national costume we wore during performances, were presented as cornerstones of Lithuanian identity. In my Lithuanian books, Lithuanian children were shown, always in drawings, wearing the national costumes while playing *kanklės* (a zither) under a hazelnut tree, seated besides mushrooms, birds and bunnies.[49]

Still other Lithuanian-American writers, like James Joseph Brown, who is half Lithuanian and grew up in Athol, Massachusetts, one of the "ghettos" of the first wave of Lithuanian immigrants who emigrated to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to escape conscription into the Czarist army or for economic reasons, questions the traditional and societally accepted understanding of what it means to be Lithuanian—heterosexual, Catholic (with a good dose of paganism on the side), family oriented. Through his writing, Brown advocates for a broader, more compassionate acceptance of *all* Lithuanians into the community, both in Lithuania and abroad. In his essay "Stebuklas" (Miracle), published in the Lithuanian-American journal, *Bridges*, Brown describes how after being shoved out of a taxi because he requests to be driven to a gay club in Vilnius, he walks across the Cathedral Square, searching for the marble tile called, *Stebuklas* (Miracle). The legend goes that if you stand on this tile, your wishes will come true.

> This was not the country my grandfather would want me to come back to. When he left for America, he had the intention of going back when Lithuania was free. But he wouldn't have wanted to go back to this. And he wouldn't have wanted me to go back to this, for anyone in his family to go back and to be treated like this, like they didn't belong.
>
> Maybe I was only half-Lithuanian. Maybe I didn't speak the language perfectly. Maybe I wasn't the most conventional Lithuanian you'd ever meet. But I was not going to let someone make me feel like I didn't belong in this society because I was gay.

[49] Žukauskas, Gintaras Aras (Gint Aras). Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 29, 2017.

> I swore then that I wouldn't be silent. That I would speak up and not deny it if the issue came up, even if it made some squeamish Lithuanians uncomfortable when they asked where my wife and kids were and I told them the truth. I would make sure I stood up for what was right until the day when this nation treated us all equally.
>
> I walked past the bell tower, to the *Stebuklas*, and made one last wish. This time I broke with tradition and told everyone I could about it afterward. I wished for Lithuania to be a more tolerant society for gays and lesbians and anyone else who felt different and misunderstood. It was too important a wish to keep to myself.[50]

Similar to Brown, Gint Aras has little patience for a Lithuanian identity that has no tolerance for Lithuanians beyond the most basic nationalistic type:

> If patriotism is defined as vigorous support of one's country, I should say that I did not grow up among patriots. My elders and the vast majority of my peers were nationalistic, and they harbored a sentimentalized, pastoral and nostalgic idea of what Lithuania was. They would probably consider themselves patriots, but they defended and supported an *idea* of Lithuania versus Lithuania itself. This was evident in their dismissal of and even animosity towards "3rd wave" migrants. They saw themselves as "true" while the post- Soviet Lithuanians were tarnished or impure. In their efforts toward Lithuanian independence, they also bore a desire to wash Lithuania clean of any Slavic influence, imagined a return to a Lithuania that existed almost exclusively in the Saturday school textbooks, one based on a romantic notion of 30's Lithuania as a heyday, no different from the fetish Americans have for the 50's.
>
> I don't feel I'm splitting a hair. If you support a culture, you should support the one that exists, not the one you wish existed, or your idea of a culture that in actuality was probably far from what you imagine or teach your children as "true". I suppose this position might destroy the very possibility of patriotism, no matter who's feeling it for what country. After all, delusion is

[50] Brown. "Stebuklas," 2016.

hardly exotic stuff. Still, the trauma of war, and the mentality of displacement created a brand of patriotism that "fought for" a sentiment, not a place.[51]

For Jocelyn Bartkevičius, for whom the direct experience of war trauma was a little more distant, and who did not participate in the emigre community events, being Lithuanian was a way of being at one with the land. She wrote:

> My parents divorced when I was a baby, and because my mother wasn't Lithuanian, she did not have Lithuanian traditions to pass on to me. However, I spent a good deal of time with my father and his parents, and in their households, being Lithuanian was very important. In my father's house, the one tradition he carried on was to grow and eat natural, healthy food. (This was way before the natural food movement, and people thought he was really eccentric for doing this). He instilled that respect for food and land in me, as well as his political stance, a deep longing for Lithuania to become free and independent, and a political stance that was very anti-Soviet.
>
> At my grandparents' house, given that they had both been farmers in Lithuania, they continued the tradition of growing and preserving their own food. Everything was homemade, from kielbasa to horseradish to whiskey to soap. My grandmother's garden was completely organic. When their children were growing up, Lithuanian was spoken in the home, and the children were punished for speaking English. By the time I came along, my grandparents spoke broken English. They did not teach the grandchildren to speak Lithuanian (other than a couple of phrases). My father and his sister did not teach any of their children Lithuanian either, and chose to celebrate holidays in American ways, rather than what by then they considered "the old ways." At Easter, my grandmother used natural vegetable dies to color eggs but that was the only tradition that I observed that differed from American traditions.[52]

[51] Žukauskas, Gintaras Aras (Gint Aras). Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 29, 2017.

[52] Bartkevičius, Jocelyn. Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 23, 2017.

On Identity Confusion

To complicate matters even more, the identities of these North American writers of Lithuanian descent are not just dual, but triple identities: 1) Lithuanian—raised in the émigré community; 2) Canadian or American; 3) A hybrid identity that is Lithuanian-American or Lithuanian-Canadian. The third category has its own set of traditions and cultural understanding. Lithuanian-American poet and literary translator Rimas Užgiris pointed out some of these differences in an interview recorded in Vilnius:

> I still don't feel close to the Lithuanian-American community. Since I've lived here in Lithuania since 1993 I felt how non-Lithuanian the Lithuanian-Americans are. I don't do the things that Lithuanian-Americans do. I hate the dancing, the dance festivals, etc. So I don't feel that connected to them. In my writing and themes I am Lithuanian-American because I write about that background and I do it in English, but I don't feel that I fit into any group easily. I once casually said to a Lithuanian-American friend that he does not speak Lithuanian and he got upset. 'My uncle helped NATO,' he said, and 'don't you dare question my Lithuanianess.' There is a pumped up patriotism in Lithuanian-Americans that I disassociate myself from. My parents ran from the regime, but it was not a big point in our family. Being Lithuanian was just our cultural background.[53]

By looking closely at the literary work of North American writers of Lithuanian descent we can begin to understand the paradox of identity crisis. These writers have written about what it means to be a foreigner, an immigrant, a refugee in Canada and America. They have written about the toll it takes psychologically and emotionally to balance dual identities. They have carried the responsibility of telling the untold stories of those left behind while their parents and grandparents fled to the safety of the democracies of the West. These writers gracefully balance three cultures and at least two languages in one lifetime.

[53] Užgiris, Rimas. Interviewed by Laima Vince. October 17, 2016.

However, North American writers of Lithuanian descent share in common a sense that they are still searching for their identity. This sense of confusion regarding identity is the same whether the writer interviewed was in his or her twenties or seventies.

How can one feel firmly rooted in one's culture to the point that one is able to devote one's career to writing about it, even at the expense of being able to publish, while at the same time feeling confused about identity? These writers feel as though they belong to some greater whole, but at the same time sense they are alone with their shattered identities. They boast a strong cultural identity while at the same time are continually searching for one. They exhibit the long-term emotional and psychological affects of displacement. Psychologists have established that victims of extreme traumatization do not heal their psychological scars quickly. Their wounds are passed down the generations epigenetically and the societal result can be profound. This phenomenon is reflected in the literature of the Lithuania diaspora.

Milda DeVoe expesses their sense of displacement, even at home:

> When I go to Texas, I don't feel like a Texan, even though I was born there. I don't belong. Among Americans I feel more Lithuanian, which makes me different. In Lithuania I'm considered American. I have no group that completely fits all the aspects of who I am. I am always searching for my identity.[54]

The sense of not knowing where one belongs is strong with Rimas Užgiris, a contemporary of Milda DeVoe, although the two have never met.

> Who am I and where do I belong? It's a compelling issue for me. I want to explore my duel identity. It's heightened because I felt less American than many Lithuanian-Americans. And yet when I live here [in Lithuania], it's obvious that I am different, American. I can always express myself better in English. I find Lithuanians difficult to get along with.[55]

[54] DeVoe, Milda. Interviewed by Laima Vince. November 20, 2016.
[55] Užgiris, Rimas. Interviewed by Laima Vince. October 17, 2016.

It seems as though that the more the years pass, the more difficult the question of identity becomes.

The generation born during the war who ended up in the thriving Chicago emigre community, established an identity within the boundaries of their own ghetto. "I thought everyone in Chicago spoke Lithuanian," Birutė Putrius commented.[56]

Gint Aras muses on that Chicago Lithuanian-American style of perceiving identity that would lead a child to believe everyone speaks Lithuanian:

> Well, I'm Lithuanian-American, right, and I write, so that makes me a Lithuanian-American writer. However, I don't feel like my ethnic background informs my aesthetic directly, and I don't feel that the position I take as a thinker or an artist is mostly the result of my Lithuanian-ness. I've lived a complex life, have been to 30 countries, speak several languages, etc. I feel that my experience in Linz, Austria, where I lived for three years; alongside my experience in Havana, Cuba, where I taught a class; meshed with my experience in New York, where I came close to becoming homeless—all of that follows me and shows me the world right alongside the Lithuanian lens.[57]

And yet, when it comes down to writing, to self expression, Gint Aras's voice is American:

> I have the point of view and consciousness of an American. I grew up in America and was educated in America. I write to and from an aesthetic that is thoroughly American, specifically urban American, and American writing has influenced me much more strongly than any other "kind". The sound of my English is the American sound. However, while I have access to that Lithuanian consciousness, I don't see the world the way a Lithuanian does. I also can't control the language or prose well enough to write in Lithuanian, which obviously changes the position from which I can see the world, what aesthetic I could use, etc.[58]

[56] Putrius, Birutė. Interviewed by Laima Vince. November 15, 2016.

[57] Žukauskas, Gintaras Aras (Gint Aras). Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 29, 2017.

[58] Ibid.

Rimas Užgiris explained how he was able to embrace his confusion over identity with the help of his professors:

> I do write about other themes, but my Lithuanian background is part of my experience and it made me stand apart from other Americans. Not having a strong sense of where home is, makes it difficult. When I went for my MFA there was a subtle push from Jane Ann Philips and Rigorberto Gonzales to get me to write about these themes. Rigoberto told me specifically to explore my Lithuanian background. That program is about other voice and diversity. There are no ordinary white people. They wanted me there to explore my Lithuanian background. They were big on poets finding a voice in their identities. They would sympathize. I've invited Rigoberto to Lithuania and Dennis Nurkse, who is half Estonian.[59]

The poet Užgiris looks to two great poets, both of whom Lithuania claims as their own, for a model as to how he can find his own place as a poet with a Lithuanian background.

> Czeslaw Milosc and Tomas Venclova both made a big impression on my development as a poet. I met Venclova a few times and he's not so personable. He's formal. Milosz was important in terms of writing about this region and this region's history with a strong ethical perspective as well as a focus on details, on individuals and places. He writes about ethics, history, and individual perspectives. His work made me feel more connected to this region more strongly. He also has a broader sense of identity, which I liked. He says he's the last living citizen of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. He had the argument that you don't have to have a narrow definition of being Lithuanian to be Lithuanian, like I said earlier, I don't fit in with the typical Lithuanian-American cliché of being Lithuanian–you're patriotic, you dance, and that makes you Lithuanian. He has a broader perspective of what it means to be Lithuanian.[60]

Gint Aras has given this topic much thought and elaborates:

> The irony of all these questions is that a lot of what diaspora Lithuanians have learned and continue to learn about "being

[59] Užgiris, Rimas. Interviewed by Laima Vince. October 17, 2016.
[60] Ibid.

Lithuanian" is thoroughly removed from the reality of life in places like Plungė or Utena. And who accuses whom of being the greatest fraud? Well…clearly the resident of the old country, faced with expats who still cling to an old country identity. What a group of frauds you are, they sneer. What business do you have calling yourselves Lithuanian? The diaspora turns around and calls them names, all in an effort to claim authenticity, validity, true identity.

The most difficult part of our cultural narrative isn't what we say but often what we won't admit. I know plenty of Lithuanians, in both the old country and in the diaspora, who will to this day deny the Holocaust or make up all sorts of excuses about it, just as I know plenty of Lithuanians who don't acknowledge the multi-ethnic history of Vilnius, or who would never consider Jascha Heifetz Lithuanian. Some see paganism as "more authentic" a spiritual system for "true Lithuanians" and therefore reject Catholicism, when both are means constructed to understand and explain mysteries. People harboring these opinions go to events like Lithuanian dance festivals in Toronto, but they can't decline the word *šuo* or roll their r's. They have, however, as much right to tell a story as anyone who wants to raise their voice.

In my youth, it was extremely important. I was taught it my responsibility to keep the culture alive, because realistically the Soviet Union was not going to collapse, and Lithuania was in very real danger of being extinguished. There was this desperate hysteria about it. As a child, I wanted to go to Lithuania much more than I wanted to go to Disneyland, and I got very worried when my mother told me my Lithuanian was getting lazy or poor, as I'd fail in my mission of keeping the language and culture from dying out.

There was also a strange tension between a sense of inferiority but also snobbery. I'm actually working on a book about this very question right now. Obviously, you feel inferior when hardly anyone knows your culture exists. At the same time, I was taught a brand of snobbery, and no little amount of racism; we weren't "common Americans" but had a history of 1000 years. We didn't trundle over on a steam ship looking for work, and some of us spoke English better than the Americans working in

> the gas station. I had to remember, no matter what, that I was not truly American. My family understood what black bread was, knew how to eat properly, knew how to sing. All of these things separated us and, oddly, were the cause of our inferiority complex all at once.[61]

The least conflicted was Ellen Cassady:

> The Jewish side of my family did not have a strong connection to Lithuania per se. It was more described as "the Old Country." We would not describe ourselves as "Lithuanian." We might say "Jewish from Lithuania."[62]

Writing About Lithuanian Themes

Why these writers have chosen to write predominantly about Lithuanian themes seems self-evident. Daiva Markelis commented: "Writers don't really choose their themes consciously. They write about what matters to them, and since being Lithuanian mattered to me, that's what I wrote about." [63]

Irena Guilford reflected on how her conflict between her home life and outside life shaped her as a writer:

> My mother said that when I started school, I knew no English. My father said that I had already picked it up on the street. Personally, I can't remember. What I do remember is that I thought in Lithuanian until I was nineteen, which is when I left home and started university. After that, I thought in English. When I am stuck for a word, Lithuanian often comes first. When I talk in my sleep, it's in Lithuanian. And when I am tired, my grammatical syntax reverts to Lithuanian. The language is beautiful. My facility has eroded over time but I don't believe I'll ever lose it. Nor would I allow that to happen.

[61] Žukauskas, Gintaras Aras (Gint Aras). Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 29, 2017.

[62] Cassady, Ellen. Interviewed by Laima Vince. February 1, 2017.

[63] Markelis, Daiva. Interviewed by Laima Vince. January 1, 2017.

> Being Lithuanian was the most important thing in life. I remember talking to neighborhood kids about it and getting some pretty weird looks. They would pull away. I quickly learned that life in my household was very different from life in their households. I learned to keep it to myself.
>
> This pattern of privacy has persisted throughout my life so I can't tell if the indifference around me lessened as the years passed. Later in life, at dinner parties, if conversation turned to such subjects, my friends were interested. But I was always guarded and wary, careful about what I said, and how much. When I started writing about it, interest increased. And I became more open.[64]

Antanas Šileika, contemporary of Irene Guilford, has written almost exclusively about Lithuanian themes. He says: "Lithuania in the last century was the site of dramatic events played out on a small stage. Virtually all of my books have Lithuanian settings or themes."[65]

With so many themes to write about, Šileika claims that it is the moral decisions that Lithunaians have had to make that draw him in the most:

> Because the language gives me access to a place which is remote enough to be distant from my everyday experience, but close enough to be comprehensible and in focus. It is a dramatic place where the choices people had to make were far more complicated than armchair moralists in North America ever imagine. In a way, I was born into exile from Lithuania, and exile has proven useful to some writers.[66]

However, when Lithuanian American/Canadian writers compete in the North American publishing market with hundreds of others ethnicities that make up the American experience, their work is often overlooked. Birutė Putrius started her own publishing house to publish her novels after numerous rejections. Gint Aras self-published his two novels on Lithuanian themes.

64 Guilford, Irene. Interviewed by Laima Vince. March 8, 2017.

65 Šileika, Antanas. Interviewed by Laima Vince. December 30, 2016.

66 Ibid.

On Publishing

When writing about the Lithuanian émigré community, these writers risk exposing themselves to the displeasure of the community, while at the same time presenting to North American readers a culture so small and seemingly insignificant that it narrows their opportunities to publish with commercial publishers. Even Rūta Šepetys admitted that her book had a hard time getting published.

> I think every major U.S. publisher passed on *Between Shades of Gray*. They thought historical fiction was a hard sell and that Lithuania was too obscure a country to market successfully. Even a Lithuanian editor at a major publisher rejected the novel. She wrote a letter explaining that she did want/like the book because of the main character. Now she says that she was forced by her boss to reject the book.[67]

When asked about his publishing record, James Joseph Brown commented in an interview:

> I've found that my work written about Russia tends to get picked up without much fuss while the Lithuanian work gets nice feedback but rarely gets published. I can't say that this is a definitive factor, but I have noticed it as a trend in my own work.[68]

Antanas Šileika, who has published his books in Canada, where government grants and a smaller population makes it easier for writers to publish, takes a more optimistic position. In an interview he said: "Reasons for rejections are rarely explicit – however, I always work on the principle that editors and readers will know little of Lithuania and care less, so my job is to spur their interest."[69]

Why have these writers not taken an easier route and written about American and Canadian topics? Jocelyn Bartkevičius, an

[67] Šepetys, Rūta. Interviewed by Laima Vince. March 9, 2017.
[68] Brown, "Stebuklas," 2016.
[69] Šileika, Antanas. Interviewed by Laima Vince. December 30, 2016.

American writer of mixed Lithuanian and Irish background, made this observation in an interview:

> <…> I do think that within the commercial publishing world there is a blindness to a preference for white WASP male writers of the upper classes. Where inroads have been made for more diversity, there is a very limited idea of what makes a writer or topic "diverse." The commercial publishers also think that writing that is about lives other than upper class New Yorkers and New Englanders will have a limited audience. They are blinded by their own concerns. So, writing from or about a small country that is perceived as European is pushed aside.[70]

When asked why Lithuanian work may be rejected by publishers, Ellen Cassady responded:

> Lithuania is small. Not in the news. Seems "ethnic," but not in a contemporary, hip way. Maybe the reputation of Lithuania as a vast killing field full of Nazis?? The right-wing nature of the Lithuanian-American community?[71]

Publishing for these writers remains problematic. Gone are the Lithuanian-American presses of the postwar and Cold War eras that made Lithuanian-American literary life possible. These writers today rely on acceptance by mainstream American publishers. They all face challenges reconciling their Lithuanian stories with an American readership.

Where Two Worlds Clash

Almost all the writers interviewed described the acute culture shock they experienced when they first visited Lithuania. This is when the idealized version of Lithuania they had grown up with in their communities clashed with the reality that they found when they finally reached the homeland. Gint Aras vividly describes his encounter with Lithuania as a young adult:

[70] Bartkevičius, Jocelyn. Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 23, 2017.
[71] Cassady, Ellen. Interviewed by Laima Vince. February 1, 2017.

> My first trip to Lithuania in 1992 occurred with this dance troupe. We prepared for over a year, practicing dances, believing we were to display some ultimate expression of Lithuanian-ness, that our dances should work to achieve a culmination. It took me about a day to figure out, having landed in Vilnius in the middle of summer, that hardly anybody in the Lithuanian capital gave a shit about Lithuanian folk dancing. Especially the youth, people my age, had absolutely no interest and were shocked that I found any of it noteworthy, that I had my own Lithuanian national costume. How was it possible for my elders not to know this? Were they ignorant or actively trying to deceive? It occurred to me: *they* didn't dance folk dances when they were my age.[72]

Milda De Voe had an experience similar to Gint Aras when she first visited Lithuania. She commented: "I was told to learn the culture in order to preserve Lithuanian culture. Under the Soviets it would be annihilated. I felt irrelevant when I went to Lithuania and saw how well they had preserved the culture."[73]

In her novel, *The Embrace*, Lithuanian-Canadian writer, Irene Guilford expresses the pain of lost years that could never be brought back.

> <…> I think of my broken, divided family. In a basement apartment, behind me, is Daiva. In Lithuania, in a house in a flat muddy field, are her husband and son. Scattered throughout the countryside are Jurgis, his wife and two children, plus my five other cousins and their families. In an apartment overlooking the Baltic Sea, Pranas sits, half blind behind his thick glasses.
>
> In his house by the lake, my father stands looking out at the water, hands behind his back, my mother silent beside him.
>
> Fools, I chastise myself. What fools we have been, trying to bridge forty years of silence with two visits. We are two separate spheres of existence, tied by letters, photos and stories, history and blood. It will take something other than suitcases crammed with summer dresses to overcome the teachings of Saturday

[72] Žukauskas, Gintaras Aras (Gint Aras). Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 29, 2017.

[73] DeVoe, Milda. Interviewed by Laima Vince. November 20, 2016.

> school primers, the letters not answered, the sweaters not sent. It will take the generation after ours.[74]

Just as there seems to be no solution to mending families divided by the war, there also seems to be no solution to mending divided identities. Yet, these writers keep trying to do just that in their work. These Lithuanian-American/Canadian writers express pride in their Lithuanian identity, and in having survived. The result is a growing body of work that narrates the story of Lithuania's twentieth century history and experience in the diaspora. James Joseph Brown summed up his experience well when he joked: "With my name, no one would know I'm Lithuanian unless I tell them. Maybe I just like to show off, because I'm proud that I survived growing up in a Lithuanian family."[75]

Concluding Thoughts

A question for further research would be: How do Lithuanians view Lithuanian-America/Canadian writers? Do they claim them as their own? Or do they remain outsiders hovering in that no-man's land between identities, not fully accepted in the countries of their birth nor in their parents' and grandparents' homeland?

A few writers offered their thoughts on how they have come to terms in their own lives with balancing dual, often conflicting, identities. They shared how they strive to raise their own children not to live with a divided self. Gint Aras wrote:

> Today the the whole thing is different. My wife is Ukrainian and speaks five languages, has chosen to teach our children Russian. I teach my children to speak Lithuanian, and I take them to Lithuania every year. They have friends there, as do I, but I am not fighting any great fight by linking them to this culture, nor am I teaching them that they "are Lithuanian" versus some other thing. We're people with roots to a variety of places in the world, and that makes it interesting to live, but we're no better than anyone

74 Guilford, *The Embrace*, 1999.

75 Brown, James Joseph. Interviewed by Laima Vince. November 1, 2016.

else. That's what I'm trying to instill in them, to be global citizens and to see languages as means to connect, not separate.[76]

Milda DeVoe, who studied together with Gint Aras at Columbia University, shared how she is raising her children to accept their identity as Americans with Lithuanian heritage:

> Now I am married to a non-Lithuanian (he is fifteenth generation New Yorker) and have two non-Lithuanian-speaking children. We send them to a Heritage summer camp for some exposure to the culture. I do feel that, despite the fact that I am fluent in the language and try to attend at least some of the available cultural events, that I have failed as a Lithuanian. I have always felt excluded by Lithuania (in their eyes I am, naturally, an American) and I also felt excluded by Americans (most of them needed to be taught where the country was and that it wasn't Russia). I have felt most at home with other children of refugees—both Lithuanian and non. Particularly with expatriates of any country, here or abroad.[77]

I would like to close with some thoughts from Rūta Šepetys. There is no simple solution to this complex question of identity, and yet Šepetys's words offer some hope:

> What I would like to add is that I often tell people that writing historical fiction with Lithuanian themes has taught me that progress is possible. Some people are drawn to writing because they're introverts. But I realized that through sharing history and story it helps family and communities, function better. I've seen in the programs for *Between Shades of Gray* people from families on the opposite side of the fence come together and are able to discuss the history. Through literature we can be reunited through story and remembrance. I think all Lithuanian-American writers can be reunited through this experience. That really inspires me. We have an opportunity.Through fiction and the discussion of literature, people can find a safe place to talk about painful histories and see each others' perspective.[78]

[76] Žukauskas, Gintaras Aras (Gint Aras). Interviewed by Laima Vince. May 29, 2017.

[77] DeVoe, Milda. Interviewed by Laima Vince. November 20, 2016.

[78] Šepetys, Rūta. Interviewed by Laima Vince. March 9, 2017.

One thing is for certain, the growing number of writers of Lithuanian descent writing in English about their Lithuanian heritage, and publishing with mainstream American and Canadian publishers, is growing. Their voices are becoming strong enough to be heard. And it is a united voice that proudly presents a common experience that is both challenging and enlightening.

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Stories of the Soviet Era

Gražina Pranauskas
Soviet Fairytales
Melbourne: Arcadia, 2019
xx + 175 pages
ISBN: 978-1-925801-97-2

> The fairytale of nine hundred million Soviet citizens building a classless society lifted into the sky like the spray from the crashing waves, dissolving in the thickening mist. (171)

Drawing on her firsthand experience of what it meant to live behind the Iron Curtain, the Australian Lithuanian writer Gražina Pranauskas very vividly and powerfully portrays the lives of ordinary Lithuanians struggling under communism in her new book, a collection of short stories called *Soviet Fairytales*. The publication of the book could not have been more timely, arriving at the time Lithuania and other Baltic states mark the 30th anniversary of the Baltic Way, the historic day when around

2 million citizens across the three Baltic nations formed a human chain to express their desire to be independent from the Soviet Union and to condemn the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the infamous agreement between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union which led to the Second World War and the occupation of Lithuania and other Easter European countries. With two simple words, "Soviet" and "fairytale", the author once more debunks the mythos of Soviet communism, setting the tone for her stories. The book calls out the fictitious nature of the 'socialist paradise', an idea that, surprisingly, still has some currency, especially from the fact that the atrocious acts of the Soviet regime are still not viewed on the same level as the crimes of Nazi Germany. In this context, the word 'fairytale' does not refer to sugar-coated stories written for children, but rather to the unabridged version of Grimms' fairytales full of hardships and lurking dangers.

Soviet Fairytales feels like an especially personal and emotional book, having arisen from the very depths of the author. Pranauskas describes the book as a collection of fictional stories "fed by autobiographical memories and imagination" (viii). It is not by chance that Australia becomes such a prominent presence in many of the stories, either directly or not, and one cannot help but wonder how much of the author's life is ingrained in these episodes. She is not afraid to lay bare the innermost workings of her psyche in the stories. For her, the act of having completed the collection becomes therapeutic, perhaps even cathartic, a way of working through her unresolved past: "To deal with unsettled memories, drifting in and out my consciousness, in 2016 I began writing a sequence of stories named *Soviet Fairytales*" (viii). This is very much felt in the pages of the book, as if they emit energy, a life of their own, difficult to capture in words.

The stories will provide different aspects and experiences for its presumably diverse readers. For younger Lithuanian readers that were lucky enough not to experience the 'fairytale' that was the Soviet Union, the book will hopefully help increase their appreciation of such historic events as the Baltic Way as well as the struggles of their parents and grandparents. For older read-

ers, the book will serve as a reminder of a not-so-distant past, and they will probably be able to identify with the feelings and experiences of the not-so-fictional characters of the stories. For readers coming from a different cultural background, from countries that were beyond the Iron Curtain, the book will be a bit of both in the sense that they will be acutely exposed to the struggles of their European counterparts and will hopefully be able to empathize with the universal aspirations of human beings striving for freedom.

The lives of various characters encountered in the fourteen stories that make up the collection represent a wide picture of the society at large, from teachers, artists and librarians to nurses, doctors, and even a forger, among others. The incidents of their daily lives combine into a "colorful mosaic of individual thoughts, feelings and aspirations" (ix), suggestive of the collective struggle of the entire nation under the yoke of communism. Even the seemingly apolitical stories *Love-grass Rings* and *Back to Herself*, the first two stories in the collection, showcase the oppressiveness and hopelessness of living in a Soviet fairytale. The former features the lives of two young people, Romas and Loreta, and the way their relationship progresses, for better or worse, against the background of Romas' seamanship, uncannily evocative of the collective state of the nation:

> *When I was at sea, loneliness saturated my body and pierced through my bones, making me cold and hopeless. During such moments, my only wish was to have you, to live with you on shore, and to regain my sense of permanency. There is no permanency at sea. The presence of gushing water, splashing and spraying all over is frightful. I thought I was going mad, especially when I saw Rimgaudas' body buried at sea.* (6)

Romas' vivid characterizations of life at sea, namely the feelings of hopelessness and the desire for something permanent, anticipate and become significant leitmotifs in the rest of the stories.

Another memorable and powerful story, called *The Forger*, and its protagonist Valdas, reflect the inner mood of the Soviet citizens, characterized by feelings of ambivalence towards their living conditions:

> *He caught himself leading a life both on the surface and beneath. In his surface life, he projected confidence <…>. In his other life it felt as if he was trapped in the body of a slippery eel hiding in stagnant waters.* (30)

On the one hand, it becomes imperative for the subjugated citizens to project or feign confidence in the Soviet institutions, as if the system were working, otherwise serious repercussions would be in order like in the case of *Prince Charming*, another story that shows what might happen to two young people who disregard or digress from the "socialist ideals". On the other hand, the people are acutely aware of the absurdity and the dysfunctionality of the regime, yet they are forced to live this double life of a "slippery eel". In *Christmas Eve with Friends*, one of the most cheerful and heart-warming stories in the collection, people try to cope with the ambivalent situation they find themselves in, expressing their frustration and criticism and voicing their true repressed feelings in the form of joke-telling (but even then they are paranoid that someone might be listening), as well as partaking of the generally subversive act of celebrating Christmas under a regime that imposes atheism:

> *After a couple of drinks, everybody became more talkative, Ignas getting into the spirit of telling jokes. Jokes about Soviet Union leaders were well received. We heard how one day Nikita Khrushchev was greeted by the morning sun with "Good morning, Comrade Khrushchev!" When the evening approached and the sun didn't say anything, he asked "Sun, why did you not greet me in the evening?" The Sun replied: "Ha, I'm in the West now and you cannot reach me!"* (43)

Soviet Fairytales also addresses the question of sex, venereal diseases, homosexuality, and disability, phenomena that were considered not only taboo in the Soviet era, but also non-existent, at least according to the official authorities. *Slip Up*, for example, explores the issue of venereal diseases and the effect they might have on the individual and the society at large. How will Vytas' life change after he acquires gonorrhea? The question of homosexuality is also one of the recurrent topics in at least several of the stories, especially prominent in the already mentioned *Prince Charming*. As one might imagine, it does not end well for the

comrades that partake of the practices considered to be in disjunction with the "conventional" ethical norms. The previously mentioned story, *Christmas Eve with Friends,* also briefly addresses the peripheral position of people with disabilities in the "workers' paradise": "Over here we're supposed to believe Soviet citizens are so strong. Why don't we ever see disabled people? They must exist!" (44).

And yet, paradoxically, despite showcasing dark themes and social issues, the book is far from depressing. All the stories bear at least an inkling of hope, one simply has to find it. Most importantly, Lithuanians do see the day the Soviet regime crumbles and independence is restored. The book ends with a very positive note which is the story called *Dreaming of Sweden.* It portrays how feelings of hopelessness and despair are substituted by growing solidarity, love for one's homeland, and the determination to maintain independence against all the odds:

> *Gitana watched people standing in front of the tanks defending themselves with their bare hands, singing patriotic songs. She sang along, her heart beating to the meaningful words Lietuva brangi, mano tėvynė – my dear Lithuanian homeland.* (171)

Finally, Gražina Pranauskas' *Soviet Fairytales* becomes quite an emotional and psychological experience, and the characters of her stories remain in your mind a long time after the last page of the book is closed. For someone belonging to my generation and me personally, the reading of this book could only be described as nostalgia towards something that did not exist in the first place, something known only from the stories of grandparents and parents, the time of their youth, a gone-by era that has to be remembered, however traumatic it might have been – and surely was. Repressing it or trying to remove it does not make it go away. It is the past that we Lithuanians endured, and thus have to be able to live with it and learn from it so it will never repeat itself.

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ABSTRACTS

VYGANTAS VAREIKIS

Dissemination of Propaganda and Image-Building in Lithuania in 1915–1940

This article examines the forms of propaganda that were utilised in Lithuania during and after World War I, and how and in what shape purposeful dissemination of propaganda took place on potential enemies in case of war and how the enemy's image (Poland, which was in conflict with Lithuania during the interwar over the Vilnius Region, and Germany, which contested the matter of Klaipėda Region) was built.

ŽYDRONĖ KOLEVINSKIENĖ

The Lithuanian Writers' Association in America as a Memory Institution of the Lithuanian Diaspora

The subject of this report is the activities of Lithuanian Writers' Association (LWA) in America in 1950–1990. The Lithuanian Writers' Association (LWA), established at the Faculty of Humanities of the Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania, on February 21, 1932, is the first independent organization uniting Lithuanian writers, translators, literary researchers, and critics. Active in Lithuania until 1944, the organization was restored in Tübingen, Germany, in 1946 by Lithuanian WWII refugee writers who fled their homeland, escaping the second Soviet occupation, and was renamed the Lithuanian Refugee Authors' Society. From 1950 until the present, the Association remains active in the United States of America.

Lithuanian Writers' Association activities previously have not been studied more widely, neither in Lithuania nor in exile. Only the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania prepared an exhibition "The Lithuanian Writers' Association: Seven Decades of History" on 2017. The exhibition shows the history of the LWA through a wide variety of documents stored at the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center in Chicago, such as letters, minutes of meetings, announcements, bulletins, and other documents related to the Association's day-to-day business, as well as photos and audio clips. This is the first visual presentation of the Society from the Restoration of Lithuania's Independence.

It is noted in the report that the Association had the uniting function for Lithuanian Writers living in the United States, and in Canada, Great Britain, Australia too. It sought to promote Lithuanian literature and culture, and maintained contacts with other countries' writers' associations. LWA's prerogative was the publication of its members' books and collected writings, giving the recommendations and the award for the best book in the year. The activities of the Association were very important for Baltic diaspora communities in America. Documents show co-operation with Latvian and Estonian writers in different countries. The primary source of this report is the Lithuanian Writers' Association's archival fund, stored in the World Lithuanians Archives of Center for Lithuanian Research and Studies in Chicago, USA.

JOLANTA BUDRIŪNIENĖ

Expressing Lithuanian Identity in Diaspora's Academic Press: Lithuanian Quarterly Journal *Lituanus*

The author of the article overviews the development of *Lituanus* – a journal that was founded by a group of Lithuanian students and young academics in the USA back in 1954. She discusses the journal's role in promoting identity issues among the Lithuanian diaspora in America and other Western countries,

and the types of national identity the authors of this journal discussed. Its role in analyzing the identity changes in Lithuania occupied by the Soviets is also brought into focus.

LAIMA VINCĖ

The Question of Identity:
Lithuanian-American/Canadian Writers

The article discusses how issues of identity were and are approached by several generations of exile and expatriate Lithuanian writers. Basing her insights on extensive review of literature as well as interviews with contemporary American and Canadian Lithuanian writers, the author provides an overview of identity construction strategies, and emphasizes differences between several generations.

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Bird-shelter, Yeonmisan Nature Art Park, South Korea. Sculptor: Arvydas Ališanka, 2018

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

FRONT COVER: The headquarters of Swedbank in Vilnius. Architect Audrius Ambrasas
Photo by Almantas Samalavičius