FOCUS V

THE STABILITY AND CHANGEABILITY OF NATIONAL (STEREO)TYPES

THE IMAGE OF UNCIVILIZED LITHUANIA IN THE CORRESPONDENCE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE HOLY SEE

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After the restoration of Lithuanian independence in 1918 there were major changes in the rule of law. New changes were also brought in for the Catholic Church in the country, including the possibility to restore religious life and new prospects for action. One of the most important partners in this field was the Holy See, with which Lithuania established formal relations after the Vatican *de jure* recognized its independence in 1922, the same year that Pope Pius XI (Achille Ratti) was elected. The Pope was quite familiar with Lithuania and its social, political, and geographical life. In 1918, he served as Apostolic Visitor to Poland and Lithuania, and in 1919 as Nuncio for Poland. He visited Lithuania on a long trip at the beginning of 1920.

The documents revealing Lithuania and the Holy See's diplomatic relations during the independence period of 1918–40 were not available to researchers until 2007. Only on June 30, 2006, did Pope Benedict XVI issue a decree declassifying Pope Pius XI pontificate's (1922–39) documents housed at the Secret Vatican Archive (Archivio Segreto Vaticano[1]). In 2010,

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[1] The current name, the "Archivio Segreto Vaticano," has been documented from the mid-seventeenth century, when, like today, it was given to the Pope's private (*secretum*) archives, over which he exercised supreme and sole jurisdiction. The documentary heritage housed in its vast storerooms spans about twelve centuries (the eight to the twentieth). It consists of over six hundred archival funds and is stored on over eighty-five linear kilometres of shelving, some of which is in the Bunker, a two-story underground vault below the Cortile della Pigna of the Vatican Museums. After Pope Leo XIII opened the doors of the Archivio Segreto Vaticano to scholars back in 1881, it has become one of the most famous history research centres in the world. In accordance with a practice established in 1924, the Pope grants free access to the documents "grouped into pontificates" currently running up to the end of the papacy of Pope Pius XI (February 1939). Nevertheless, Paul VI departed from this practice and granted scholars access to

Lithuania and the Holy See (1922–1938): The Vatican's Secret Archives Documents, being the correspondence exchanged in 1922–38 between the diplomatic corps of the Holy See at the Vatican Apostolic Nunciature in Lithuania and the Holy See, was translated into Lithuanian and published as a separate book. Its editor, Arūnas Streikus, notes that the vast majority of Lithuanian documents of the Pius XI era are held in two collections of the Vatican Secret Archives: the archive of the Vatican Apostolic Nunciature in Lithuania and the archive of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs (*S. Congregazione degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari*) (Streikus 2010, 20).

The Vatican Apostolic Nunciature in Lithuania with its permanent residency in Kaunas was founded in 1922 (Kasparavičius 2008, 113–15). Archbishop Antonino Zecchini (1864–1935) was the first diplomat of the Holy See appointed to Lithuania. However, he "could not find a common language with Lithuanian political and ecclesiastical authorities of the time, so very soon he assigned his secretary to attend to Lithuanian affairs, turning his gaze to Latvian and Estonian Catholic matters" (Streikus 2010, 23). After Zecchini moved to Riga, his duties were performed for a while by Luigi Faidutti (1861–1931). The internuncio Lorenco Scioppa, appointed to Lithuania in 1926, also could not relate to the local secular and spiritual power, and in 1928 was replaced by Nuncio Riccardo Bartoloni. Starting in 1932, nuncio monsignor Antonio Arata resided in Kaunas.

The genre of correspondence by the representatives of the Holy See cannot be strictly defined as letters because the authors of those writings, as is the nature of the diplomatic sphere, call them reports, telegrams, and encrypted communications. The correspondence reveals a broad picture of Lithuanian religious life, covering the education system, relations with the secular government, and political, cultural, and spiritual details. The documents, often marked as secret, show that the representatives of the Holy See were sceptical about religious life in Lithuania. They saw the stubbornness of Lithuania's ruling authoritarian nationalist regime and even the legacy of Russian oppression in its management style. On the other hand, especially during the second decade of the first republic, the documents point to a conflict between the more modern worldview and

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the *Archives of the Second Vatican Council* (1962–5) after the council came to a close in 1965; Pope John Paul II granted access to the fund *Ufficio Informazioni Vaticano, Prigionieri di Guerra* (Prisoners of War) (1939–47); lastly, the funds *Commissione Centrale per l'Arte Sacra in Italia* (1924–89) and *Censimento degli Archivi Ecclesiastici d'Italia* (1942) have been made accessible to scholars (http://asv.vatican.va/content/archiviosegretovaticano/it/l_archivio.html).

interpretation of cultural and religious life of young Lithuanian Catholics and the conservative and old-fashioned views of the representatives of the Holy See.

This article highlights the reasons why Lithuania's image, reflected in the diplomatic documents of the Holy See, has more to do with a mental and imaginative component than an attempt to provide an objective verbal form to the politically complicated first years of independence and the people of the time. A hypothesis is made that the representation was affected by preconceived personal sympathies and attitudes. On the other hand, the religious, political, and cultural reality of Lithuania referred to in secret documents raises another hypothesis about the Holy See's desire to recreate the Other's identity and modify it according to its own understanding of religious life. Modification and recreation are related to strict control mechanisms and the persistent and methodical pursuit of one's goals. The collection *Lithuania and the Holy See (1922–1938): The Vatican's Secret Archives Documents* provides a fine opportunity, using imagological methodology, to demonstrate the preconceived imaginative Vatican attitudes that led to the formation of the image of uncivilized, pretentious, and provincial Lithuania.

The Image in Imagology

Imagology, which is based on the analysis of literary images and which emerged in the second half of the twentieth century, received its first systematic and theoretical validity from Marius-François Guyard. In his work, *La littérature comparée*, published in 1951, the French scholar in comparative studies projects a very promising future for imagology: "by developing in this direction, comparative studies will yield a valuable contribution to the history of literature" (in Proietti 2008, 22). According to the Italian imagologist Paolo Proietti, today Guyard's "un changement de perspective," associated with imagology and the renewal of comparative studies, has become a reality, unfolding in various studies of images (Proietti 2008, 22). These studies, increasingly becoming interdisciplinary, provide more and more comparative perspectives, such as postcolonial criticism, travel and immigrant literature, and the reception of literature.

Verbal image, which constitutes the research object for imagology in literature, is by its very nature polysemantic and hybrid, referring to the encounter of many realities. The visual concept is based on complex relationships being formed between the subject and abstract mental and sensory forms: "From the analytical point of view, the image goes after the

object, it follows it; [first] we see, then imagine. The image would follow the object" (Blanchot 1975, 223).

The two domains of the concept of *imagology* are indicated by its etymological link with two Greek words: *eikon*, which in turn is related to *eikos* and means "likeness," "iconic," and *eidolon*, etymologically related to the word *eidos*, i.e. "form," "simulacrum," meaning "idea," "vision," which in Latin became *video*, originating from the word *eidon*, meaning "to see." By combining the meanings of these two domains, it can be said that:

> on the one hand, an image is an *icon*, i.e. a physical representation which implies the similarity with the denoted subject and reproduces the same characteristics of the object; on the other hand, it is an *idolo*, i.e. an image, perceived with one's eyes and mind, approximating the conception of the Platonic idea. (Proietti 2008, 40)

Thus, an image includes two domains: the real one, related to senses, and the other, more abstract one. The idea that the concept of image combines both perceptively perceived image and its idea can be found in Jean-Jacques Wunenburger's *Philosophie des images*:

> Conventionally, an image can be a specific and sensible copy of a material (a stool) or conceptual (an abstract number) or an object (a model of reference), which from a perceptive viewpoint, exists or does not exist; and which maintains a certain relationship with its referent and therefore can be recognized in all its effects and identified by a thought. In this way, an image is clearly separated from the real thing in itself, considered to be outside sensible representations, as well as conceptual representations: forms that at first glance do not have any similarity or connection with the thing, whose content is different from being felt intuitively. (Wunenburger 1997, 5)

According to Wunenburger, the visual semantic range stretches between the form idea, which implies vision (in Latin *imago* means "form," "figure," "body"), and the idea of unreal and fictitious content, as of a product of something that is not there (from the Greek *eidolon*). In this way:

> an image is not so much the emanation of objective reality as, as it is in Plato's case, a product of *eidolopoietike*, similar to the Latin *fictio*, referring to the imagination, to *phantastikon* that generates *phantasmata*, things which, compared with the reality, only appear. (Wunenburger 1999. 11)

Thus, when it comes to the image as imagology's basic object, it must be borne in mind that it is not related to the actual image, but to an image that is the interpretation and representation of reality. Therefore, the image is associated with the subject, who first sees something and thinks about it, and only then processes it according to his or her preferences.

Two existing categories of an image—individual and collective—are affected by certain external things, which become images only when passed through the group or individual's consciousness, emotions, and attitudes. In addition, memory and self-identity are present in the formation of images, showing how "I" perceives itself in a particular social, political, or cultural context. Therefore, an image has a complex structure that can be perceived as the space where various contents coexist: external, referring to the cultural, social, or ideological situation, and internal, subjective, or collective.

However, although related to different areas, these contents are linked. Proietti notes that they are related by experience, situation, or historical time. Specifically, this particular distinction is crucial for an image not to lose its relevance and keep renewing itself (Proietti 2008, 45). The dynamics or internal energy, which provides relevance and polysemantic characteristics to an image, clearly separates it from a stereotype or cliché, "which is always static" and its "structure is always monosemic." Therefore, a stereotype or cliché always transmits the same message, regardless of the external context (Proietti 2008, 48).

In this way, an image is never neutral. Its ability to communicate certain information and values is always related to objective or subjective, intellectual or sensual filters that lead to a deviation from reality. According to Proietti, the stereotypes about another culture can thrive only in this particular space open to distortions (Proietti 2008, 54).

Based on correspondence from the first decade of Lithuania's independence, this article aims to highlight how preconceived attitudes of representatives of the Holy See and their unwillingness to understand the specifics of Lithuanian-Polish relations influenced the formation of the image of the stubborn and savage Lithuanian. In subsequent years, with the arrival of new representatives of the Holy See, the image of the Lithuanian slightly changed. However, the Vatican's imaginative and preconceived views, and its pragmatic goals to create exceptional conditions for the Church to act, gave priority to the ideological or imaginative dimension of the image, which in turn allowed the same stereotyped image of the stubborn and uncivilized Lithuanian to be generated.

Preconceived Attitudes and Lithuania's Cultural Image in the Correspondence of Representatives of the Holy See

In the book *Lithuania and the Holy See (1922–1938): The Vatican's Secret Archives Documents*, the diplomatic nature and certain formulas of the representatives' reports and other correspondence speak of clear hierarchical relationships, as well as the writer's limited autonomy and weak decision-making power:

> Meanwhile, there is nothing left to me except to bend down and kiss the Sacred Purple, reaffirming great respect for His Eminence. The most humble, the most grateful, and obedient servant. (*Lietuva* 2010: 97)

> However, before promising the obligatory obedience … (199)

> Bending to kiss the Sacred Purple I express the deepest devotion of a son. (173)

> And in the meantime, I am to wait for high instructions from Your Eminence. (518)

The first letter in the collection, dated October 31, 1921, belongs to the Jesuit General, Wlodzimierz Ledóchowski. His letter, addressed to the Secretary of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, consists of suggestions regarding a candidate for Visitor to the Baltic countries. It shows that, at the time, the Vatican's spiritual leaders did not have a very clear image of Lithuania; the country was regarded as a former Tsarist Russian province necessitating further investigation. The letter also betrays the Vatican's far-reaching intentions, using Lithuania to penetrate Russia:

> you have asked me to suggest someone of our own for Visitor to Lithuania and the Baltic countries to serve as a rapporteur, who could cautiously foresee how to pave the way to Russia. In the morning of the same day, I was thinking how we could penetrate the muscovite republic, and … send a man from the Brotherhood to the ancient Baltic provinces to explore those areas. (37)

However, in Ledóchowski's letter, the goal of investigating Lithuania is associated with certain requirements for candidates, paying special attention to good health and strong physique. This raises a hypothesis about the existence of a preconceived image of the Baltic provinces. The requirement to have a strong physique becomes decisive when choosing a

candidate; for example, the Belgian Provincial, Father Ferdinand Willaert, is "a truly very prominent person but of such poor health that I think it would be dangerous at this time of year to send him to the country, which is very cold and where the means of transportation are slow and poor. Such trips require a very robust man" (38).

Such a preconceived attitude about Lithuania as a country of cold climate and little civilization determines that Antonino Zecchini becomes the main candidate, despite his serious flaw: "he has never been interested in the issues important or exciting to the people of those lands" (38). When Zecchini is appointed Visitor, Cardinal Pietro Gaspari, the Secretary of State of the Holy See, sends him a detailed ten-point instruction on how to perform "a subtle work" in the Baltic countries, with clearly outlined activities and limits for the future Visitor. In it, a profile of the hetero-image and verbal representation of another country produced by the Vatican starts to emerge. It accommodates two approaches: an alien culture is inferior; however, its uniqueness is also important. The French scholar Daniel-Henri Pageaux came up with a classification of different approaches towards another culture. In the case of this article, two relationships are very important. A phobic relationship when the observed culture is seen as inferior to the observing country's culture, and philia which allows one to see the uniqueness of the foreign culture (Pageaux 1994, 71–3).

> A six month Visitor's mission is essentially provisory; its purpose is to inform the Holy See about the true state of the Church in the Baltic countries and Lithuania. So the Visitor will not have to take action himself, only to inform the Holy See and each time wait for instructions from those who are entitled to make them. However, in an emergency, he is given wide powers … The Visitor will try to get closer to clergy … He will have to help them to realize that his mission is by no means political but purely religious; therefore, he must stay away from national affairs and carefully try not to express a judgment about one or another issue. But he has to present his assessments to the Holy See. In a word, he must be more of a missionary than a diplomat … In any case, one has to remember and know whom we are dealing with. (*Lietuva* 2010, 39–40)

After three years in Lithuania, Archbishop Zecchini is forced to leave the country because of his openly expressed Polish leanings, which provoked conflicts with the Lithuanian clergy and politicians.[2] But his first

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[2] The history of Lithuanian-Polish relations is very long and complicated. After the signing of the Union of Lublin in 1569, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was founded. The period after the Union of Lublin was marked by the Polonization of

long and detailed report, written in the summer of 1922, quite objectively identifies the complicated national and political situation in Lithuania, showing his own ethic priorities, which will eventually start to dominate and overshadow the self-image of a Lithuanian. Such disregard of national identity highlights the first signs of tension between the self-image and the hetero-image:

> Here, the people are very good Catholics and, if not for the hatred incited by the Lithuanians towards the Poles and vice versa, everybody could live in peace. But often in a speech, one tries to incite the hostility of one nation to another, and now they are full of such nationalism. But when the hatred is not incited, people are calm … It makes no sense to try to understand how many people of different nationalities live [here], since each nation shifts the [real] number of another nation. But it cannot be denied that there are a lot of Poles living in Lithuania—much fewer than the Poles have found, it is undeniable, but still more than the Lithuanians would prefer. The great misfortune is that during the declaration of independence of Lithuania, bishops allowed priests do what they wanted; and this continues to this day. While proclaiming the state of Lithuania, the priests believed to be authorized—except for rare and respectable exceptions—to immediately remove from the church everything that is not Lithuanian, as if all of a sudden everyone had become a Lithuanian … Therefore, the Poles, who

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the Lithuanian nobility. Although, it did not affect the country's small nobility, its overall impact on Lithuania was enormous. At the end of the eighteenth century, Lithuania looked like a Polish province. For example, with the most important people matters could be discussed only in Polish. In 1795, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth collapsed and Lithuania and parts of Poland became part of the Russian Empire. However, the unionist tradition and the priority for the Polish language remained until the end of the nineteenth century. In 1861, after Russia announced the abolition of serfdom, social transformation started to take place, which contributed to the formation of Lithuanian intellectuals. The intelligentsia initiated a national revival movement that later led to the signing of the Lithuanian Independence Act on February 16, 1918. On the other hand, the First World War was also very important to the declaration of Lithuania's independence, because it destroyed the Russian Empire and provided conditions for the Polish and Lithuanian countries to re-emerge on the political stage. There was no talk about the Polish-Lithuanian union; however, the new Republic of Poland had laid claim to the former lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Fighting with Poland began. Poland had established itself in western Belarus, western Ukraine, and eastern Lithuania, occupying the Lithuanian capital Vilnius and the entire region of Vilnius. It is therefore understandable that Archbishop Zecchini's openly expressed sympathy for the country that had annexed Lithuania's capital could not go unnoticed by Lithuanians.

live in ethnically mixed areas, where the Polish language was abolished, protest and turn to me with requests. (*Lietuva* 2010, 46)

Reporting on the situation of seminaries [3] in Lithuania, Zecchini regards an attempt to speak only Lithuanian as a negative thing. Therefore, it can be noted that the Lithuanian mental image was not formed from a neutral observer's position or one that would show an understanding of the uniqueness of another culture, but, to use Pageaux's idiosyncratic perspective, from a position where the approach influenced by the personal characteristics of the observer starts to dominate (Pageaux 1994, 73). Although imagology does not ask whether the image is right or wrong (Leerssen 2007, 28), in this case the documentary nature of the representatives' correspondence makes this question valid. Its legitimacy is confirmed by the historical-political context of the time, to which Zecchini paid no attention. He openly declares his sympathy for Polish culture and from this engaged position draws a negative image of the Lithuanian:

> Too bad that everything is Lithuanized in Kaunas Seminary now. And although a few school hours are assigned to the Polish language, no Polish cleric enters this Seminary; instead he goes to Vilnius or elsewhere. Thus, Polish priests will soon disappear in Lithuania. And since Lithuanians speak the language poorly, one will no longer be able to preach [in Polish], at most, will be able to hear only confession … On the other hand, one cannot even advise a Polish seminary student to go to Kaunas Seminary, because he would feel very uncomfortable there. I would not be surprised if he was forced to keep his mouth shut and speak no Polish, otherwise, he would be kept at a distance from the community and be considered like a leper … It is said that the rector writes a lot in Lithuanian and publishes erotic poetry, signing with a pseudonym; nevertheless, everybody knows who the author is. (*Lietuva* 2010, 47)

Zecchini's sympathy for Polish culture enables him to create images of Lithuanians which are entirely devoid of a Lithuanian identity component, or consider it irrelevant. The bishop, who resides in Lithuania, whose capital and its vicinities were occupied by Poland in 1920, is trying to defend the right of Poles to speak Polish. In such a political and cultural context, the archbishop's statements about the situation in Lithuania,

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[3] In 1918–40, four seminaries operated in Lithuania. The oldest seminary was in Vilnius, founded by the Jesuits in 1582. Kaunas seminary was established in 1864 after the transfer of the seminary from Varniai. Seminaries in Telšiai and Vilkaviškis were opened in 1926–7 after Pope Pius XI issued a bull "Lituanorum gente" on April 4, 1926, and thus founded the Lithuanian ecclesiastical province.

though sometimes accurate, show his reluctance to identify himself with the possibility open to Lithuanians to freely manifest their national identity. This way, in Zecchini's image of the Lithuanian, *eidolon*, the ideological dimension, and not *eicon*, the real, sensory-based dimension, starts to dominate:

> The trouble is that all these Lithuanians—both bishops and priests—whenever there is an opportunity to say who they are, first of all declare themselves to be Lithuanian priests and bishops and only then Catholic. So it is not surprising that all those who are not Lithuanians had lost all confidence in them and became their enemies. (*Lietuva* 2010, 66)

> It is therefore not surprising that Zecchini's first long report of 1922 can be summarized by a concern that "the fact is that Polishness is being suppressed using any means possible. Since Lithuania became independent, wherever it is possible, preaching is no longer in Polish." (61)

Other letters of Zecchini only confirm his preconceived negative and ideologically rooted views towards Lithuanians. Such images show a certain nervous frustration with Lithuanians, who behave differently from what he believes is acceptable: "In fact, everything here is very slow, and if there is no man who would encourage others, it seems that everybody and everything is asleep" (70); "The obsession of the native clergy to participate in politics with the pretext that allegedly only they have willing and educated people, looks disgusting to the majority of people" (68). And finally, in the report to the Holy See, describing the changes in Ernestas Galvanauskas' government, Zecchini writes that "quite a number of local priests would like me to leave Lithuania and move to Latvia" (69)

Thus, it comes as no surprise that, already living in Latvia, he compares the two countries to the detriment of Lithuania. Zecchini creates a generalized negative image of Lithuania, which, as Wunenburger notes, by obeying the power of *olopoietike* generates *phantasmata* (1999, 11). This once more only confirms that Lithuania's image was formed by siding with Polish culture rather than by keeping in mind the current political situation in Lithuania:

> Here [in Latvia] the government, though not Catholic, is much better than the so-called "Catholic" Lithuanian Government and certainly deserves praise … I have learnt that Lithuania's foreign minister, who was on an official visit to Latvia, in Riga, to be more precise, a few days ago, encouraged the Latvian Government to officially declare that Vilnius legally belongs to Lithuania and not Poland. But of course, to his own grief he did not reach the target … The clergy also works for the benefit of the

Church, which unfortunately, cannot be said about Lithuania, where much
of the work is done for nationalism rather than the Church. (105)

Being unable to understand each other and see the uniqueness of the
Other, Ledóchowski's observations made in his letter of April 17, 1925 to
the Secretary of the Holy See, Giuseppe Pizzardo, about Zecchini's
situation in Lithuania, are significant. They confirm that images are
subjective and determined by preconceived attitudes rather than the desire
to see the actual situation:

It is said that Monsignor, because of his strict character and lack of
diplomatic tact, has turned the entire country against himself, to such an
extent that his further presence in those countries would pose great harm to
the Church … but later, in a very short time, because of his *faux pas* and
not very polite behavior, I would say, an upright presumptuousness, which
has been proved by more than one written evidence, especially by his later
very pushy and not always reasoned observations about the country and its
population, he had lost the affection of almost all the social classes of
Lithuania. (92–3)

Ledóchowski's summarizing look into Zecchini's personality and his
activities lays bare the reasons why he was so annoyed with the Lithuanian
national dimension: "He was and still is known as a diplomatic spy who
favors Poland. In general, his arrival in Lithuania as a delegate was
received very negatively" (93).

In this respect, a very different relationship with Lithuanian culture can
be observed in Zecchini's secretary Luigi Faidutti's reports to the Holy
See. Being the sole delegate in Kaunas for some time, Faidutti had written
many reports to the Vatican about the situation in Lithuania. The tone of
his letters is much more moderate than Zecchini's, and his attitude towards
the Lithuanians, although depicting them as culturally inferior, lacks his
predecessor's frustration. Faidutti sees the Lithuanian as someone who
needs education and culture, which he can provide: "I criticized his
apology and the environment, suggesting that he to try to cure it" (131).
Faidutti's stance is clearly diplomatic, even pragmatic with far-reaching
goals. It allows him to see and ascertain the uncivilized nature of the
Lithuanian with calmer and more tolerant eyes:

no one mentioned the Pope; more than ten people toasted the rector alone,
who invited them—of course, he is a writer, a poet, a patriot[4] and so on. (131)

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[4] Here, Faidutti refers to a Lithuanian romantic poet, an active participant in
Lithuania's national revival movement, a Catholic priest, a Doctor of Theology,

The tendency to ignore the delegates, even by the churchmen, is still alive … The group of delegates was not invited, although good manners would require it and a thoughtful person would certainly have taken this into account. (120)

Not just for himself, but keeping in mind the environment, which lacks human respect and is irritated, restless, and confused and first of all, because of the nationalist passions and excessive concept of democracy … Generally speaking, the reason is the education of these generations, their extremely peculiar mentality, absolutely artificially formed opinions and currents; it is easier to adapt to circumstances than to fight or resist them, because they lack the inner courage. (135)

The image, which can be described as a multi-layered mental and sensory representation of reality, at the same time conveys and reveals the ideological and cultural field in which it operates. The business-like correspondence of the Holy See's representatives covers a quite specific field of their activities and goals. This article analyses three Holy See representatives' approaches to Lithuania at the time and highlights different relationships between the self-image and hetero-image. Lithuania's image, which firstly needed to be investigated and depicted, appears differently in Zecchini and Faidutti's reports. Zecchini's preconceived attitudes, influenced by his concern for the Polish language in Lithuania, did not allow him to grasp the complicated ethnic situation in the country, and formed the image of the stubborn and intolerant Lithuanian. On the other hand, Faidutti's diplomatic and pragmatic stance towards the current Lithuanian situation helped him to depict the uncivilized nature of Lithuanian clergy, but using a more relaxed tone. Tolerating instead of disdaining their uncivilized manners and trying to find objective reasons for them, Faidutti was preparing the stage for the implementation of the Holy See's ambitious plans for Lithuania.

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and professor Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis (1862–1932). In 1909–32 he was rector of the Kaunas Seminary. Because of his poetry, which focused on the person's inner world, emotions, and imagination, and his commitment to Lithuanian culture, Maironis was, in the Vatican's eyes, as a controversial figure.

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THE LITERARY IMAGE OF THE POLE IN THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA (1918–1940)

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In the Republic of Lithuania (1918–1940) Polishness was a "sensitive" theme, both historically and politically. The literary image of the Pole was a complicated set of ideologemes and imagemes determined not only by specific historical, social, and political circumstances, but also by folkloric tradition and the historical memory of serfdom that had left a deep imprint on this tradition, by romantic nineteenth-century historiography, and by the Lithuanian national consciousness of the interwar period that laid a strong emphasis on the peasant roots of the nation.

The literary image of the Pole underwent a change in the first half of the nineteenth century. Previously, Poles depicted in the texts of Lithuanian authors of noble origin had been treated as brothers joined by a historical fate, as Lithuania and Poland were bound together for hundreds of years by a political union (from 1386 to 1569, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland had one ruler, and from 1569 to 1795 both countries merged into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth), and at the end of the eighteenth century they both became part of the Russian Empire. The literary image of the Pole started to deteriorate with the spread of the ideas of Simonas Daukantas (1793–1864), the author of the first history of Lithuania written in Lithuanian. The book dealt with the negative impact of the Poles on the fate of the Lithuanian state (Kalėda 1993; Subačius 1998). Late in the nineteenth century, anti-Polish moods were fuelled by the negative attitude held by the majority of the Polish-speaking elite among Lithuanian nobles (aristocracy and large landowners) towards the democratic movement of the Lithuanian national revival.

In 1918, towards the end of the First World War, the Council of Lithuania consisting mostly of Lithuanian intelligentsia declared the re-establishment of the country's independence (within the boundaries of ethnic Lithuanian lands), and at the same time suspended all diplomatic ties that had linked Lithuania to other countries. Such a vision of Lithuania

went against the hopes of some of the Polish political forces and the Polish-speaking Lithuanian nobility to restore a federal Lithuanian-Polish state within the boundaries of the historical Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In addition, Lithuania and Poland failed to reach an agreement regarding the subordination of some ethnically mixed territories such as Sejny and the Vilnius Region. The argument led to a war between two neighbouring countries that had just re-established their independence. Although armed fighting ended in the autumn of 1920, Lithuania refused to enter into diplomatic relations with Poland before the late 1930s in protest against the annexation by Poland of its eastern lands—the so-called Vilnius Region. The loss of the historical capital of the dukes of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was experienced as a collective trauma by the interwar Lithuanian society, which generated the most radical demonization of the Pole and Poland to date in both public and literary discourse (Subačius 1998).

The methodological starting point for this research is the imagological approach examining the image of the Other, or the hetero-image, in relation to national self-perception or the auto-image, where the Other is seen as a category necessary to define one's own identity (Leerssen 2015, 20). Thus, the image of the Pole in the Lithuanian literature of the interwar period is examined along with its correlation with the Lithuanian national self-perception, which shows up in the literary works of that time. During the period of the Republic of Lithuania, the ethno-linguistic concept of Lithuanianism was the institutionally promoted form of national identity. The literary image of the Pole as the Other was shaped from this perspective: in the years between the two wars, this image encompassed both the residents of Poland and the Polish-speaking autochthons of Lithuania.

The present paper consists of two parts. In the first part, the imageme of the literary image of the Pole dominant during the period under consideration is singled out. The second part addresses the overlap of ethnic and social images within the literary type of the Polish landlord, and the models of breaking the line between the Self and the Other in the Lithuanian literature of the interwar period.

"The Treacherous Pole"

The position of literary imagology in contemporary studies of the image is based on the recognition that literature plays an important role in the development of national images: *it not only represents* human experiences of historic events or intercultural contacts, *but also shapes* the ways in

which cultures and nations perceive themselves and the Other (Pohl 2011, 33). Literary works are seen as the specific discourse for the construction of a national image, since the picture of the particular character it creates is artistically more convincing than the picture appearing in the texts of public or political discourse, where the schemes of national stereotype construction are much too straightforward.

Early in the twentieth century, Lithuanian literary fiction exerted a strong influence on the formation of national images. The fact that professional historiography, and the institutions responsible for its development, were established in Lithuania rather late created conditions for the "long-term imprisonment of our cultural imagination in the field of literary and romanticised images of the past" (Gieda 2013, 358). Even if the numbers of professional Lithuanian historians started to grow after the establishment of the University of Lithuania in Kaunas in 1922, the historical consciousness of the interwar Lithuanian society was, to a large extent, still being shaped by mythologized images of the Lithuanian past as created in literature, fine arts, and theatre (Gieda 2013, 360–2, 366). Thanks to the nineteenth-century historian Simonas Daukantas, and, even more so, the litterateurs who embraced and popularized his ideas, the era of the pre-Union Grand Duchy of Lithuania was seen during the interwar period as the Golden Age of the Lithuanian nation and state, while the post-Union history of Lithuania was unequivocally treated as a decline, as "five centuries—a night without dawn" in the words of the Lithuanian writer Maironis (real name Jonas Mačiulis, 1862–1932). The majority of historical plays of the interwar period pursue the glorification of the pre-Union Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The fact that the Republic of Lithuania was a Catholic country and the clergy played an important role in the country's political, public, and cultural life at the time was not an obstacle to extolling pre-Christian times in the historical narrative, the literature, and the theatre. Strongly influenced by romantic historiography, the interwar dramaturgy depicted "noble savages"—pagan Lithuanians contrasted to Polish diplomats who used Christianity as a means of political manipulation. Vincas Krėvė's (1882–1932) drama *Skirgaila* (1922 in Russian, 1925 in Lithuanian) is the most prominent example of such a depiction.

The anti-Polish historical imagination of the Lithuanians was nourished not only by romantic historiography but also by the traumatic situation following the loss of Vilnius, which the Lithuanians treated unambiguously as a consequence of Polish foreign policy violating international agreements. This theme was escalated intensely by Lithuania's interwar propaganda, which made a marked contribution to the most radical demonization of the image of the Pole to date (Buchowski 2012, 147). Not only Poland but

also local Poles who displayed nostalgia for the political association of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were accused of treachery and betrayal. Hostility towards them was aroused even more by the news of a coup d'état being instigated by the Polish Military Organization (*Polska Organizacja Wojskowa*), which was uncovered by Lithuanian intelligence services and which met with a strong reaction from the Lithuanian public. Following the plan conceived by Poland, local Polish-speakers formed a secret organization and sought to cause turmoil in Lithuania, to paralyze the actions of its government, and to form a new government that would declare the re-establishment of the union between Lithuania and Poland (Buchowski 2012, 147; Laurinavičius 2013, 202). These events caused the Lithuanian public to treat Poland as a treacherous state spreading its tentacles into the territory of its small neighbour, and the local Poles as traitors to their homeland. Such an approach to the events of that time gave birth to the image of the "treacherous Pole" that became established in the public discourse of interwar Lithuania (Buchowski 2012, 163–8). One of the typical examples of the consolidation of this image in the Lithuanian collective consciousness was the case of the Black Monument. On October 9, 1930, on the tenth anniversary of the loss of Vilnius, a mournful black granite obelisk was unveiled in the main venue for state celebrations, the garden of the War Museum in Kaunas. It bore the following inscription in golden letters: "Remember, o Lithuanian, that the *treacherous Pole*, who signed the Treaty of Suwalki on 7 October 1920, violated this treaty two days later and seized your capital Vilnius" (emphasis mine).

The image of the "treacherous Pole" was not only applied in describing the relations between Lithuania and Poland of that time, but also retrospectively shaped the views of the Lithuanian public on the role of Poland in the early history of Lithuania. In the light of the loss of Vilnius, the centuries-long development of mutual relations between Lithuania and Poland was actualized anew from the point of view of the Poles' historical wrongs with regard to the statehood of Lithuania. The interpretation of the treacherous role of Poland in the history of Lithuania, which gained ground during the interwar period, is vividly conveyed in the speech of an influential figure of that time, General Vladas Nagevičius, at the unveiling of the Black Monument:

A Lithuanian knew how to fend off the Crusader who came with a sword in his hand. But when the Pole saw that nothing could be achieved with a sword, he took a cross in his hand, adorned himself in the plumage of a borrowed civilization and in this way invaded Lithuania. Under the cover of the cross, the Bible and his own pseudo-civilization, he declared a do-or-die struggle against the Lithuanian spirit. Having exerted themselves

like this for about three centuries, the Poles undercut the roots of the Lithuanian spirit and nurtured Polishness in its place. They infected the once disciplined Lithuanians with the poison of anarchy. In the end, the independent Polish-Lithuanian state was killed by this poison. (*Klastingas* 1930, 836)

Poland's treacherous and hypocritical policy with regards to Lithuania is also depicted in Lithuanian historical dramas of the interwar period. It is no coincidence that they are dominated by the storylines of the times of Grand Duke Vytautas (ca. 1350–1430). This ruler became the central figure of the national historical narrative constructed during the interwar period because he was considered not only the all-time best Lithuanian politician and military leader, but also the most principled defender of the autonomy of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania against Poland. Bearing in mind the dispute between Lithuania and Poland over the Vilnius Region, which smouldered throughout the whole interwar period, this became extremely relevant (Mačiulis 2001). The monument to Vytautas erected in Kaunas in 1932 is considered the "symbolic quintessence of the mental space of the interwar Lithuanian nationalism" (Mačiulis 2009, 134): facing Vilnius, the Duke rests on the shoulders of symbolic figures of the enemies he had conquered—a Crusader, a Russian, a Tatar, and a Pole. They are depicted as bending under the burden of Vytautas's symbolic power. A famous Lithuanian poet of the interwar period interpreted the sculptural figure of the Pole with his hands covering his face in this way: "Meanwhile the Pole, unable to endure Vytautas' majesty and covering his eyes with his hands on Vytautas' side so that he cannot see him, is standing here totally yet *treacherously humiliated*" (Nemunėlis 1932, emphasis mine).

In public discourse as well as historical plays of the interwar period, one can clearly see the identification of Polish state policy with a Pole as the national character: both are supposedly insidious and hypocritical, without any moral norms and ideals. The geographical and national space correlates to morality in Balys Sruoga's (1896–1947) drama *Milžino paunksmė* [*The Shadow of the Giant*] (1932), which glorifies the times of Vytautas: the central line of the conflict separates two countries, Lithuania and Poland, which are united politically but dissociated as morally opposite worlds (Pabarčienė 2005, 48–9). Lithuania is lauded as a strong and united state rallied around its leader, Vytautas. Lithuania is contrasted with Poland, a space of depraved customs and anarchy ruled by squabbling and prying nobles who denounce one another and seek nothing but wealth, power, and pleasure (Pabarčienė 2005, 48). Such an image of Poland and of the Polish noble was shaped by one of the key attitudes of Lithuanian

historical narratives according to which the collapse of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was triggered by the excessive rights of the nobles, who took advantage of these rights to pursue their own personal interests and not those of the state. The antithesis of the Lithuanians who persistently and selflessly defend the interests of Lithuania, and the Poles who seek personal gain and switch political sides, is seen in many Lithuanian historical dramas of the interwar period. Idealism, patriotism, and the striving for peace were highlighted by the authors of historical plays as key characteristics of the national image, whereas the Poles were depicted as selfish and unreliable allies, capable of betrayal at any moment.

The image of the "treacherous Pole" is not confined to historical dramas. In the novel *Karjeristai* [The Careerists] (1935), which analyses the moral problems of the interwar Lithuanian urban society, Juozas Grušas (1901–86) creates an antithesis between Domantas, a Lithuanian intellectual from the peasant class, and Nikolskis, a Polish-speaking official of noble descent. Although both are members of the Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party, Domantas sincerely believes in democratic values and ardently works for the sake of the nation, while Nikolskis only pretends to be a Lithuanian patriot and actually despises the Lithuanians for their attachment to their peasant roots, and considers them a primitive and uncultured nation. An opposition exists not only between the views of the two characters, but also between their value systems. In contrast to Domantas's integrity and anti-conformism, Nikolskis is portrayed as an opportunist and fortune-seeker, whose life's motto is "you belong to those … who pay you" (Grušas 1981, 168). As if that is not enough, it becomes clear at the end of the novel that Nikolskis has been withholding the fact that he was a member of the coup organized by the Polish Military Organization, and when he becomes an influential official he makes every effort to set Lithuanian political forces against one another. Such a development in the storyline of the Polish-speaking official shows how persistent the stereotype of Polish nobles as treacherous anarchy-spreading enemies of Lithuania's independence was during the interwar period, as shaped by the national historical narrative. It also conveys the Lithuanians' suspicious attitude to the "converts," especially those representatives of other nations who began to espouse Lithuanian patriotism after the re-establishment of the independence of Lithuania, when broad opportunities for a career in the civil service became available.

The Degenerate Landowner

In the Lithuanian literature of the interwar period, national and social images overlap: Jews are often depicted as shopkeepers, Poles as landed gentry, and Lithuanians as peasants or intellectuals of peasant descent (historical dramas depicting Lithuanian nobles of the pre-union Grand Duchy of Lithuania represent an exception to this rule). The identification of the ethnic image of the Pole with the character of a noble landowner was determined, to some extent, by social reality: in 1919, Poles made up 66.4 percent of the large landowners in Lithuania (Vaskela 2014, 190). For political considerations, this identification was encouraged by interwar Lithuanian propaganda, which resorted to the historical memory of serfdom and the hostile attitude of peasantry towards landowners resulting from the estate system. For instance, in one of the anti-Polish posters the citizens of Lithuania are urged to take up the struggle against Polish aggression with the following slogan: "The Poles are coming to Lithuania to protect their manors and to enslave us" (Galkus 1997, 49).

Led by the elite of peasant origin, the Lithuanian society of the interwar period traced its roots to the peasantry that had preserved the Lithuanian language and its cultural tradition (the culture of the Polish-speaking nobility was considered alien and placed outside the area of Lithuanian cultural identity). This explains why the traumatic experience of serfdom, which lasted for four centuries—from the middle of the fifteenth century to the second half of the nineteenth century—manifested itself so strongly in the Lithuanian collective memory. Since the transfer of the Lithuanian nobility to the Polish-speaking linguistic-cultural space was happening alongside the processes of the establishment of serfdom, the Polish-speaking local nobility was demonized in Lithuanians' historical imagination of the interwar years as having betrayed the Lithuanian nation both politically and socially: purportedly, having fraternized with the Polish nobility after the union and having exchanged love of Lithuania for love of Poland, they turned away from their "true brothers," the Lithuanian-speaking peasants, and turned them into slaves. Numerous historical social novels and dramas appeared during the interwar years depicting the situation of the Lithuanian village during and after serfdom, a situation centred on the social conflict between a Polish landowner and Lithuanian peasants. References to the licence of landlords during the times of serfdom abound even in works depicting Lithuanian landowners of the interwar period. Polish-speaking landowners, separated by a double boundary—linguistic-cultural and social—from Lithuanian peasants, are depicted (and mostly demonized) as the Other.

As a matter of fact, the literature of the independence period did see rare instances where Polish landowners were depicted without a negative bias, conveying the understanding of Lithuanian identity from the nobility's perspective, and thus eliminating the ethnic distinction between Polish-speaking landowners and Lithuanian peasants. Yet, contrary to the intention of the authors, the interwar reader was inclined to treat the literary characters of noble origin as the Other, and oppose them to the estate of peasants attributed to the category of Self. The most prominent example of such a misunderstanding between the addressor and the addressee was the reception given to *Blaškomos liepsnos* [*Flustered Flames*] (1936), a saga of an eighteenth-century family of Lithuanian landowners by the novelist of noble origin Fabijonas Neveravičius (1900–81). Reviewers criticized the novel because its social space bordered only on the nobility, while ordinary people participated in the narrative only as insignificant extras in mass scenes: "The material of the novel would be varied and interesting, but *the idle life of the Polonized nobles who used to oppress our great-grandparents—serfs is so alien and unwelcome* to the Lithuanian reader. He [the reader] misses the scenes of peasants' life" (Viliūnas 1992, 84, emphasis mine). When interpreting a text where the artistic representation of the world is completely void of class-based antagonism, the interwar reader generated that antagonism themselves, impulsively rejecting the reading approach suggested by the text. The representation of a Polish-speaking family of Samogitian landowners at the turn of the twentieth century, depicted by the writer of noble descent Šatrijos Ragana (real name Marija Pečkauskaitė, 1877–1930) in the novella *Sename dvare* [*In an Old Estate*] (1922), was received much more favourably by interwar readers. However, even though the reviewers were impressed by the character of the landowner Marija, who sympathized with the ideas of national revival, they were critical of the idealization of estate society that eliminated social tensions and portrayed the landowner as a protector and benefactor of peasants, the latter being mere village people who humble themselves respectfully before their landlords (Mykolaitis-Putinas 1936, 373).

The ideological environment of interwar Lithuania was shaping a strong imperative to transform the overlapping ethnic-social types of the Lithuanian peasant and the Polish noble into moral categories.

National images are shaped by the aggregate impact of a plethora of texts, not just by one, and therefore a hint in a text referring to some other text with a deep cultural tradition is sufficient for readers to create an all-encompassing image in their imagination resulting from the interaction between several texts and intertexts (Beller 2007, 5). The more prevalent

and entrenched a certain stereotype, the fewer hints are needed in a particular text for a reader to fill in the rest of the portrait of a national character. The demonization of Polish-speaking landlords in Lithuania was based on a strong folklore tradition (Kalėda 1993, 20). The negative attitude towards the landlord in folklore was stimulated by the experience of social injustice from the times of serfdom ("Landlords are sitting in hell, even in a pot,/ and poor people in the centre of heaven"; "An estate is not a neighbour and the landlord is not a brother") and the notion of the noble tradition as an alien culture, for example mocking pride in one's family or the family coat of arms, which was seen as silly by peasants ("Boasting like a noble with papers"). The critical stance towards landlords, which was typical of the peasant mentality of interwar Lithuanians, was strengthened by the opinion formulated by romantic Lithuanian historiography, according to which the Lithuanian nobility experienced moral decline after adopting the customs of the Polish nobility. According to Daukantas, after the union with Poland was concluded, Lithuanian nobles were no longer engaged in affairs of the state and were just enjoying pleasures and taking pride in their noble descent (1976, 639–40). The myth of a degenerate local nobility was very persistent and prominent in interwar Lithuania. In the literature it manifested itself in the allegorical narrative about moral atrophy (spiritual degradation, soul-eating cancer, and the like), which the Lithuanian nobility supposedly caught from the Polish nobility at the time of the union.

There were several types of "degenerate landlord" in interwar literature. From the point of view of tradition, the most influential character of this type is the Polish-speaking landlord Sviestavičius from the epic work *Pragiedruliai* [*Rays of Hope*] (1918–19) by the classic writer of Lithuanian literature Vaižgantas (real name Juozas Tumas, 1893–1933). In the novel, the portrait of Sviestavičius is created as a generalized picture of the whole social group of Polish-speaking landlords. Its central trait is spiritual degeneration, which was ostensibly coded into the noble's concept of a political nation that had suppressed the natural attachment and obligation to one's homeland (Lithuania). Since the ideologues of Lithuanian national revival saw the Polish-speaking nobles as misled and nationally not-yet-conscious Lithuanians, they cherished the hope that the old elite of the country would eventually renounce the "centaur-like" Polish-Lithuanian self-perception and would absorb the "natural" ethno-linguistic concept of Lithuanianism, along with the democratic principles of public life. In other words, the hope was that the vanishing old estate society would relegate the centuries-long nobles' tradition of national self-perception and historical narrative to the past, and it would be replaced by

modern Lithuanianism and the ethnocentric historical narrative that had formed in the years of national revival.

Interwar writers willingly modelled this process of the "re-Lithuanization" of the Polish-speaking gentry. In Vaižgantas's *Pragiedruliai*, Gintautas, a Lithuanian doctor (whose name etymologically means "to defend the nation"—*ginti tautą*), helps Sviestavičius to recover from this "abnormality" of the nobles. Gintautas is not only a doctor by profession, but also a figure of national revival, and thus a public doctor. Thanks to his ingenious plan, the landlord, who had spent most of his life abroad, gradually comes to love his homeland, and when he finds himself among Lithuanian peasants for the first time is immediately captivated by them. Struck by his sudden revelation, Sviestavičius emotionally repents his dissociation from his land and its people, and swears to serve the Lithuanian people. We can find other similar episodes of revelation and repentance for the collective guilt of the land-owning class in Lithuanian interwar literature.

Still, the process of the "re-Lithuanization" of the Polish-speaking landlords, which was modelled by interwar writers, had very little in common with the reality of Lithuania in the early twentieth century. Contrary to the expectations held by the figures of the Lithuanian national revival, the majority of the landlords did not recognize the leadership of the new elite of peasant descent and did not want to be "cured" by them. Although a segment of the nationally inclined public figures and writers of noble estate participated in the process of Lithuanian national revival and the building of an independent Lithuania, the larger part of the Lithuanian nobility did not want to renounce the Polish language and culture, and remained loyal to the struggle to restore the common Republic of Both Nations (Gaidis 2009). The illusions of the Lithuanians regarding the voluntary assimilation of the Polish-speaking nobility were dispersed by the support of local gentry for the Polish army during the fight for independence, and their participation in the coup of the Polish Military Organization. Ten years after he had started *Pragiedruliai*, Vaižgantas admitted with regret in one of his journalistic articles that the nobility's "obscurantism prevented them from grasping the spirit of the new times" (Vaižgantas 2000, 467).

From a chronological point of view, one can see that, during the twenty years of independence, the enthusiasm of Lithuanian writers for the "conversion" of the Polish-speaking gentry was gradually wearing off, while obscurantism, or hostility to progress, became the most prominent quality of the literary type of the landlord. Progress was related to democratic changes in society and the country's economy. One of the most

important of these changes was the Law on Land Reform of 1922, the implementation of which completely eliminated large-scale landowners in Lithuania. As the Polish-speaking landlords did not welcome changes that violated their economic interest, they were depicted as enemies of progress who wanted to return to the past and to take the country back to the times of serfdom. The contrast between the new vibrant world and the old one doomed to collapse is the symbolic axis of numerous literary works of the interwar period focusing on the theme of the Polish-speaking gentry. For instance, in the comedy *Naujieji žmonės* [*The New People*] (1937), Petras Vaičiūnas (1890–1959) created a contrast between a Polish earl who lives in the past and sinks deeper and deeper into poverty, and the descendants of his former serfs who had settled on the land that used to be his property and were successful farmers. The latter are described as "the new people," active *modern* heroes who represent the economic capabilities of young Lithuania and build a new life on democratic foundations. Thus, due to the overlapping of social and ethnic images, the model of the Lithuanians' life was being represented as modern and promising, and the Polish model as outdated and doomed to extinction.

The most radical portrayal of a Polish-speaking landlord as an enemy of progress is given by Jonas Marcinkevičius (1900–53) in his novel *Benjaminas Kordušas* (1937). Having lost his economic powers and social privileges as a result of land reform, the landlord Kordušas distances himself from the changing life and withdraws into his crumbling manor, which is shown as an atavistic nineteenth-century inclusion in the map of rapidly modernizing Lithuania. Marcinkevičius attributes Kordušas's exaggerated contempt for everything Lithuanian and rural to the whole social group of landlords, and presents it as the final stage in its spiritual degeneration. Unlike Vaižgantas, a writer of the older generation, the young leftist writer Marcinkevičius does not propose any remedies or methods of treatment to the gentry. The Polish culture of the nobles is identified in the text as a tradition without future prospects, while the landlords are shown as dysfunctional relics of the past in a modern world:

All the last of the Mohicans have gathered here like fledglings thrown out of nests and still cheeping … The circle of their life is already complete, but their legs are too feeble to step over, and they are pressed down by their titles and bygone carelessness. They are so horribly shy to dip their silver spoons into Lithuanian borscht … Once proud and smart, unwilling to see the land or the sky but only themselves and their whims, all these Kordušas, Stančikas, Makovskis and another hundred with similar names have lost their homeland and the genuine sense of the human value, and are now wandering and bristling with rage … they, all those counts and nobles,

are fluttering around, over our land, like some glittering and poisonous flies and evoke only a smile of surprise and pity on the face of the Lithuanian ploughman. (Marcinkevičius 1937, 123–4)

The image of the landowner as an alien pest—a poisonous fly— accurately reflects the attitude of the interwar Lithuanian society towards the landowners. It connects the identification of the culture of Polish-speaking noblemen as an *alien* tradition with the historical memory of serfdom (the landowner as an exploiter of peasants). The leniently sneering reaction of the "Lithuanian ploughman" (the "nation of ploughmen" was one of the most widespread self-identification clichés among the interwar Lithuanians) conveys the feeling of pride in the democratic development of the Lithuanian society and economy that doomed the "pests" of the past to extinction. Unlike Vaižgantas who wrote the story of the "recovery" of the Polish-speaking landlord, which, although hardly plausible, gave some hope of reconciliation to the divided society of Lithuania, Marcinkevičius finished his novel with Kordušas's moral and physical suicide.

Conclusions

The Pole, seen as a brother by fate in Lithuanian literature of the early nineteenth century, was transformed into an image of the fiercest enemy of the Lithuanians a hundred years later. A complex of specific historical, political, culture, and social factors contributed to the demonization of the Pole in interwar Lithuania: the Lithuanian-Polish military conflict (1919– 20) and twenty years of propaganda between the two countries over the Vilnius region, a biased approach to the ideas of nineteenth-century romantic Lithuanian historiography, manifestations of the Polish-speaking local population's disloyalty to the nation state of Lithuania, and the social tension between the Lithuanian-speaking peasantry and the Polish-speaking gentry encoded by four centuries of serfdom.

In the works of literary fiction on historical themes, the features of the Pole as a national type frequently coincide with the assessment of the policies of Poland. The negative attitude towards the role Poland played in the history of Lithuania, inherited from Daukantas's historiographical tradition, and the annexation of the Vilnius region by its southern neighbour, were the reasons why the image of the "treacherous Pole" took root in interwar Lithuanian literature. We could argue that treachery dominates the image of the Pole constructed during this period, treachery being a trait of the national character exposed in the allegedly historical process of the development of Lithuanian-Polish relations.

Since the Lithuanian literature of the interwar period interlinked ethnic and social images, works of literary fiction were dominated by an overlapping ethnic-social stereotype of the Polish landlord. In the interwar Lithuanian society, the historical memory of serfdom generated a negative relationship with the Polish-speaking gentry that declared peasant roots as the essential component of national identity. This negative assessment was further reinforced by the myth of the Lithuanian nobility that morally degenerated after the union between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland, a myth that evolved under the influence of romantic historiography. In literature, it manifested itself as an allegorical narrative about the spiritual malaise of the Polish-speaking nobility, the only cure for which was overcoming the boundary separating the Polish-speaking landlords from the Lithuanian peasants; in other words, assimilation with the people. Texts of literary fiction modelling the desired "re-Lithuanization" of the local nobility correlated poorly with the reality of interwar Lithuania. Due to this, in the 1930s there was waning enthusiasm among Lithuanian writers for the "conversion" of Polish-speaking landlords, and a tendency became more distinct to caricature them as reactionaries following the laws of the no-longer existing estate society. Due to the overlap of social and ethnic images, the public and economic model of life in the Republic of Lithuania was depicted as democratic, modern, and with prospects, while the opposing Polish world, represented by Polish-speaking landlords, was shown as anti-democratic, outdated, and doomed to extinction.

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DISCOVERING DISTANT NEIGHBOURS:
SCANDINAVIAN IMAGES
IN LITHUANIAN POETRY

MANFREDAS ŽVIRGŽDAS

Literary Aspirations and Political Projects

While explaining characteristic literary stereotypes, the cultural context of a nation might be revised because some distinctive texts reveal a correlation of images related to social prejudices. Imagology, suggesting theoretical principles for this research, deals with "imaginary societies" and warns that "nobody is in a position to describe a cultural *identity*. What is described is always a cultural *difference*, a sense in which one nation is perceived to be 'different from the rest'" (Leerssen n.d.). The discourses of national culture are limited by extra-literary factors, such as censorship, propaganda, historically determined xenophobia, or xenophilia. National images that are being developed in literary texts do not always emerge as the result of intercultural transfer or hybridization; they are often represented as imported and native (Dukić 2012, 123). Imagological studies are closely related to the paradigm of "spatial turn" and the concepts of poetical geography, topography, and/or geo-poetics; in the collective imagination, the territory of Europe might be realized as the battlefield of various contexts, and thus the project of a European literary atlas frequently replaces the traditional linear narratives of literary history (Butkus 2008, 16). In this paper, we will discuss the Scandinavian hetero-images in Lithuanian poetry and try to recognize their common features inherited from the era of pre-Second World War Western-oriented cultural life and those adopted during later periods. In the Eastern European poetical discourse, the topic of Scandinavia refers to the Nordic myths and stereotypical literary-based images of free-spirit vagabonds and medieval Vikings.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, the image of Scandinavia in Lithuanian cultural media was linked with literary connotations. It was conceived not as a constant geographical constellation of the neighbouring

nations of the Scandinavian Peninsula, but as a literary myth that was allegedly nourished by austere Nordic magicians of literary fiction; their dramatic characters were adopted by ascending Lithuanian symbolism. The newly organized humanitarian intelligentsia of liberal deviation was highly influenced by the famous Lithuanian-Russian poet Jurgis Baltrušaitis (1873–1944), who also translated the major works of Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg into Russian. Baltrušaitis spent the greater period of his creative career in the remote Norwegian islands and was fascinated by the moral ethos of Nordic culture. When Ibsen died in 1906, Baltrušaitis arrived on the shore of Christiania (later called Oslo) as a reporter for the Russian Symbolism-oriented journal *Весы*, and wrote an exalted and sentimental essay "У гроба Ибсена" ("Beside Ibsen's Coffin"). He called the greatest Norwegian playwright "the most lonely of the solitary individuals of this century," a prophet, the star of Bethlehem leading people to the new spiritual virtues, to the ideas of the New Testament (Baltrušaitis 2001, 28–31).

During the interwar period, Knut Hamsun with his impressionist style was very popular in the Baltic States; from him, Lithuanian fiction inherited special attention for psychological impulses and shared his advantage of emotional and intuitive elements over rational decisions. Hamsun was known for the image of an openhearted and emotionally unstable wanderer, the modernized version of the archetypical prodigal son who gave birth to the tradition of existentialist introverts, seekers for the lost idyll of Arcadia or Eldorado. Hamsun's main characters devoted themselves to romantic Rousseauism, escaped technical civilization and submerged themselves in the pantheist dimension of natural serenity and beauty, and searched for stability of being and well-balanced identity. In Lithuania, Scandinavian fiction was acknowledged mainly from secondary sources: at this point Lithuanians could not match Latvians, who had translated and published the multi-volume *Complete Works* of Selma Lagerlöf, Hans Christian Andersen, Jens Peter Jacobsen, and Hamsun during the period 1918–40.

During the decades of Soviet occupation, the tradition of Hamsun's reception was interrupted: the name of the denounced Nazi collaborator was excluded from the ideologized literary histories and the whole pattern of the interwar aesthetical canon was shattered. However, Hamsun had many admirers among the Lithuanian émigré diaspora in the West; his personal and political life was strictly separated from his artistic reputation and romantic myth. Lithuanian émigré poet Henrikas Nagys wrote a eulogizing obituary in 1952, declaring bitterly: "The Great Pan is dead." The name of the famous writer determined the image of his country; thus,

the influential personality of Hamsun inspired a national auto-image. Nevertheless, after the fall of Nazi Germany the political government of his native state in the Second World War condemned Hamsun for betrayal. His image and reputation were related to memory. When the continuity of collective memory is defined as transient, no one needs to be concerned about their name and status. Nagys quoted Hamsun's rhetorical exclamation during his trial: "Is it really important? After a hundred years we will all be dead and forgotten!" (Nagys 1952, 24).

The anxious Scandinavian spirit was related to the independent creative personalities required for the newly created Republic of Lithuania during the 1920 and 30s. A neo-Romantic poet of the catastrophist deviation, Jonas Aistis (1904–73) interpreted the vision of Ibsen's Solveig (from the drama *Peer Gynt*) as the ideal dreamlike object of desire, and at the same time an incarnation of pure emotion.[1] In 1932, the neo-Romantic and leftist poetess Salomėja Nėris (1904–45) enjoyed a sightseeing tour of the Baltics and characterized the island of Gotland from a distance as "the shore of predacious Vikings"; its historical landmark, an old gallows, was distinguished as a horrific souvenir from the past: "Here it was taught brutally not to thieve!"[2] (Nėris 1984, 92). The Scandinavian literary references gave an impulse to meditation on the mysteries of human nature, the requirement of personal and private freedom, and discontent with the trivia of everyday life.

Lithuanians also admired Scandinavian pragmatism; those who visited Northern countries soon after the First World War praised their economical and sanitary rules, rational obedience to the laws, and common sense. The academic elite of the newly created state (e.g. Kazys Pakštas, Matas Šalčius, and Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas) shared plans for the "confederation of Baltoscandia" as a geopolitical phenomenon. The fixed iconic pattern of a naval state with its capital Vilnius was familiarized in Lithuanian literature and popular culture after 1918. The litterateurs of the first era of national revival in the nineteenth century (Antanas Baranauskas, Motiejus Valančius, and Maironis) had been considered as the "founding fathers" of this national project and geopolitical experts: they modelled the spatial and temporal identity of a nation. When the geographical borders of Lithuania were clearly determined, many felt

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[1] The retroactive images of Solveig and Peer Gynt re-emerged in the avant-garde lyrics of the 1960s by Vytautas Bložė and Judita Vaičiūnaitė: reviving the universal topics of intimate emotionality and natural eroticism (inspired by literary context) meant a significant return to the humanization of post-Stalinist culture.

[2] All the fragments of poetical texts were translated word-by-word from Lithuanian by the author of this article, unless noted otherwise.

discontent for the downfall of the romantic visions of the medieval Grand Duchy of Lithuania and contemplated their inferiority complex. Researchers indicate the gene of self-despising, self-destruction, and the psychological attitude of a nonconformist outsider, which could be considered intrinsic to the Baltic consciousness (Laurušaitė 2014, 132). The founders of geopolitical thought (e.g. Pakštas) tried to compensate for these destructive elements by promoting plans for the integration of the flexible and shifting Lithuanian culture into the context of sober Nordic civilization.

Unfortunately, Lithuanians who were the most ardent enthusiasts of the "Baltoscandic" idea felt the most obvious differences of the heterogeneous regions. The northern neighbours on the other side of the Baltic Sea had not experienced the depressive occupation that affected all levels of Lithuanian society under the Tsarist rule of the nineteenth century. The nations were also culturally divided by confessional discrepancies that determined approaches towards the principles of labour, education, financial relations, and the role of individuality. Scandinavians were regarded as "distant" neighbours who aroused envy but did not inspire tensions or conflicts; for Lithuanians, they violated no geopolitical interests. As Baltic nations, they also belonged to the periphery of Eurocentric civilization, but their cultural achievements seemed to be positive examples to the designers of the national identities of the newly established republics.

Fear of Strangers and Love of Geography during the Totalitarian Winter

The encounter with Scandinavian as well as with Western culture in general was complicated in Soviet Lithuania. Artificial stereotypes and anachronisms prevailed. The quantity of literary translation declined after 1944, and the Lithuanian audience could read only classical Nordic authors of the critical realism school and the literary fiction works of open socialists and sympathizers with the URSS (the most important names among them were the Icelander Halldór Laxness and Dane Martin Andersen Nexø), which were translated mainly from Russian. The great exception was the classic master of fairy tales Hans Christian Andersen, whose collections were published without interruption throughout the twentieth century. In the era of total restriction and isolationism, Scandinavian countries were regarded as alien and hostile territory; military conflicts between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Vasa's dynasty in Sweden of the seventeenth century were recalled, and its

semi-mythic narratives were reinstalled in the collective memory. The neurotic and depressive atmosphere of Ibsen's and Strindberg's dramas was interpreted as the supposed reflection of the terminally ill Western society. The anachronistic image of Scandinavians as Vikings was aroused from cultural unconsciousness, referring to the irreversible and irrational past.

A historic, old-fashioned name for the Swedish nation *žuvėdai* (literally "fish-eaters") was mentioned in the avant-garde poems of the Lithuanian Soviet period. Various archaisms were part of the grotesque and surreal style adopted by the nonconformist poets who played the roles of cultural archaeologists studying ancient relics. Irony and sarcasm by Marcelijus Martinaitis (1936–2013) were considered by simple readers as a pretext for short poetical jokes; only a very attentive audience would recognize a hidden tragic message. During the 1970s, Martinaitis invented the character of Kukutis as a mythic hero and existentialist philosopher who captured and assimilated Lithuanian agrarian myths. One of those pseudo-patriotic myths defined Lithuania as a strategically important crossroad of historical events: thus, the traditional balance of centre and periphery was reversed.[3] The eccentric trickster Kukutis introduced himself as a tragicomic mediator of interwar Lithuania and the totalitarian era as well as a cosmogonic arbiter of primordial elements or a chthonic prisoner of purgatory. Kukutis gained extraordinary liberty through his outsider style of living: he belonged to the "contingency of people who existed outside the realm of Soviet laws and regulations and beyond the limits of sanity. Through their madness, these people obtained an enviable inner freedom" (Vincė 2011, 9).

In the book of poems *Kukučio baladės* [Ballads of Kukutis] (1977) by Martinaitis, all notable historical events flow into Kukutis's remote hut in the middle of the Samogitian marshes: "As the hunchback crossed herself/ nations and governments collapsed/ and the Swedes [*žuvėdai*] lay down on the ground/ with their toes pointing north"[4] ("Spending the Night at Kukutis Farm") (Martinaitis 2011, 17). *Žuvėdai* ("the Swedish people") belong to the indecipherable past. Kukutis is a recluse finding his place under the sun in the agrarian preserve of patriarchal traditions that was miraculously not distorted by the absurdity of Soviet ideology. Migrating between dimensions of coherent historical discourse and erratic myths, Kukutis discerned clearly what was alien to him and what posed the

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[3] In imagological studies, centre and periphery tend to represent constant stereotypes: "The periphery of any given area is more traditional, timeless, backward, 'natural'; the centre of that area is more cosmopolitan, modern, progressive, 'cultural'" (Leerssen).
[4] Translation by Laima Vincė.

greatest menace to his unique balance of physical and metaphysical competences. He could not escape global catastrophes; however, the medieval conquests of *žuvėdai* [Vikings] and the massacres of the twentieth century seemed equally significant to him.

While translating poetical texts, a specific dialogue with a different semantic tradition frequently begins. In the 1990s, Martinaitis published in Lithuanian a collection of verses by Swedish poet and Nobel Prize winner Tomas Tranströmer, and wrote a poem "In Vanaginė, Translating Tomas Tranströmer" (Martinaitis 1996, 61–2) where the stormy northern wind is hyperbolized into a scene of slaughter, a "terrible assault of the North." Tranströmer's poetry seems to be one of the best examples of the greatest mystery lying beyond the simple images and everyday observations of nature. The practice of translation encourages seeking dialogue and empathy, and enriches the semantic field of national lyricism. The subject of Martinaitis enjoys the role of neutral spectator, but after some time awakes in foreign snow-covered territory, beyond the border of poetry and reality. This new place looks unfamiliar to him, but he feels himself to be safe there, just like in the shelter of his home: "In the morning/ I wake up with my little house carried far away—/ in the unknown white north./ Soft baby's hands/ of the Lapland wind/ powder terrible massacres of the night/ with the first snow."

Some decades earlier, the mythical Kukutis was identified as a true son of Mother Nature, even when he came into conflict with the power of totalitarian regimes that invaded his agrarian universe. He was not a peaceful observer but a witness of anthropocentric aggressive history and a preserver of the natural ecosphere when he carried his peasant's hut to the city and embedded it in human memory as a utopian opportunity to save his identity (Kavolis 1994a, 285).[5] The lyrical character in the later poem "In Vanaginė …" did not distinguish the fields of nature and culture. Tranströmer's intuitive existentialism with its dispute of life and death was intertextually reiterated in Martinaitis's ecological consciousness.

Sophisticated poetry by Judita Vaičiūnaitė (1937–2001)[6] was frequently attacked by the disciples of socialist realism for demonstrative gentility and alleged hermetism. When Vaičiūnaitė deserted the safe territory of a

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[5] During the late Soviet times, Martinaitis himself moved from the farmhouse of his parents to his summer residence in Vanaginė, near Vilnius. This was a symbolic transplantation of memory, an act of restoring the archetypic centre of sacrum in the secular topography.

[6] In the 1960s, Vaičiūnaitė was influenced by Western modernist culture, free jazz improvisations, and nostalgic souvenirs from the urban landscapes of the cities that had been familiar to her since her childhood in Vilnius and Kaunas.

city she felt herself abandoned in a foreign place, and allusions to the Vikings expressed her mood of concern and anxiety. Northern and Nordic motifs dissociated her lyrical chronotope from the trivial and distorted Soviet reality. Trying to define the Nordic character of the Baltic shore, she mentioned *žuvėdai* [the old Swedes], and this name of a nation phonetically recalled *žuvėdros* [seagulls]: "North. The sea of angry/ old Swedes [*žuvėdai*]. The scream/ of seagulls [*žuvėdros*] and mews. The night is white/ because of feather. Their time is unique" ("At the Dunes") (Vaičiūnaitė 2005, 267). At that time the Swedish shore was inaccessible, blocked by the "Iron Curtain." It became the object of ephemeral vision, and an ethnonym could easily be changed by the name of a bird. Birds easily overcome human-made obstacles; however, representatives of different nations cannot communicate. Vaičiūnaitė's (as well as Martinaitis's) *žuvėdai* represent an untamed, foreign element, lacking human features. The estranged territory alludes to the communication gaps and specific periods of silence in the art-house cinema of the 1960s (of Andrei Tarkovsky, Michelangelo Antonioni, and Ingmar Bergman), with its hypnotized, surreal atmosphere and lack of active subject or addressee. On the other hand, the Lithuanian seaside landscape can obviously be recognized in the series "At the Dunes," and its "Swedishness" and "antiquity" signify its outlandish character and remoteness.

In 1968, a group of Lithuanian litterateurs travelled through Norway. Vaičiūnaitė was among those who seized the occasion to free themselves for a short period from the strict ideological control of the Soviet regime. She wrote a series of poems "Night of Fiords," recalling a nostalgic collection of popular touristy snapshots. The impressions of foreign space may seem fragmentary and accidental, and the Norwegian details are presented very superficially. The memory saved pretty details rather than the shine of standard must-see sites: it was necessary to mention a little powder compact made of seal's fur that was bought in a fish-market as a metonymy of Western "decadent," "bourgeois" everyday pleasures; attention was also drawn to a remote motel for drivers as an intimate "red shell of love," an icon of moral liberty that seemed impossible in the "puritanical" USSR (Vaičiūnaitė 2005, 187). There were no efforts made to analyse the cultural differences or historical background, because those were risky topics that had not been dedicated for public discussion. Researchers of the Soviet Lithuanian poetical avant-garde defined its evolution in the 1960s as "the escape from the factory," as liberation from repressive normative ideology and the process of artistic modernization (Kmita 2009a, 23). Such ephemeral liberation became possible while

travelling abroad: unfortunately, only those who had close links with the reliable elite of Soviet culture could visit "capitalist" Scandinavia.

In private diaries, the impressions of the individualist creative person who could escape the marasmic Soviet routine were given in a straightforward manner, undisguised by metaphor. A prominent literary critic Vytautas Kubilius (1928–2004), who also participated in the same tour of Norway, revealed in his private diary the psychological complexes of a Soviet intellectual who painfully responded to the contrasts of the political atmosphere "here and there." The tour itself was compared to a fairy tale and a fascinating picture. The greatest contrast could be felt upon returning home, when everyone should return to the common state of material and spiritual poverty, and this depressing state of being seemed permanent. After a short encounter with Western civilization, Soviet tourists required adaptation and self-determination for the long-lasting role of a pursued animal or an anonymous and hypocritical person lacking any dignity, living "in the zone of taboos": "And now—keep silence with your ears folded while nobody crushes you, while nobody squashes you, while wheels of the machine are not smashing you" (Kubilius 2006, 343).[7] The Scandinavian chronotope was the symbol of freedom and a respectable life, especially when it reminded one of lost opportunities. The Soviet citizen excited by a Norwegian landscape could only sigh bitterly: "how tidy and beautiful could have been our native land!"

Lithuanian avant-garde poetry was influenced by the shortage of intellectual experiences from abroad and an insatiable desire for independent, "normal," civilized life. Scandinavia might be realized as the desirable model for such a *modus vivendi*.

Tomas Venclova's (1937–) complex metaphors seemed rebellious or enigmatic to the connoisseurs of traditional lyricism; the specific inner logic of space and time was almost unexplainable.[8] Semiotician Algirdas J.

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[7] The rhetoric of a disillusioned intellectual could be interpreted as very crucial and dissident, but these confessions were published only after Kubilius's tragic death in 2004. The diaries of distinguished academic figures of the Soviet period gained publicity generally when they had been recognized as not posing any threat to the diarists.

[8] Venclova was the son of famous Communist litterateur Antanas Venclova, who was the author of an official anthem of Soviet Lithuania. Disillusioned by the brutal suppression of the Hungarian revolution in 1956, Tomas Venclova became a significant critic of the totalitarian regime, and a poet and translator of the poetic and dramatic works that belonged to the canon of Western modernism but were "inconvenient" for the regime. He described his career in the fields of humanities as "risky play with a censor." Expatriation to the West divided his life: after 1977 he could freely express himself as an émigré author and lecturer in the American

Greimas stressed the significance of the temporal dimension in Venclova's poetical semantics and found a chronologically determined "specific tonality of tragism" in his "almost meaningless poetry" (1991, 132). The logical and ontological misbalance of geographical and historical coordinates once symbolized the atmosphere of Soviet schizophrenia, and the poet's efforts to recreate structural order in this fragmented poetical universe led him to an openly dissident position.

Venclova's poetry of the Soviet period was full of civic pathos, and so-called Aesopian language (i.e. hidden codes which seem obscure to censors); the "empire in winter" and "the ice of stagnation" were mentioned in many poems of the Soviet period, and the only hope was the available support from close friends. The symbolic northern cities for him were the political and cultural centres of Russia, Moscow, and Leningrad (St. Petersburg), where he spent a significant part of his youth. Two decades of Brezhnevism (1964–83) were generalized by him as a "totalitarian winter": his famous poem "Winter Dialogue," with its post-catastrophist motifs, could be interpreted as the polemical contrast to the optimistic classical book of verses *Pavasario balsai* [*Voices of Spring*] (1895) by the bard of the Lithuanian national revival Maironis. While analysing Venclova's texts of the Soviet period, émigré critics mentioned "the freeze that penetrates through words" (Šilbajoris 1992, 447) that had obstructed the efforts of self-expression.

The poem "Autumn in Copenhagen" (1983) belongs to the later period of Venclova's creative career when he became a respectable professor at Yale University and travelled extensively around the world. His lyrical subject was introduced to the situation of a triple separation: he gradually lost contact with his homeland, native language, and a loving woman. This poem was qualified as a "triple love-story," which finished in a "triple fail" (Nastopka 2002, 60–1). The loss of homeland was realized in the foreign Northern European city—and had led to the ignorance of nostalgia itself: "So there remains the homeland—/ only as soundless threat, only as a leaked uranic whale/ on the cliffs of the shore" (Venclova 2010, 162). "Autumn in Copenhagen" symbolized the final farewell to the Soviet absurd (and, sad to say, Lithuania was regarded as a part of this absurd), but Scandinavia did not become more familiar in its place, when Venclova's subject had overcome the notorious "Iron Curtain." One of the Nordic capitals welcomed the tragic nomad with coolness; he felt himself

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universities, but his books were banned in the USSR. His first (and last published in Lithuania under the Soviets) collection of verses *Kalbos ženklas* [*Sign of Language*] (1972) was influenced by Western Imagist and Russian Acmeist poetical traditions.

insecure there, although he was already accustomed to recurrent feelings of loss and yearning. Winter was related to the experience of menace that breathed in the air. The topography of the central district of Copenhagen (although it was clearly mapped by references to St. Ann's square, Tivoli park, and the strait of Kattegat) was transformed into a playground of subjective consciousness. Venclova's glance at the urban landscape is unique compared to the poets of his generation: his subject is full of creative or destructive energy and can metaphorically reincarnate into a complex architectural structure, not only absorbing sensual impressions of the outer world. The phenomenological perception seems to be different: "Vaičiūnaitė's city penetrates into an awaiting, suggestive body … T. Venclova's body penetrates into a city, modifying himself into its model" (Kavolis 1994b, 356). Exotic places and must-see sites are turned into mediums for the demonstration of existential conflict.

Venclova often emphasizes his "love of geography" (Mitaitė 2002, 146); beside poetical impressions from all the continents, he is the author of a travel guide to his beloved city of Vilnius, and comprehensive tourist diaries containing accounts from very exotic countries. In his metaphoric reflections, the Scandinavian city was related to the stereotypical image of punctilious order, but this order looked fragile; it could easily be disturbed by the "uranic whale," the element of intrusive power.

Nostalgia and a "Polaroid-style" Vision of the North

Lithuanian émigré poets in the Western Hemisphere felt themselves unrestrained by political borders; however, the state of civic freedom did not provide them with a cultural advantage and did not encourage integrating into local societies. Henrikas Nagys (1920–96)[9] meditated on the idea of the solidarity and "brotherhood" of romantic ramblers; he declared that the "north is the home for all poets" ("Poems about North") (Nagys 1990, 232). The atmosphere of his verses can hardly be called idyllic: he clearly perceived the existential danger of atomic war as he belonged to "the cold war generation, which survived one catastrophe only to wait for the second, and ultimate, Armageddon" (Šilbajoris 1970, 231). Nagys was a very sociable poet and public figure, who shared all the urgent problems of the Canadian-Lithuanian community; nevertheless, he

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[9] When Lithuania was occupied by the USSR for the second time, Nagys was exiled to Germany in 1944, lived in Montreal, Canada from 1950. In his collections of verses *Broliai balti aitvarai* [Brothers White Kites] (1969) and *Prisijaukinsiu sakalą* [I Will Domesticate a Falcon] (1978), the beauty of the wild Quebec nature is reflected.

was overwhelmed by the metaphysical vision of the North, which was a cosmological reference rather than a geographical fact:

> A final embodiment of this mystique is the Northern Star around which turns the constellation of the Great Bear, always pointing North that now comes to symbolize the friendship of the free and brave as well as the longing to be back home under the Northern sky. (Šilbajoris 2002, 127)

Nostalgia for the homeland was broadened to a cosmic dimension, and Nagys's subject called himself "brother" of all rebels and avant-garde artists, thus escaping the claustrophobic reserve of émigré culture. At the same time, the North is the dimension of eternal freeze, death, and repressive exile to Siberia, which was notoriously familiar to several generations of Lithuanians.

Nagys was fascinated by the Scandinavian neo-Romantic fiction of Selma Lagerlöf, Karl Gunnarson, Trygve Gulbranssen, Frans Eemil Sillanpää, and Knut Hamsun, as well as the Estonian novelist August Gailit. The poet wrote:

> The people and nature of those writers were familiar to me; they were understandable, as well as their experiences, feelings, moods, dreams, and their struggle with the severe world. This was certain kinship, and I didn't feel it reading the fiction that came from other continents and countries. (Pakalniškis 1994: 168)

"Poems about the North" include the stereotypical vision of Nordic motives as a mix of elementary historical and literary references: "The daughters of Vikings repair the nets until midnight … The winter strolls around in the landscape of eternal night—/ she is slim, graceful and white/ like Solveig" (Nagys 1990, 234). The North was contemplated as a metaphysical, eschatological home that should be rediscovered by all post-war émigrés at the end of their life journey. The shining of the northern landscape was so unambiguously bright and denying of all doubts that Vytautas A. Jonynas, a close friend of Nagys and a literary critic who also lived in Montreal, once joked that "something was too well recognizable in these poems: all that domesticated north, the Polaroid-style Dainava[10] with its little bridge near the embankment" (Jonynas 2006, 637).

The nostalgic émigré communities tried to distinguish the inherent Baltic element from the Slavic, Eastern European identity and remodel the national character. For a small country whose auto-image is not well

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[10] I.e. one of the ethnographical and historical regions of Lithuania.

established, it is easy to choose new roles and reinterpret history. While Scandinavian identity meant higher status, a sufficient comfort of living, and cultural superiority, it was desirable and appreciable. When the national image was included in the semantic field of austerity, gloom, isolationism, and severity, *northernism* became a source of adverse generalizations, and the public voices (for instance, poets) were forced to change geopolitical orientation, "to modify negative hetero-stereotypes, to demystify the visionary image of Lithuania as a polar country" (Laurušaitė 2014, 131). The image of the "domesticated north" that was credited to Nagys symbolized the pattern of the lost Lithuanian paradise. Exiles who maintained only imaginary links with their homeland used to create museums of personal memory in their private premises, crammed full of nostalgic souvenirs; even the public spaces dedicated to the émigré communities were loaded with kitschy reminders of the past.[11] The poet's vision of the north was in fact not Nordic, Canadian, or Lithuanian—it was a complex of artificial images, although it reflected sincere efforts to adopt these "northern" stereotypes and "translate" them into the dialect of national romanticism.

In the imaginary world of Nagys there was a place for the mythic hero who lived in harmony with the elements of nature and could easily overcome distances. Weariness after the long wandering across the northern land, the sense of intoxication, and the loss of orientation characterized the moods of the lyrical subject. He did not expect to defeat the forces of nature or to reach secure shelter. His only wish was to converge with a landscape, to become its metaphorical voice, and to reach nirvana-like solidarity with all the creatures of nature. The subject focused his gaze on the sky seeking the blessing of superior authorities: "I will cut a piece of that azure/ and will breathe deeply with the spring-like wind/ let my head swirl/ with the scent of spongy glaciers in the north/ and with a breath of/ homeland of falcons" ("It Was Said in Spring") (Nagys 1996, 175).

The northern axis of Nagys's poetical geography may be qualified as the utopian chronotope of childhood, and absolute perfection. The poet

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[11] The overcrowdedness of mementos was a characteristic feature of Eastern European émigré diasporas in the West. Svetlana Boym, who analysed the cultural manifestations of nostalgia, shared her impressions of the private interiors of Russian expatriates in New York and Boston: all these "collections of diasporic souvenirs tempt us at first glance with heartwrenching symbolism of the abandoned mother country; yet the stories these owners tell about their objects reveal more about making a home abroad than about reconstructing the original loss" (Boym 2001, 328).

was exceptional for his specific "Nordic" view of wild nature, the image of the nomad wanderer (borrowed from the impressionist *fin de siècle* Scandinavian novels), ecologically minded respect for natural vitality and contempt for urbanistic culture. Like Kukutis by Martinaitis, Nagys's folk-style mythical characters "Falcon," "Brother," and "Aitvaras" [12] could change their localization, hopping from Canada to his native Samogitia or distant Siberia, but at the same time they proved the integrity of national identity. Nagys's "northern" character never accepted humour or irony; his rhetoric was generally straightforward, full of literary clichés. Being a utopian territory, his universal home for genuine poets did not allude to the literary topoi of classical Ithaca, Arcadia, or Eldorado. This space needs to be conquered and protected, but nobody can take root there or devote themselves specifically to cultural activity.

Postmodernist Gaps of Communication in the Remote Island

When the independent state of Lithuania became part of the Western world, a new type of travelling poet appeared whose duty it was to write texts while being in a literary "internship." The Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators, located on Gotland Island, Sweden, organizes month-long stays for writers from Eastern Europe. Writers can get close to contemporary Scandinavian culture, and many young, up-and-coming litterateurs have successfully taken this opportunity. Poets dominate among them, perhaps because poetry is the most suitable genre to express momentary moods on a foreign island. Many Lithuanian poems were written in Gotland, and most of them are sarcastic, frivolous, and ironic. We can hardly find any intention of cultural dialogue in them. The lyrical subject is often exposed as a contemplator of everyday impulses or a bohemian idler, sitting on the shore with a bottle of wine (some kind of romantic *flâneur* à la Baudelaire). The new texts are reminiscent of complicated theorems, and sessions of wordplay; they multiply new myths and stereotypes.

In the poem "Touristy Poetry: Gotland in November" (2007) by Artūras Valionis (1973–) women-Carlsons, legendary comic figures trolls, and "Scandinavian nymphs of the bicycles" appear. The Swedes are no longer regarded as *žuvėdai*, lying down "on the ground with their toes pointing north"; however, they are still observed from a suspicious distance. The poet is happy to submerge himself in bookish reality and allusions to popular children's literature, wherein the images of the

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[12] A symbolical figure of fortune in Lithuanian folklore, literally meaning "kite."

Swedish classic writer Astrid Lindgren and Swedish-speaking Finnish author Tove Jansson reveal a slightly ironic position, though the reader can find naïve superstitions about Scandinavians in this poem. A contemporary Lithuanian poet "reincarnates" into "a bow-backed Baltic Moomintroll" because he wishes to adapt to the foreign environment stereotypically exhibited as a scene of infantile carnival (Valionis 2012, 32–3).

The series of poems "Letters from Visby" by Rimantas Kmita (1977–) may be read as a private diary full of digressions and philosophical essays. The space of the isolated island looks advantageous for the practice of leisurely meditation. While strolling along the shore of Gotland, his culturally oriented subject simultaneously meditates about the digital copying of medieval mystic texts, the classical horror film by Stanley Kubrick *The Shining* (1980), and a little magpie on the lonely figure of a cross:

> A cross just like a knife divides everything, it is grimly cruel to those who are different, and this is distinction from a wheel which is tolerant and implies that there are many different ways although generally that's the same thing. (Kmita 2009b, 56–7)

Medieval mysticism encourages Kmita's subject to contemplate his perceptive impulses as geometrical symbols. The Scandinavian spirit of tolerance inspires his meditations about the fundamental semiology of the wheel and the cross (elementary symbols of Buddhism and Christianity). He is trying to persuade the audience that his visit to Visby has been productive, despite the fact that his impressions did not differ from those of an easy-going tourist. Cogitating about everyday boredom, he reveals his individual method of phenomenological reduction, which seems sarcastic rather than analytical. The politically correct, idyllic, tempered, and partly infantile atmosphere of the contemporary Scandinavian intellectual scene, as it is reflected in the sketchy poetical form, lacks any dramatism. Kmita's asocial, misanthropic subject encounters difficulties while trying to communicate so he withdraws into his private world, and the space of the remote Scandinavian island seems to be favourable for such a poetical retreat.

In Lithuanian postmodern poetry, Scandinavian culture relates to the values of individualism and tolerance and does not suppress the free flow of thoughts, so there is no need for Aesopian-style metaphors and the poem is spontaneously transformed into fictional reportage. In literary accounts about the visit, postmodernist authors frankly reflect their encounter with the Other and their emotional responses, such as embarrassment, fear, and ennui; sometimes they even demonstrate arrogance, concealing post-

Soviet complexes. Certainly, the island of Gotland cannot compare with London, Paris, and other centres of the world tourism industry or landmarks of cultural pilgrimage, but Gotland (as located off the beaten track) may suggest a comfortable position for contemplation and self-estimation. The foreign gaze can easily be focused on the spectator themselves; the narcissist viewer can meet their own reflection in the mirror of a previously unseen landscape.

Conclusions

The image of Scandinavian culture was considerably influenced by literary texts: independent, emotionally misbalanced, boisterous individualities from the works of Ibsen, Strindberg, and Hamsun and their cult of natural vitality call to open the mind to the primordial elements that fascinated Lithuanian neo-Romantic intellectuals of the early twentieth century. The enlightened elite tried to install the principles of a civic society and modify the reviving Lithuanian nationalism with ideas of Baltoscandian confederation. This ambitious geopolitical vision was not supported by axiological arguments: the social, confessional, and economic differences between the distinct shores of the Baltics restricted plans for integration. During the interwar period of cultural Eurocentrism (1918–40), litterateurs often visited Nordic countries and overestimated the heroism of the Vikings who conquered the North. Antithetical myths of Prometheus's sacrifice and narcissist egocentrism were intermingled in the poetical subconsciousness and were related to the stereotypical Nordic characters of extremely popular novels and dramas.

During the first decade of post-war Soviet occupation (1944–54), all means of communication with the northern neighbours were discontinued, and anachronistic historical stereotypes replaced immediate experiences. Scandinavia was regarded as a uniformly alien and hostile territory. The historical name for Swedes, *žuvėdai* (literally, "fish-eaters") appeared in modernist poetry as a historical and cultural allusion, proving that collective memory with the whole complex of national stereotypes was still alive in the era of censorship (in Martinaitis and Vaičiūnaitė). The mythically based and allegorical character Kukutis was represented as a survivor of the global catastrophe appealing to the archaic agrarian images (in Martinaitis). "The chill of empire" and "stagnation of the North" were typical metaphors of Soviet life. The topographical landscape of the Scandinavian capital city recalled the topics of estrangement (in Venclova). While travelling to Norway, attention was focused on the simple objects of "normal life" and the private experience (in Vaičiūnaitė),

as opposed to the official propaganda of collectivism. The resentfulness of the intellectual, who clearly realized their hermetic isolation, could be expressed only in a private diary (of Kubilius). During the Cold War era, all the encounters with the mysterious but desirable Other evoked the inferiority complexes of the tourists, and contact with the locals was sporadic.

The vision of the émigré poet was related to complex emotions in the metaphorical shelter for nomadic "brothers" and the nostalgic image of the long-lost homeland included in the semantics of the North, and the lyrical subject could feel themselves being entangled in kitschy "Polaroid-style" sentimentalism. The North was qualified as the lost paradise of childhood and the ideal sphere (in Nagys).

Nowadays, the barriers of cultural distance have been lost and, ironically, stylized touristy poetry flourishes, but its imagery is still based on the traditional stereotypes of Scandinavia as the "distant neighbour": familiar enough, attractive and seductive, but at the same time hermetic, and not tied by a close mental and spiritual relationship.

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Cultural Stereotypes of Vilnius in the Modern Poetry of Lithuanian Poles

Algis Kalėda

The Subject Matter and Scope of the Research

The main subject of this article is the reflection of cultural phenomena and human artefacts of the city of Vilnius, and those related to the city, in the modern poetry of the Poles of Lithuania mainly created after 1990. The most abundant ethnic minority (there are about two hundred thousand Poles living in Lithuania) is known for a relatively strong national-cultural identity that is based on rich historical traditions. After the departure of almost the entire intelligentsia after the Second World War, the cultural and literary life of local Poles revived only in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Modern poetry by Lithuanian Poles has not yet been widely examined; this phenomenon was mainly described in popular periodicals, introductions to separate anthologies, and occasional articles. The subject has been reflected in wider works aimed at comparative studies of the Lithuanian-Polish literary connections only as separate fragments (in works by Tadeusz Bujnicki, Wojciech Jerzy Podgórski, Aleksander Fiut, Halina Turkiewicz, Inessa Szulska, Andrzej Franaszek). Certain aspects of the subject can also be found in monographs on famous Polish writers related to Lithuania by Adam Mickiewicz, Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, Czesław Miłosz, Józef Mackiewicz, and others.

This article sets out a diachronic paradigm illustrating the key modifications of Vilnius cultural stereotypes and their variations in literature. Based on the analysis of empirical material, certain synchronous parallels have also been drawn with current Lithuanian poetry, illustrating the cultural layers of Vilnius from different angles.

Almost all, or the vast majority, of these authors were born, studied, and now live in Vilnius or the region, though some have left Lithuania and are writing in, for example, Germany (Alicja Rybałko) or Poland (Romuald Mieczkowski). However, as a matter of fact there are no

boundaries in today's Europe, in the European Union, and thus the places of residence of authors as well as the concept of contacts with readers are changing completely. The internet and other communication tools allow us to feel as if we are living in a single community, a sort of "global village" (a concept used by Marshall McLuhan). A similar situation has formed with Lithuanian authors, the only difference being that the audience for Polish readers is much wider throughout the world.

The current core of the Polish poets is a writers' club established under the daily *Kurjer Wileński* [*Courier of Vilnius*] in 1978, whose members released an anthology *Sponad Wilii cichych fal* [*Down the Peaceful Waves of the Neris River*] (1985). The club published the works of authors representing all the post-war generations—the senior (Jadwiga Bębnowska, Maria Stępowska, Michał Wołosewicz), the middle (Maria Łotocka, Sławomir Worotyński, Wojciech Piotrowicz), and the junior (Henryk Mażul, Romuald Mieczkowski). These and other poets (about twenty of them) have published or are publishing their poems in periodicals, monothematic anthologies, and separate books in Lithuania and Poland. Over about thirty years (since 1985) more than fifty books have been published, constituting an important creative habitat for our region. R. Mieczkowski (fifteen books), Aleksander Śnieżko (ten books), and Alicja Rybałko (seven books) may be mentioned as the most productive authors; in addition, a number of collections were released by Piotrowicz and Józef Szostakowski.

Of course, statistical data do not adequately reflect either the place occupied by the poetry of Lithuanian Poles in the culture of the country or its artistic potential. Usually, these are small publications, holding about thirty to forty poems, and released with a circulation of about one hundred to two hundred copies. A large part of their creative work has been published in relatively abundant anthologies, where not only Polish, but also Lithuanian, Belarusian, Russian, and Ukrainian poets published their work; these publications demonstrate not only individual artistic conventions and styles but also depict interesting comparative aspects. *Przenieść Wilno do serca. Portret Miasta* [*Move Vilnius over to the Heart. Portrait of the City*] (2009) and *Susitikimai. Spotkania* [*Meetings*] (2013) can be mentioned among anthologies of particular value to the problems of this publication.

What are the main characteristics uniting, or "binding," the Polish poets of Lithuania? Which artistic conventions do they usually use? Here, comparisons and parallels with the entire body of Polish poetry usually emerge. The compilers of the anthology *Współczesna poezja Wileńszczyzny* [The Modern Poetry of Vilnija] (1986), published in Warsaw, discuss in

the introductory part the development of creative works in the post-war years and distinguish three main artistic trends with their own thematic and artistic preferences. The first is unique, stylized "folk art" reminiscent of the artistic style of poets of the nineteenth century (Władysław Syrokomla, Maria Konopnicka); the second is "resting on traditional versification and stanza, discussing public-political topics" (this is close to the poetry of Władysław Broniewski); the third is "a syncretic current of innovative, modern poetry" (authors such as Maria Łotocka, Mieczkowski and Mażul can be considered the ambassadors of this trend. It should be noted that authors compare Mażul with the representatives of the Polish poetic avant-garde, Tadeusz Różewicz and Stanisław Grochowiak) (*Współczesna poezja Wileńszczyzny* 1986, 8–11).

After the debut and active manifestation of representatives of the new generation in 1990, the number of works using modern or even avant-garde means of expression has increased. Many poets have given up direct declarations, open poetisms (which were used before), and open emotionalism, and have instead started using cultural contexts, polysemous irony, the grotesque, and stylizations.

Traditions

Poetry in the Polish language has deep roots in Lithuania, reaching back to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. From the ancient poetic texts created during the Renaissance until the very end of the eighteenth century, the poetry of Lithuanian Poles explored various motives, revealing the beauty of the country and emblematically exalting the courage and nobility of its people. Of course, the artistic suggestibility of the works and the hypnotism and expression of images depended on specific artistic individuality and talent, as well as the context of patriotic and civic pronouncement. Such authors as Andrzej Rymsza, Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, Samuel Dougird, Daniel Naborowski, Stanisław Samuel Szemiot, Adam Naruszewicz, and numerous students of the Vilnius Academy can be considered as the most outstanding creators. The repertoire of traditional stereotypes is related to the works of these poets marking the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the founding of Vilnius (a myth about Gediminas's dream), the Gates of Dawn, and the Neris river (Vilija), and churches, palaces, etc. also play an important role.

Meanwhile, images developed in recent times are first of all associated with works of Adam Mickiewicz and the ideas he manifested. This poet, who studied in Vilnius University and made the statement "Litwo, Ojczyzno moja" ["Lithuania, My Homeland"], became an integral

component of the cultural space of the city. Similarly to the epoch of Romanticism, his characteristic topics and poetic affirmations became a rich centre of stereotypes, which generated many individual artistic options. First of all, this includes the mysterious history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL), and the tragic and heroic destiny of its rulers—the entire myth of "majestic and dear" Lithuania and its capital Vilnius, which continues to this day in a wide variety of forms.

Currently, the most relevant are the traditions of works of romanticism and the interwar period. These subjects also take up the major share of cultural stereotypes in the current literature.

The images of twentieth-century Lithuania in Polish literature are clearly associated with the works of Czesław Miłosz—his poetry, prose, and essays. He made a great impact on the formation of the space of cultural images of Vilnius. Several groups of literary topics, themes, and images can be distinguished in these texts, which are in a way also drawing the horizons of the entire modern poetry of Lithuanian Poles. It is safe to say that almost all analogous or similar dimensions are emerging in the works of current Polish poets of Lithuania. Of course, the impact made by Miłosz is not straightforward; it manifests rather itself as a variation of similar motifs, usually related to the Lithuanian past, a love for the country, a "childhood paradise", the relations between Lithuanians and Poles and, most of all, cultural artefacts and spaces of the city of Vilnius.

Literary Topics, Individual Options

One of the most important centres of the topicality of Vilnius is the heritage of romanticism and, above all, Mickiewicz, as well as attributes related to him and the heroes of his works. They recur in the collections of Mieczkowski, which are often named after historical and cultural stereotypes representing the city of Vilnius. For instance, in his debut collection named after a sacred name of the city *W Ostrej Bramie* [*The Gates of Dawn*] (1990), the poet draws the contours of cultural action along with numerous lyrical reflections. In the poem "W podwórzu u Mickiewicza" ["In the Courtyard of Mickiewicz"], cultural realities of the past are perceived as a kind of a matrix impacting the perception of the present. The space of the poem comes as no coincidence: this is where the poet lived, wrote his poems, and where a museum has been established in his name. The imagination of the lyrical subject revives the silhouettes of the poet-romanticist and his heroes (the poem "Grażyna" in this case), which are depicted in the context of a fire that recently happened there.

But the portrait of a heroic woman is identified with an elderly resident of the city:

> I nie zawzięta Grażyna/ hardym wzrokiem raptem/ przechodnia zatrzyma—/ a szpetna stara kobieta/ w poszczerbionej bramie/ próbuje za pół dartmo/ polne kwiaty sprzedać.
> [And it is not a revengeful Grażyna/ who will hastily stop/ a passer-by with her eyebeam—/ but rather an ugly disgusting woman/ trying to sell wild flowers/ for almost nothing/ in a dilapidated arch-gate]. (Mieczkowski 1990, 37)

Similar transformed images are typical of another collection of the poet, which also bears a "labelled" literary name *Podłoga w celi Konrada* [*Konrad's Cell Floor*] (1994). Here, the poet operates easily identifiable cultural-literary emblems of Vilnius. For example, the title piece treats the place of detention of the poet-romanticist in the Basilian monastery at the beginning of the nineteenth century as the junction of history and the current reality. The past has already become a symbolic space, a myth, while the present is too mundane to preserve that myth. The first part of the piece talks about the cell floor, which might preserve the memory of Mickiewicz:

> w szczelinach pazur zapomnienia—/ w jakim kącie ogrzewał Wieszcz ręce/ w które wypatrywał okno.
> [in the cracks of oblivion—/ the corner where the Prophet warmed his hands/ the window, which he looked through]. (Mieczkowski 1994, 46)

But, of course, that floor is different today, illuminated by "banal lamps." The second half of the poem somewhat denies the first. Now the voices of contemporary creators and their "unnatural words dressed too much" are heard, which contrast with the authentic romantic atmosphere. The finale of the poem formulates a melancholic conclusion, which is paradoxically true: the feet of the poet-romanticist "never stood on *this* floor" (emphasis mine).

It should be emphasized that Miłosz visited Konrad's cell multiple times in the interwar period; he attended literary events there (the so-called "Środy Literackie" ["Literature Wednesdays"]) where he read poems and held discussions with his colleagues. The fact that, after a fifty year absence from Lithuania, Miłosz came to Vilnius in 1992 and held a meeting with Lithuanian authors, readers, and fans in Konrad's cell resonated widely. Overall, both the poet and other literati treat this site as a sacred place in the city, with a relationship to many manifestations of the past.

Specific poets interpret the literary stereotypes of Vilnius using their favourite aesthetic conventions, artistic tools, and stylistic shapes, and of course their personal intuition. Thus, similar phenomena are depicted in the works of various authors through new, yet unnoticed aspects. In order to create original variations of the stereotype, its portrayal in a certain context (the "contextualization" of the image) is of high significance. In certain cases, the context is relatively specific (this can be a street, a monastery cell, a house, a monument, or a floor), and in other cases it extends to virtual or imaginative paintings.

These are the principles used to portray the personality of Mickiewicz and his environment in poems written by Worotyński—"Nad Wilenką" ["At the River Vilnelė"], "Zima Adama Mickiewicza" ["Winter of Adam Mickiewicz"], "Harfa Maryli" ["Maryla's Harp"], and others. Mickiewicz is known for light lyrical touches and a thoughtful tone, and thus imagological contexts created by him can be distinguished by their reflexivity and a wide range of connotations. Through the skilful use of synecdoche, metaphors, and metonymies, the poet brings certain details to light and thus revives the contours of Lithuanian patriots and the process of Philomates-Philaretos. The waves of the Vilnelė River have become the pretext for the poem, bringing back memories:

Rzeka rzeźbi fale na wodzie … / Na prawym brzegu w lesie Belmontu/ stało krzesło filomatów./ Na lewym ciężki but Nowosilcowa./ Dzisiaj tym miejscu/ Stoi wołacz mostu/ na przęsłach pierwszej zwrotki/ z "Pana Tadusza"

[The river is moulding waves in the water as if a sculpture … / a chair of Philomates/ stood on the right-hand shore of the Belmont forest./ On the left-hand shore there was a heavy Novosilcov's (a persecutor of Philomates) shoe./ Today a herald of the bridge/ is standing in that place/ on the poles of the first strophe/ on the verse from "Pan Tadeusz"] ("Lithuania, My Homeland," *Współczesna poezja Wileńszczyzny* 1986: 64)

Concisely describing the legendary love story of the poet in the poem "Zima Adama Mickiewicza" ["Winter of Adam Mickewicz"], Worotyński plays with colours, symbolizing the joy and tragedy of love as well as the change in individual emotions:

Miała być freskiem/ Pięknym jak miłość./ W białym Poezja./ W białym Maryla.// Po co, powiecie, tak się zdarzyło?/ W białym Poezja,/ W czarnym Maryla

[There had to be a fresco/ Beautiful like love./ Poetry in white robe./ Maril in white.// You will ask/ why this happened?/ Poetry is in white./ Maril—in black]. (*Współczesna poezja Wileńszczyzny* 1986, 64–5)

Literary motives are manifested somewhat differently in the works of Sokołowski. The author tries to divine the riddles of existence through lyrical discourse, conveying the individualities of separate authors and imitating their worldviews. In the poem "Pamięci poety litewskiego Pauliusa Širvysa" ["In Remembrance of the Lithuanian Poet Paulius Širvys"], the lyrical subject concludes: "Głębiny życia drążył/ I zagadką został" ["He explored the depths of life/ and remained a mystery himself"]. Meanwhile, in his other poem "Studnia Syrokomli" ["The Syrokomla Well"], Sokołowski tries to summarize semantic depth, a kind of "inexhaustibleness" of the works of the romanticist of Vilnius using a see-through metaphor of the "well."

On the other hand, the latest Polish poetry contains elements of cultural relativism, which are probably associated with postmodern trends. In his poetic cycle "Dostałem e-maila od" ["I Got an E-mail from"] in the collection *Do krainy milczenia* [*To the Land of Silence*] (2012), Tomas Tamošiūnas interprets Polish cultural phenomena and their echoes from the point of view of a modern person. In this work, a synchronous mosaic of different eras and art genres is created—such cultural phenomena as the pop music group Czerwone Gitary, nineteenth-century Vilnius composer Stanisław Moniuszko, the writer, painter, and modernist from Krakow, Stanisław Wyspiański functioning in parallel with Miłosz, and the character of the famous contemporary film director Krzysztof Kieślowski emerge. At the end of the poem, the lyrical subject asks:

Kulturo, masz pytania/ bo ja mam// Czemu też giniesz/ w mych rękach?

[Do you, culture, have any questions? Because I do// So why are you dying/ in my hands?] (Tamošiūnas 2012, 22)

Similar reflections are also typical of such poets like Mażul, Rybałko, Dariusz Kaplewski, and Jarosław Samosionek. Their work shows a sort of balance between the conventional literary stereotypes of Vilnius and the original interpretations of universal images. When diagnosing the state of the poetry of Lithuanian Poles, Tadeusz Bujnicki, wrote:

Still there are questions about the identity of the Polish literature in Vilnius, its relations with currents of literature functioning in Poland, about the functions of poetry in respect of other genres and external focus on the Lithuanian literature … The return to a sort of exotic literary "enclave"

outside the borders of Poland, to the reserve of romantic emotions may become a very useless thing. (Bujnicki 2002, 337)

On the other hand, the sacralization of one's own "domesticated" space and the recurring individual interpretations are very typical of this poetry, and this is one of the most important features of its imagological system.

The Topography of Vilnius

The main feature of this paradigm is the "palimpsest" poetics and its multi-layered portrayal. Cultural images in works about the buildings, streets, and other spaces of Vilnius have rich semantics. Authors often turn back to the past and in a way "resurrect" and refresh the memory of objects that functioned in the past, as well as the experience of people who lived there. However, the images of Vilnius acquired their relative meaning through their relationship with a specific object and its ability to recognize the signs of previous lives.

The poetry of one of the most talented Polish poets of Lithuania, Rybałko, stands out in this respect. She released her first collection *Wilno, ojczyzna moja* [*Vilnius, my Homeland*] in 1990, then published her books *Listy z Arki Noego* [*Letter's from the Noah's Ark*] (1991), *Będę musiała być prześliczna* [*I Will Have to Be Charming and Magnificent as Well*] (1992), and *Moim wierszem niech będzie milczenie* [*Let Silence be My Verse*] (1995). Images of the city are usually interpreted in her collections as equivalents of the emotional survival of an individual living "here and now." Together, they bear witness to the history, the existence of the entire community, and the individual characters of the city; the vitality and inexhaustible energy of cultural spaces emerge in works of this poet such as "To jeszcze Wilno" ["This is Still Vilnius"], "Złocone Wilno" ["Gold-Plated Vilnius"], and "Do Wilna" ["To Vilnius"]. On the other hand, topographical representations of the city have experienced the impact of destructive time, and their sacredness is often transformed and disturbed, touched by profane desecration. This is, first of all, typical of churches, which were abandoned during the Soviet period and turned into museums of atheism, and the famous churches of Saint Ann and Saint Casimir described in the poem "Złocone Wilno" stand out in this context:

> Czy jesteś pięknie opakowane, Miasto/ czy jesteś/ całe w podartych złudzeniach … / Staruszce z Zarzecza/ zostają pomarszczone dłonie/ świętej Anny./ I Kazimierz/ pusty jak dusza po ateizmie

[Are you nicely packaged, the City,/ or are you all/ covered in torn illusions … / An old lady from Užupis/ is left with/ wrinkled palms/ of saint Ann/ and Casimir—/ empty as the soul after atheism]. (Rybałko 2003, 136–7)

An immediate sensual approach is often supplemented with images dictated by the imagination. These aspects may be said to merge, and the reality in the imagination of the artist sometimes moves into the realm of fantasy. Possible interpretations of spaces in the city of this type form the basis of a large cycle by Mieczkowski, "Canalleto maluje Wilno" ["Canaletto is Painting Vilnius"]. The poet interprets attributes and symbols of the city as a certain potential, the virtual equivalent of survival. However, these components should be transposed into an aesthetic dimension, "eternalized," and the city will gain a new status. In this way, the author develops an almost ethereal existence:

A jakież namalowałby nad Wilnem niebo—/ byłaby to z pewnością metafora wejścia do raju.

[And what if he painted the sky over Vilnius—/ this would surely be a metaphor for the entrance to paradise]. (Mieczkowski 2011, 8)

Many poets follow direct visual signs in general and describe individual external elements, contrasting them with components at a different level. Ideas about the fusion of arts (architecture, poetry, painting, music) are reflected in the sonnet "Wstęp do Katedry Wileńskiej" ["Entrance to the Vilnius Cathedral"], written by Vorotyński as if in a magic mirror; they are given a meaning as if united by the senses of the lyrical "ego":

Klasyczne kolumny wileńskiej katedry./ Fetyszem zadumy—poezji kalendarz/ przed różą ekspresji z nut Bacha i piętra./ Przed oknem pejzażu Rustema i piękna./ Przenigdy te okna i kwity nie zwiędną.

[Pillars of the Vilnius Cathedral of the classicism times./ Fetish of surprise—a calendar of poetry/ in front of the rose of expression from the music and stage of Bach./ In front of the window and beauty of Rustem scenery./ Never will those windows and flowers die]. (*Współczesna poezja Wileńszczyzny* 1986, 63)

Another poem by Vorotyński called "Park Vingis" playfully intertwines the components of various planes: parts of Vilnius and Paris (*Bois de Boulogne*), the youthful love of the poetic subject, and a flirtation of the young romantic poet Juliusz Słowacki ("Julek") with Ludwika Śniadecka.

However, the topography of Vilnius also comprises images that are already non-existent, marked with a sense of loss. This sensation is enshrined in a suggestive cycle about Vilnius, "Miasto bez imienia" ["City Without a Name"], written by Miłosz; this emotional motif is repeated in the poem "Miasto młodości" ["City of my Youth"]. Miłosz, a Nobel Prize winner, portrays walks down familiar streets, which however evoke thoughts about his past life:

> To live is not decorous,/ Says he who after many years/ Returned to the city of his youth. There was no one left/ Of those who once walked these streets. (Miłosz 1996, 412; English translation by Miłosz and Robert Hass)

Continuous life-death dialectics also emerge in the poem by Mieczkowski "Ból cmentarza Rossa" ["Pain of the Rasos Cemetery"]. In the scenery of the cemetery the poet sees both traces of destruction and "a little growing maple tree". At the end of the poem, a thoughtful melancholic conclusion resounds.

Topographical signs interpreted from the perspective of the present become keynote axes in other poems by this poet such as "Ścieżką na Trzykrzyską Górę" ["Path to the Hill of Three Crosses"], "Weekend nad Zielonymi Jeziorami" ["A Weekend at the Green Lakes"], and "Prośba o spojrzenie z wieży Katedry" ["Request to Take a Look Down from the Cathedral Tower"]. They create the atmosphere of a close dialogue that is sincere and warm. Mieczkowski designs a presumed addressee, possibly a sacred object, area, or simply a friend. Sometimes a poem imitates the intonation of a confession, request, or prayer. A rhetorical salutation to the Virgin Mary occurs in the poem "W Ostrej Bramie" ["At the Gates of Dawn"]:

> Co w opiece Wilno trzyma/ I razem mnie z tym miastem/ moim I nie moim

> [Who watches over Vilnius/ and also me together with that city/ mine and not mine]. (*Przenieść Wilno do serca* 2009, 76)

It is interesting to note that the motives of pagan mythology and characters, which were very popular in the nineteenth century, remain relevant. They are willingly exploited by both Lithuanian and Polish poets, thus expanding the symbolic space of the entire city.

The sonnet written by Piotrowicz "Zaranie Wilna" ["Vilnius in the Morning"] can be seen to revive mythological images and create a dynamic cinema spectacle:

W Dolinie Świntoroga wieczny ogień bucha/ Potężny Perkun stoi posępny
I dumny/ Dąbrowa Święta z niebem gwar prowadzi szumny.

[The eternal fire murmurs in Šventaragis Valley/ The Mighty Thunder
stands scorching, proud/ The Sacred Oak grove is loudly chatting with the
sky]. (*Współczesna poezja Wileńszczyzny* 1986, 53)

Vilnius is a city where various nations live and have lived, and this
subject has many similar parallel features in the poetry of each of them. By
comparing individual works we can recognize traditional stereotypes
"typical of Vilnius," but at the same time find a number of individual,
personal approaches.

A very important book for getting to know the cultural imagology of
Vilnius and its international aspects in greater detail is the previously
mentioned poetry anthology *Przenieść Wilno do serca. Portret Miasta.*
Poems in this anthology portray the perspective of Polish, Lithuanian,
Czech (Libor Martinek), Belarussian (Ihar Babkou), and Russian (Georgij
Jefremov) poets on the city. The dominant thematic centres (the Gates of
Dawn, the District of Užupis, Pilies Street, the Rasos Cemetery, and
others) illustrate common comparative parallels. The diversity of the
authors also indirectly reveals the importance and appeal of the subject. A
book usually manifests experiences and reflections related to two
dimensions of time—the historical and the present. Time, or its layers,
becomes the main hero here, in some places clearly invading the field of
the present, in others subsisting deeper down, not noticeable right away.

Such a traditional reflection of literary stereotypes, individual
attributes, and paraphrases of motives has become almost natural and self-
evident in modern poetry. It is also quite common in the poetry of
Lithuanians. Interpretations and variations of cultural stereotypes pervade
the entire representative anthology *Iš Vilniaus į Vilnių. Rinktinė poezija*
[*From Vilnius to Vilnius. Selection of Poetry*] (2008), a publication of
poems by Lithuanian poets written over half a century from 1946 to 2007.
They depict the history and everyday life of Vilnius, its urban landscape,
and signs of time captured in culture from various angles. The suggestive
and original treatment of this thematic paradigm is characteristic of such
famous poets as Kazys Bradūnas ("Vilniaus užkalbėjimas" ["Incantation
of Vilnius"]; "Prieš Katedrą" ["Before the Cathedral"]), Henrikas Nagys
("Vilniaus baladė" ["A Ballad of Vilnius"]), Justinas Marcinkevičius
("Rudeninė puokštė Vilniui" ["Autumn Bouquet to Vilnius"]), Tomas
Venclova ("Odė miestui" ["Ode to the City"]), Vladas Braziūnas
("Vilniaus stotelės" ["Stops in Vilnius"]), or Antanas A. Jonynas ("Pilies
skersgatvis" ["Pilies Lane"]).

Cultural stereotypes of Vilnius are a vital source of artistic inspiration for the poets of many nations. The reborn Polish poetry created here becomes an equal partner in this respect and, even more, transposes and modifies the very rich and long-lived literary experience of Lithuanian Poles.

Conclusions

The motives of two national identities—Lithuanian and Polish—resonate very suggestively in the poetry of Lithuanian Poles; they can often be interpreted as unique options for the identity and integration of the known opposition: Self and the Other.

Being a permanent component of artistic thinking and identification for the authors, archetypical cultural symbols and artistic manifestations can be interpreted as a special space for a literary movement. This arises under the impact of many factors and occupies a separate topographic-cultural sphere of expression. Cultural stereotypes actualized in the poetry of Lithuanian Poles bear witness to the significant transformation of traditional topics, and unfold like individual bodies of stereotypes and *loci communes*.

On the one hand, the field of this poetry has been impacted by long-lived traditions and poetic patters, especially those related to Vilnius, which are manifested in the works of predecessors (Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki, and other romanticists, as well as Czesław Miłosz and Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński). On the other hand, links to modern Polish poetry and Lithuanian literature can be identified in its structure.

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