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# **Lithuanian Philosophy: Persons and Ideas**

**Lithuanian Philosophical Studies, II**

edited by  
*Jurate Baranova*

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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# Preface

*George F. McLean*

Volume I of Lithuania Philosophical Studies was entitled *Personal Freedom and National Resurgence*. The title reflected the strong emphasis upon the distinctive Lithuanian cultural identity needed in order to support the claim to independence from Russia. The title reflected, moreover, concern lest this emphasis become a threat to personal freedom.

The present volume II in this series of Lithuanian Philosophical Studies, does not advance that issue, but focuses rather on providing a longer view of the history of the development of Lithuanian philosophy. In undertaking the work Professor Jurate Baranova was inspired by an earlier volume in this series, *Czech Philosophy in the XXth Century* done by a team of philosophers at Masaryk University in Brno. In turn, the present work has encouraged similar volumes in other regions.

Part I, "Lithuanians: Their History and Culture", reaches far back into the history and even prehistory of Lithuania and its peoples. Chapter I, "Lithuanian Philosophy: the Search for Authenticity" by J. Baranova is the true introduction to this work. It not only identifies the context of the chapters, but goes much further to identify in detail the various historical philosophical schools, their circumstances and bibliography. The parts of the work reflect in general the history of their development. Chapter II, "Glimpses of Lithuanian History," by Alfredas Bumblauskas and Chapter III, "A Latecomer to Latin Civilization: The Lithuanian Way to World History", by Edvardas Gudavicius provide preliminary overviews of this early background.

Perhaps nowhere is this continuity more evident than at the Cathedral in Vilnius. Legends identify the area as the location of the oracle where the dream of the Iron Lion was interpreted as foretelling the development of a great people. In time the King's palace was built on this location, and over that the Cathedral was later built. For years during the Communist regime the Cathedral was reduced to a museum. The real moment of the reinstitution of a free Lithuania was the day when the Cathedral was restored to the people and began to serve once again as a Cathedral. Perhaps no people are so constituted of an interweaving of legend and history, of palace and Cathedral, as are the people of Lithuania,

Chapter IV, "Lithuanian Mythology," by Gintaras Beresnevicius goes in detail into this heritage of myth, its terms and their etymologies, its themes and their goods in this life and the next. He shows how the ancient myths depicted the human as accidental, taking God by surprise and therefore as lacking meaning; this makes manifest the essential significance of the Christian message in adding the sense of meaning and the spiritual dignity of humankind to Lithuanian culture.

Chapter V, "Lithuanian Messianism: Its Beginnings and Origin," by Vytautas Berenis, is a very sophisticated analysis of the way in which this has constituted a special messianic sense for the nation, a sense of mission for the people and of Providence in its realization. In this it reflects the magnificent volume in the series edited by Leon Dyczewski on *Values in the Tradition of Polish Culture*. By locating human dignity in the people, the issue became not only law but justice. This engages and indeed epitomizes the people. The limitation of messianism is, however, that it is out of history and hence does not engage directly the issue of social progress,

Part II, "Academic Philosophy through the Centuries" provides an overview of the development of professional philosophy in Lithuania. This is provided by Romanas Pleckaitis in Chapter VI, "The Development of Professional Philosophy at The University of Lithuania," providing a detailed account of the development of the faculty of the philosophy department at the University, listing the courses and professors in detail. The last half of the chapter constitutes a veritable *tour de force* by distinguishing the various fields of philosophy and providing a detailed history of the work done in each in the university. It parallels a similar survey of philosophy in Pakistan by the late Richard DeSmet, published recently as an appendix to *Philosophy in Pakistan* in this series. Especially notable in this survey is the extent of the work done on the philosophy of culture. This was much advanced beyond the work of philosophers further West.

As will be seen in subsequent chapters, in order to take account of culture, it is necessary to be able to treat especially of values and hence of the teleology of human life and action toward the good. Adequate appreciation of this heritage of the philosophy of culture and the way it relates to the transcendent character of human nature may require more distance from the Marxist materialist period.

This appeared in the first meeting of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) teams from Central and Eastern Europe in the early '90s. Everything that was not contained within a materialist horizon was referred to as irrational. Upon discussion it became clear that this was the effect of the previous Marxist ideology and that they had no philosophical terminology to express the new areas of freedom which their people had just acquired. In other words as philosophers they were still prisoners of the old ideology. Their people could not advance in freedom to explore their cultural identity and evolve new dimensions for the future to which they aspired until the philosophers freed themselves from this bondage of the mind. This is an issue which philosophers in Lithuania, with their tradition of attention to the issue of terminology, are especially fitted to address.

Part III, "Philosophy between the Two World Wars" is especially detailed and effective in illustrating the great riches and varied dimensions of the Lithuanian philosophical heritage. Chapter after chapter proceeds to unfold not only the rich systematic Thomistic centuries ago, heritage of Christian philosophy upon which the University was founded over four centuries ago, but a broad range of ingenious individual thinkers and a broad range of interests even to Hindu philosophy.

Chapter VII, "Vyduenas: the Essential Features of His Philosophy," by Vaclovas Bagdonavicius manifests the extraordinary reach of this heritage of Lithuanian thought. Vyduenas, though not a trained philosopher — or could it also be because of this? — was able to reach across cultures to find in the Hindu philosophical tradition direct statements of the spiritual dimensions for Lithuanian culture which are not available in Western philosophical traditions.

He describes a twin process of involution from the absolute as plenitude into time and space, and evolution as a return ascension of human life to the spiritual, social and cultural. In fact, Ramaniya's thought will take him only to the sense of plenitude and divine attributes. To complete his cycle and achieve a realism, rather than an idealism, he needs the notion of creation and the thought of Madhva.

Chapter VIII, "Stasys Salkauskis: The Contours of His System," by Arunas Sverdiolas provides an excellent example of the original efforts of Lithuanian thinkers, often without extensive formal training in philosophy, to develop and organize a level of philosophical reflection which reflects their national culture and identity. Stasys Salkauskis was an early example of just

such an effort. His work was theoretical especially as regards ontology, but had a practical focus with insights into the philosophy of culture and of religion.

Chapter IX, "The Social Philosophy of Fabijonas Kemesis," by Adolfas Poska, reflects the heritage of the Catholic philosophical tradition in which many of the philosophers were trained and which they reflected while retaining their own critical stance. This tended to develop a social philosophy which set them in a critical relationship to socialism.

Chapter X, "Between Ideology and the Criticism of Culture: the Case of Julijonas Lindė-Dobilas," by Almantas Samalavicius, studies an attempt to develop a philosophy of culture that would value the cultural creativity of the Lithuanian people and attend to their aspirations as a people and as a nation. This attention to culture is again a special mark of Lithuanian philosophy which bridges its own folk heritage of wisdom to the classical content of the ancient Greek and Christian traditions of Homer and Dante.

Chapter XI, "Oscar Milosz — Theoretician of Love," by Andrius Konickis, analyses analogous dimensions in the thought of Oscar Milosz which he traces to a combination of Jewish, Christian and Cabalistic sources. This focus on love brings out the essential character of the teleological element in any philosophy which is based on the life project or culture of a people. Approaches to philosophy which are unable to relate to this may be able to perform some tasks in philosophy, but are incapable of taking account of the reality of the life and culture of a people however much they may claim to be related to concrete facts or individual choices. In this sense these dimensions of the earlier thought of Lithuania are particularly essential for the development of a philosophy related to the aspirations and creative efforts of the Lithuanian people.

Three philosophers treated here have been concerned with developments in existential philosophy. Chapter XII, "Two Existentialists: Antanas Maceina and Juozas Girnius," by Ruta Tumenaite, describes richly the efforts of these two thinkers to develop philosophy on the bases of the life-world of the people, which indeed has as a yet broader context the people's religious sense of human meaning and commitment. These are precious resources for the development of the sensibilities and aspirations for freedom and authenticity of the new post-Marxist generation. The author draws a rather harsh distinction between the Maceina and Girnius, however, noting that the religious context is noted explicitly by Girnius at the beginning which he considers to be a matter of honesty, whereas it comes only at the end of the method of Maceina. It may be possible to interpret this in an opposite manner, however. From a rationalist perspective the premises need to be made clear, and all is to be deduced therefrom. This would seem to be the expectation of R. Tumenaite. However, in an existential approach one proceeds not from the "top down," but rather from the "bottom up" i.e., from the exercise of life to its premises and conditions. This latter is the method of Maceina who would consider it more authentic (and hence honest) to follow the path of discovery from the practice of life to its religious premises as source and goal. This too is an important building block for the development of a philosophy appropriate for the progress of the Lithuanian people.

Chapter XIII, "The Life of Vosylius Sezemanas and his Critical Realism," by Loreta Anilionyte and Albinas Lozuraitis, is exceptionally well thought through. It shows how this early philosophy developed an original and personal philosophy that is exceptionally relevant today. In it V. Sezemanas moves from a philosophical position fixed on the object to attention to the subject so that the spirit becomes central and hence also culture and history.

From the detailed analysis of the sequence of authors in this Part III it can be seen that Lithuanian philosophers have had the combination of freedom and genius to do original philosophical work. This has been marked by attention to the spirit as lived in time and in the

particular context of Lithuania. Hence, it has not only drawn richly upon culture in general, but has focused upon Lithuanian culture in particular. This set a standard of authenticity and insight which strenuously challenges philosophers of the present time.

Part IV "Contemporary Lithuanian Philosophy" samples the present efforts in philosophy and can be divided between two philosophers working in Lithuania who explain and illustrate the present problem and two philosophers of Lithuanian origin working outside of the country who develop a response.

Chapter XIV, "Lithuanian Philosophical Thought: Between East and West," by Arvydas Sliogeris, suggests a way of dividing the history of philosophical thought in Lithuania, namely, between (a) working from classical texts by Saulkauskas as a Catholic thinker and Vydunas as inspired by Indian thought, (b) Western oriented existential thinkers such as Maceina and Girnius working in the Catholic tradition and in the context of eternal truth; and (c) the present struggle to free philosophy from Marxist ideology. This could be considered a good epilogue to this work.

The author provides a fascinating account of the experience of growing up as a philosopher in Marxist times and under the intense pressure of Marxist ideology. In this situation he found exceptional importance in the lectures of Eujenijus Meskauskas precisely in his conscious use of the Marxist dialectic to negate all meaning and reduce the mind to a skeptical position. This "scorched earth" approach effectively destroyed any growth of ideology, but seems to have left the soil so devastated that it was difficult to grow any new insight.

The response of Sliogeris is to take an existential path indicated in this chapter but developed more elaborately in Chapter XV, "Arvydas Sliogeris: The Philosopher as Knight of Being," by Regimantas Tamosaitis. This looks to existential experience as the sole authentic engagement of being which he calls "humanism," and rejects all that is systematized in thought as a depersonalizing distraction from being, which he terms "hominism". This enables him to appreciate the spark of personal insight, and his extensive writings and personal appearances interpreting the long history of philosophy has been a major contribution to the renewal of philosophical interests in post-Soviet times.

He proposes what he terms philotophy or philosophy as a love of nature and of peace. This constitutes an axiological-ethical system of values which gain ontological meaning. The effect is to focus philosophy upon being in its concrete existential meaning as life. But the position seems too iconoclastic, for focusing on existence, it omits or completely subordinates essence on which all formal universalization and systematic work depends. His existential outlook is a characteristically 20th century insight, from which point of view all prior thought is dismissed.

In contrast, the emergence of existence in late ancient times and its evolution through the early and high middle ages was a work of high theory, very much dependent upon systematic theoretical elaboration. Moreover, this was elaborated in a religious context. In fact, this exercised an effect to that feared by Sliogeris: rather than closing the mind in preset and limited categories it constituted a process in which the mind was opened to the transcendence and infinity of being and thereby defies all limitation and categorization. As noted in recent post modern discussions on faith and reason faith is now called upon to liberate reason, which had fallen into low estate on both sides during the Cold War.

This can be seen in Chapter XVI, "Rethinking the Philosophy of Culture: Lithuania and the Western Tradition" by Marius-Povilas Saulauskas, philosopher and leader of the Liberal Party. His response to the ideology of Marxism has been to take on the alternate, liberal ideology and to follow closely the path of Karl Popper. Here the strategy is similar to that of Meskauskas: by



elaborating the nominalist position and focusing upon its skeptical character it frees the mind from principles and convictions, except the decision to be "free from". But one must ask whether the resulting anarchistic atomism can enable one to engage one's freedom ("freedom for") in the building or rebuilding of a nation.

It was one of the major misinterpretations of the end of the Cold War that since one side, Marxism, was wrong, the other (liberalism) must be right. This would be true only if the basic rationalist suggestion from which they both derive was correct. What was at first unsuspected, but has been driven home by the post-modern critique is that the problem is more fundamental and lies in the reductionist rationalism which rejects all that is not clear and distinct to the human mind. This effectively reduces the human mind to only what is common by abstraction and subject to artificial construction by the human mind. The infinite variety, creative freedom and spiritual meaning of life is omitted. It foresees a brave "hominized" world, to use the term of A. Sliogers, but one that is dehumanized and dehumanizing.

In view of the above the work done by the two expatriate Lithuanian philosophers, A. Greimas and V. Kavolis has special significance. They were not forced to begin as it were *ex ovo*, but were able to elaborate their thinking in a rich and continuous tradition of philosophizing continually subject to critique and enrichment by other currents of thought.

At the same time they did not merely enter into those currents to imitate others, but brought to their work special insights from their Lithuanian background. This can be seen in Chapter XVII, "Algirdas Greimas in Lithuania and in the World," by Zilvinas Beliauskas, who describes the role of A. Greimas in the development of the science of Semiotics. His appreciation of the significance of formal patterns, quite contrary to the existential orientation of many of his countrymen, may well reflect the position of his culture between East and West. His dictionary made a pioneering contribution. His work is typically Lithuanian, in the way in which it carries the Semiotic discussion beyond mere signs to meaning, thereby remaining engaged in life and its achievement.

Perhaps more characteristic, especially in the efforts to redevelop identities for new countries, is the work of V. Kavolis described in Chapter XVIII, "Vytautas Kavolis as Social and Cultural Critic," by Leonidas Donskis. Drawing upon the heritage of his Lithuanian predecessors described in Part III above, he was able to play a leading role in bringing forward the hermeneutic potentialities of existential phenomenology for a restoration and renewal of the sense of cultural tradition, no longer as mere habits from the past, but as a dynamic and transforming dimension of the newly emerging, post-Cold War human sensibilities.

His work unites a number of the elements underlined above: the new appreciation of subjectivity, the importance this gives to teleology and human purpose, the way in which this is shaped in the form of a concrete culture, and the way in which this draws individual persons beyond themselves into society.

In this light Kavolis has been able to draw on the liberal position regarding the dignity and rights of the person, but to carry this beyond defense of minimum standards for isolated individuals into cultural patterns of social cooperation and community which can attract and inspire.

This does not constitute a conclusion to the story of Lithuanian philosophy, but challenges its young philosophers to continue the process of freeing the country from its post World War II ideology including the fear of reengaging its own cultural and religious traditions. Especially, it points to the work of unfolding new riches from its culture as a basis for the social reconstruction of the new millennium. Lithuania is a country at once old and new; the same must be true of its philosophy.



## Chapter I

# Lithuanian Philosophy: The Search for Authenticity

*Jurate Baranova*

This book is an attempt to present Lithuanian philosophical thought, its history, main ideas and personalities. The idea was suggested in reading *Czech Philosophy in the 20th Century*.<sup>1</sup>

A superficial glance at two philosophical traditions — Czech and Lithuanian — shows two different orientations of the philosophical mind. Reading the volume about Czech philosophy, one can discern rather strong trends of positivism, phenomenology and structuralism, all set within the notable spiritual tradition of Central Europe. In the Lithuanian philosophical tradition these three kinds of philosophy historically had no decisive influence. In the time between the wars only Vosylius Sezemanas was influenced both by neo-Kantians and by phenomenology. Two other eminent Lithuanian philosophers, Stasys Salkauskis and Antanas Maceina, were decisively influenced by the Russian religious thinkers Vladimir Soloviov and Nikolai Berdiaiev. Religious existentialism prevailed over other types of philosophy.

Only very contemporary Lithuanian philosophers have focused on analytic philosophy (Professor Evaldas Nekrasas, Professor Rolandas Povilionis), phenomenology (Tomas Sodeika), structuralism (Vida Gumauskaite, b. 1941). The chapter "Czech Protestantism and Philosophy" could have no parallel in our volume, as Catholicism was the dominant religious tradition.

The Lithuanian philosophical tradition has the same problem as Czech or any other Central or East European philosophy. No one philosophical school or trend takes its origin in Lithuania; ideas were imported from the West or from the East. The reasons for that can be sought in the historical background. Lithuania geographically is a border of the West. The concept of being "between" the West and the East has been used to interpret the peculiarities of our culture by some native and even foreign thinkers. This paradoxical place of Lithuania as being "between" was noticed by British historian Arnold J. Toynbee who found this place for Lithuania in the stage of his dramatic theater of the growth and collapse of civilizations.<sup>2</sup>

Any serious analyst would consider Lithuanian history in the 13th and 14th centuries to be somewhat paradoxical. One might wonder why our Lithuanian forefathers did not bother to create a Lithuanian alphabet in order to keep their national identity independent from other languages? Instead, they were galloping from one sea (Baltic) to another (Black) like Mongols, Tartars or landbound Vikings.

Toynbee gives an explanation of the source of such aggressiveness in the Lithuanians. As the last pagan country in Europe Lithuania suffered military aggression from the Christian West. In the 13th century, the Teutonic Orders concentrated pressure upon it. The Lithuanians were incited to fight, and marched to the Eastern lands. The pressure was transformed into martial power, which at first was used against neighbors, but later, when the pressure had become persistent, was turned against the Western enemies themselves.

According to Toynbee, such Lithuanian reaction to the pressure by the Teutonic knights is reflected even in the Lithuanian coat-of-arms which depicted a rider with a sword, wearing peasant shoes. This almost barbaric man galloped to Tanenberg and defeated the amazed knights (the battle of Grunwald). However, the Lithuanians were able to do this only after they had accepted the religion, culture and martial techniques of their enemies.

Later on, the energy of history turned in the opposite direction. The Lithuanian pressure on Russian lands induced retaliation. Those lands were united under the Moscovy, and stood against Lithuania. Then Lithuania was to face a new pressure from the East — states Toynbee after the manner of a commentator on a dynamic sports match. It could not withstand the pressure and perished together with Poland. Toynbee's interpretation of Lithuanian history suggests that while other nations were cherishing their philosophy and arts our ancestors had to waste their energy on battles.

As pointed out by Lithuanian history professor Edvardas Gudavicius, Lithuania is the latecomer to Latin civilization.<sup>3</sup> Almost all European nations had joined the Latin cultural domain by the 11th century. Lithuania lagged behind the other Central European countries by some 400 years and found itself within the bounds of Latin civilization only in the 14th century. On the other hand, as Lithuanian philosopher Professor Arvydas Sliogeris noted, we philosophize starting not from "pure experience", but from "pure word" — from somebody else's text.<sup>4</sup> It is very difficult to answer to the question whether there was authentic philosophy in Lithuania or if there is now. According to Sliogeris, philosophizing is not a characteristic feature of Lithuanian mentality. The Lithuanian looks more at the earth than at the sky. And if he looks at the sky, he does not see in it the same things as discerned by Plato — pure ideas. For this reason, according to Sliogeris, the Lithuanian flight of thought lacks metaphysics. Many contemporary researchers who deal with the tradition of Lithuanian philosophy do not share Sliogeris's point of view. Nevertheless, the question of the authenticity of our philosophical thought remains open. The plausible answer is the one suggested by Professor Romanas Pleckaitis, who used to repeat to the students studying philosophy at Vilnius University : "We are not philosophers, only commentators and investigators of philosophical texts".

Philosophical culture in Lithuania is a culture of academic lectures, notes Alvydas Jokubaitis (philosophy lecturer from the "younger generation") in one of his articles, which provoked vivid disagreement and interesting debate.<sup>5</sup> "Our philosophical texts are created only at the cost of good references"; "in Lithuania, it seems, we only duplicate duplicates", continues Jokubaitis. But nevertheless he does not use an *argumentum ad hominem*. "The reason for the dependency and lack of originality of Lithuanian philosophers lies not in intellectual powerlessness as creators, but in the fact that all our philosophical traditions till now float only behind the huge ice-breaker of Western philosophy". Is the way of the smaller and less visible following ship without meaning? Not at all; every tradition has its value in itself. And the concept of originality has several aspects: some ideas are original because they are expressed for the first time in the history of humankind, some — in the history of the nation, some — in the context of the contemporary generation. In one sense ideas can be called original when they make a deep impression on the philosopher's mind for the first time, regardless of their origin or context. This is the sense of the title of this volume "Lithuanian Philosophy: Personalities and Ideas".

Part I, "Lithuanians: History and Culture" consists of four essays about some aspects of the historical and cultural tradition of the Lithuanian nation. The Dean of the Faculty of History of Vilnius University, Alfredas Bumblauskas (b. 1956) and the professor of the same faculty, Edvardas Gudavicius (b. 1929), present sketches on Lithuanian history. Two members of the Lithuanian Institute of Culture and Art, Gintaras Beresnevicius (b. 1961) and Vytautas Berenis (b. 1963), discuss the old and new Lithuanian mythology.

Part II, "Academic Philosophy through the Centuries", Professor Romanas Pleckaitis of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology presents a broad historical review of the lectures in philosophy at Kaunas University and in logic at Vilnius University through the centuries. Professor Pleckaitis states that philosophical studies at Vilnius Jesuit College began in 1571, which date can be considered the beginning of philosophy in Lithuanian academic life. Croat Professor T. Zdelaric (who unfortunately died one year later in a plague) began to teach logic, the first discipline of scholastic philosophy. Scholastic philosophy in the 16th and 17th centuries was studied extensively in other Lithuanian schools as well.

R. Pleckaitis concludes that Lithuania had a rather normal level of late medieval philosophy, that discussion between nominalists and realists retains its significance even until now, and that the level of the study of logic was rather high. Not all historians of Lithuanian culture are committed to the conception of "Lithuania lagging behind the West." Professor Pleckaitis stresses more the achievements of Lithuanian philosophy through the ages.

Part III, "Philosophy between the Two World Wars," is represented by the "golden age" of Lithuanian philosophy: Vydunas (Vilhelmas Storosta, 1868-1953), Stasys Salkauskis (1886-1941), Antanas Maceina (1908-1987), Juozas Girnius (1915-1994) and Vosylius Sezemanas (1884-1963).

Vydunas was not an academic professor, never graduated from the university and created no philosophical system. He philosophized like an ancient sage, caring for moral development. Vydunas was influenced by Indian philosophy, the *Bhagavadgita* being his main text. He was a unique philosopher in the rather Catholic Lithuanian culture. The chairman of "Vydunas society", the director of the Institute of Philosophy and Culture, Vaclovas Bagdonavicius, presents the main ideas of Vydunas which were closely connected with the magic of his personality.

Stasys Salkauskis was perhaps the first eminent Lithuanian philosopher and pedagogue and the last rector of Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas between the two wars. He was influenced by Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev and afterwards by neo-Thomism. Philosophy for him was a means for the upbringing of the nation, for which he created an original philosophy of culture and stated the task for the Lithuanian nation as being the union of two cultural traditions — from the East and from the West. Arunas Sverdiolas (b. 1949),<sup>6</sup> in his article "Philosophy of Stasys Salkauskis," identifies different aspects of the influences and aspects of Salkauskis's philosophy: the discrepancy between his practical and theoretical philosophy, his philosophy of culture and the relation of culture and religion. Sverdiolas concludes that the Promethean tragedy about which Salkauskis writes is not final as in Salkauskis's understanding, for culture is not the highest sphere of life, but is surpassed by a further step towards religion.

Salkauskis's ideas influenced his student Antanas Maceina — the other eminent Lithuanian philosopher. Antanas Maceina studied philology, left it for theology, afterwards returned, and finally decided to study philosophy and pedagogy. He was promoted to doctor of philosophy with the thesis "Tautinis auklėjimas" (National Education, Kaunas, 1934). The next year he wrote his habilitation thesis, "Ugdomasis Veikimas" (Character Development). Maceina, as well as his teacher Salkauskis, analyzed the philosophy of culture *Kultūros filosofijos ivadas* (Introduction to the Philosophy of Culture) and a series of articles "Kultūros sintezė ir lietuviškoji kultura" (Synthesis of Culture and Lithuanian Culture). Just before the war he published two widely known books: in one, *Socialinis teisingumas* (Social Justice) he wrote as a social critic; in the other he reflected the historiosophic vision of Russian philosopher, Nikolai Berdiaiev, *Burzuazijos žlugimas* (The Fall of the bourgeoisie).

After the war he lived in Germany as private docent, gave courses on Russian philosophy and East European spiritual history at the universities of Freiburg and Munster (Germany), and lectured on the philosophy of religion. In a series of books Antanas Maceina discusses the existential questions of being, and deals with the old theodicy puzzle concerning the genesis and justification of evil: *Didysis inkvizitorius* (The Grand Inquisitor), *Jobo drama* (The Drama of Job) and *Nieksybes paslaptis* (The Secret of Meanness). Maceina also discussed questions very close to theology and dealt with contemporary problems of secularization and the relation of religion and evolutionism. In 1978 The Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Sciences published his opus magnum, *Filosofijos kilme ir prasme* (The Origin and Meaning of Philosophy).

Maceina's philosophical conception in this volume is presented by the article of Ruta Tumenaite. In the paper "Two Existentialists: Antanas Maceina and Juozas Girnius" she compares the different influences and types of existential thinking by the two main Lithuanian existentialists. Tumenaite focuses more on the differences between these two philosophers, noting that Maceina, because of his openness to the tradition of Russian philosophy is subject to problems of intellectual integrity, which Juozas Girnius, who is open to Western philosophy, does not encounter. These standards of evaluation, however, come more from ideological than from philosophical discourse.

Juozas Girnius experienced influences very similar to those of Antanas Maceina. Both shared the same fate, leaving in 1944 to spend the rest of their lives far away from their native country: Maceina in Germany, Girnius in the United States. They both had the same teacher Stasys Salkauskis who, from his studies at Moscow University, was deeply influenced by the Russian philosopher, Vladimir Soloviev. During his studies Girnius spent some time at such Western universities as Leuven, Freiburg, Sorbonne, College de France. In Freiburg he attended Martin Heidegger's lectures and his seminar, and in his works refers more to Western than to Eastern philosophers.

Existential thinking was only one aspect of Girnius's philosophy. The other was religious faith. His main book, *The Man without God*, is a polemic mostly on atheistic existentialism. According to Girnius, a man is not only a necessity of nature, but has spirituality as well, which opens the possibility for freedom. Because of freedom a man becomes a moral being, but then faces the possibility of guilt. The longing for moral purity, like that for eternity, is the source of deep anxiety for man. But, asks Girnius rhetorically in a polemic with atheistic existentialism, if there is no God who can forgive man's guilt? Philosophy has no autonomy in dealing with the questions of human being and hence Girnius did not see a gap between philosophy and literature. He considered Dostojevskij's, Faulkner's and other writers' works to reveal the secluded corners of the human soul more than did the schematic works of some philosophers. But philosophers can take much for their reflection from the works of writers.

The Western philosophical tradition in academic life between the wars was taught by two newcomers to Lithuania — emigrants from Russia — Vosylius Sezemanas (1884-1963) and Levas Karsavinas (1882-1952). Levas Karsavinas was invited to Lithuania in 1928 as professor at Kaunas and Vilnius Universities to deal with the theory of history. He wrote about the methodological premises of historical investigation, stating that no historical theory can escape metaphysics. Discussing the subject of history, Karsavinas stated that it is "socially active humanity", which realizes itself through individual cultures — Indian, Ancient, Russian, European and so on. The culture of humanity is the "multiversal unity" of these cultures. Two of his works *Philosophy of History* (1923), and *About Origins* (1926) were published in Russian. His later works *Theory of History* (1929),<sup>7</sup> *The History of European Culture* (1931-1937, v. 1-5) and *Metaphysics of History*(typed, 1940-1947) were in Lithuanian.

Vosylius Sezemanas was born in Finland, of Swedish and German descent, and had lived in St. Petersburg. He studied philosophy and psychology at Marburg and Berlin Universities and was a professor at St. Petersburg and Saratov Universities. In 1921 he left Russia and in 1923 was invited to Lithuanian State University in Kaunas. Loreta Anilionyte and Albinas Lozuraitis in their chapter "Vosylius Sezemanas: His Critical Philosophy," discuss the circumstances of his life, personality and spheres of philosophical interests. Sezemanas was influenced by the neo-kantians and phenomenology. The starting point for his original philosophical thinking was epistemology. Recently a collection of Sezemanas's writings has been published including his studies on the philosophy of history and general questions of the philosophy of culture. Karsavinas and Sezemanas, experienced the same fate: during Soviet times both were exiled to Siberia; Sezemanas returned and lectured until his death; Karsavinas died in Komi.

The six philosophers discussed above compose the kernel of the "golden age" between the wars in Lithuania. The tradition is broader, of course. One should mention Ramunas Bytautas (1886-1915) — the first Lithuanian professional philosopher, psychologist and publicist; Pranas Kuraitis (1883-1964) — professor of Kaunas University and a follower of Thomas Aquinas; Vladimiras Silkarskis (1884-1960) — historian of literature and philosopher, professor of Tartu, Vilnius, Kaunas and Bonn Universities, who wrote about Plato, Socrates, Baruch Spinoza and Vladimir Solovjov; Jonas Sliupas (1861-1944) — the representative of vulgar materialism; Izidorius Tamosaitis (1889-1943) — professor from Kaunas University, who was one of the first in Lithuania to write about anthropology and the theory of values; Adomas Jakstas-Dambrauskas (1860-1938) — philosopher and theologian who discussed religious, aesthetic and world-view questions in the press and also was influenced by Vladimir Solovjov.

Intellectuals who were not professors were engaged in creating a public philosophical culture. One of them, Julijonas Linde-Dobilas (1877-1934), like many Lithuanian thinkers of this epoch, was a universal author writing fiction, aesthetics, literary and cultural criticism. One can read about his ideas and their place in the common culture in Almantas Samalavicius's article "Beyond the Philosophy of Culture: the Case of Julijonas Linde-Dobilas".

Fabijonas Kemesis (1879-1945) is not well known to contemporary readers in Lithuania. One can find only one fragment of his ideas in the school anthology on Lithuanian philosophy where Adolfas Poska presents an article concerning his social view. Kemesis was a canon, economist, professor and teacher of Christian social thought.

Oskaras Milasius (1877-1939) is a paradoxical and interesting phenomenon in Lithuanian culture. He never lived in Lithuania but was born and spent his childhood in Cereja (near Mogiliov, Byelorussia) and graduated from *Janson de Saily Lycee* in Paris. His longing for his fatherland was more metaphysical. Having to choose between two conflicting countries — Lithuania and Poland — he preferred Lithuania which for him was an idea even more than a fatherland. In 1920 when France recognized the independence of Lithuania, he was appointed officially as *Charge d'Affairs* for Lithuania. He published: 1928, a collection of 26 Lithuanian songs; 1930, "Lithuanian Tales and Stories"; 1933, "Lithuanian Tales"; 1937, "The origin of the Lithuanian Nation", in which he tried to persuade the reader that Lithuanians have the same origin as Jews from the Pyrenees peninsula. Can one consider Oskar Milosz as an investigator of Lithuanian culture; was he only a poet, or a philosopher as well? Andrius Konickis, the author of the book about Oskar Milosz,<sup>8</sup> writes that there are many ways of expressing philosophical insights; Oskar Milosz had his own way.

Part IV, "Contemporary Lithuanian Philosophy," presents some texts about contemporary thinkers, but they are only a few of the most visible philosophers; the spectrum is much broader.

The group of professional philosophers (professors, scholars, critics of philosophical texts) in Lithuania can be divided into several groups: those who studied Karl Marx and wrote books or textbooks interpreting first of all Marxist philosophy; other philosophers dealt more with the tradition of contemporary Western philosophy; a very small group dealt with the tradition of Eastern philosophy (e.g. Professor A. Andrijauskas, b. 1948). The group of those who went deeper in the tradition of Lithuanian philosophical thought is also not numerous (e.g. Dr. V. Bagdonavicius, b. 1941, etc.). As usual, interest in the "history of philosophy" was shared between the Western tradition and Lithuanian thought.

In one sense one can discern two different trends in the general Marxist tradition. Eastern Soviet style Marxism was more ideological, more orientated to practical political needs. Western Marxism is more sophisticated, elaborated as a method of social criticism. The dominant Marxist tradition in Lithuania was Western in type. Professor Eugenijus Meskauskas (1909-1997) treated Marxist philosophy as a sophisticated kind of scientific methodology and a critical theory of ideology. Professor Arvydas Sliogeris (b. 1944) in his paper "Lithuanian Philosophical Thought: between East and West" writes that Professor E. Meskauskas's orientation towards scientific thinking began to destroy Soviet Marxist ideology from within. This idea caused heated arguments. Was not sophisticated Marxism more dangerous, because it was more capable of seducing minds than the more simple version? — on this there were contrasting views. In any case, the Professor's lectures were popular, and the level of philosophical reasoning attracted listeners from other humanities faculties.

A typical phenomenon in Lithuania was so-called half-Marxism. Under the screen of Marxist philosophy various ideas and conceptions were developed. Students of another Marxist philosopher Juozas Vytautas Vinciusas (1929-1979) remember his Socratic method in discussions with students. Jonas Repsys (1930-1976) — professor from the same department of philosophy at the University in Vilnius — was among the first there to write about existentialism. Krescencijus Stoskus (b. 1938) is a well-known specialist on aesthetics.<sup>9</sup> Albinas Lozuraitis (b. 1934) wrote on the problems of epistemology and the theory of values.<sup>10</sup> Justinas Karosas (b. 1937) dealt with the materialistic conception of history and ideology and at the same time wrote about hermeneutics and the "Frankfurt School".

The tradition of studies in the history of philosophy was not less influential than the tradition of Marxist philosophy during the 1970s and 80s in Lithuanian philosophical culture. Professor Romanas Pleckaitis (b. 1933) — a doctoral student of Vosilius Sezemanas — represented an "historical approach" towards philosophy. Pleckaitis is well known as a scholar of Lithuanian philosophy in the 16th to 18th centuries and translated the main works of Immanuel Kant into the Lithuanian language.<sup>11</sup> Professor Bronius Genzelis (b. 1934) dealt with the history of philosophy in Lithuania as well.<sup>12</sup> Professor Kristina Rickeviciute<sup>13</sup> (1922-1984) — a doctoral student of Vosilius Sezemanas — was a remarkable lecturer and specialist on ancient philosophy and on the classical German tradition. Professor Bronius Kuzmickas (b. 1935) wrote mostly on the questions of modern Catholicism, national culture, aesthetics, ethics and self-consciousness.<sup>14</sup>

Some professional philosophers in Lithuania are also well known politicians. The first one was Arvydas Juozaitis (b. 1956). After his doctoral thesis on Wilhelm Dilthey in 1986, two years later he became the main spiritual leader in the fight for Lithuanian independence. Afterwards he did not participate in institutional political life, but regularly took part in ardent public debates, usually expressing oppositional positions. His role is similar to Socrates in not entering state



institutions, but always discussing, criticizing and thus influencing political action. Some other philosophers follow the model of Plato's philosopher-king. The Rector of Vilnius University, Rolandas Pavilionis (b. 1944), introduced to Lithuanian philosophy the Western analytical tradition focused upon language. Recently he ran for President. Bronius Kuzmickas, Bronius Genzelis, Justinas Karosas, Albinas Lozuraitis, Romualdas Ozolas, Gema Jurkunaite, Mecys Laurinkus, Zibartas Jackunas and others for some time have been members of the Lithuanian parliament. Leonarda Jekentaite, the neo-Freudian scholar, is now Director General of UNESCO in Lithuania.

One of the leaders of "Sajudis" — the mass movement which led Lithuania to the independence in the 1990 — was Vytautas Radzvilas (b. 1958) who only two years earlier had completed his thesis on the history of French personalism. He was one of the founders of the Lithuanian liberal union, which for some time was reputed as a party of philosophers. He led this party until the electoral disaster in 1992, after which almost all philosophers left this Party.

During the period of transition Lithuanian society needed new ideas for structuring social life. The most active philosophers in suggesting new approaches in political discourse were libertarians. Some of them — Algirdas Degutis (b. 1951) and Audronis Raguotis (b. 1952) — tried to impose a rather strict type of libertarianism on the Lithuanian mentality. This tradition collapsed as a social movement, and the financial supporters of this "new capitalism" have been imprisoned after financial misfortunes. But academic research is going its own way. Degutis has published a book *Valdininku reketo salis* (The Country of Criminal Bureaucracy, 1993), and prepared another for publication *Individualizmas ir visuomenine tvarka* (Individualism and the Social Order) and translated more than ten books on liberertarianism into Lithuanian. Grazina Miniotaite (b. 1948) has been dealing with contemporary moral philosophy. Recently she published a book about the history of the peaceful liberation of Lithuania, an analytical study of contemporary history. Paradoxically, it is published also in Chinese.

Professional philosophers not only promoted political life in Lithuania, but also contributed greatly to developing new sociological thought. Aleksandras Dobryninas (b. 1955) left the Department of Philosophy at Vilnius University to establish a new Department of Social Theory at the same University, of which he is the head. The members of this department are mostly professional philosophers. For example, Arunas Poviliunas (b. 1958), who wrote his thesis on the philosophy of history, now is engaged in empirical social research on the historical consciousness in Lithuania. Virginijus Valentinavicius (b. 1955) left for journalism and is a commentator for Radio "Free Europe" in Prague.

A small group of professionals is now doing the less visible but necessary everyday academic work in Lithuania. The main core of our professional philosophers of "middle generation" had grown out of the tradition of the "history of philosophy". Tomas Sodeika (b. 1949) is well known as a specialist on phenomenology and a remarkable lecturer as well. He developed the specialization in philosophy and is its head at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. Arunas Sverdiolas (b. 1949) is a specialist on hermeneutics and the philosophy of culture, as well as being a translator. Professor Evaldas Nekrasas<sup>15</sup> (b. 1945) is the head of the Department of Philosophy at Vilnius University, He wrote extensively on questions of the analytical philosophy of science, especially of probabilistic knowledge, and investigated logical empiricism in Western philosophy.

Recently two serious and interesting academic studies have been published. Besides Arunas Sverdiolas's book, *Steigtis ir sauga*, one should mention the monograph *Istorika* (Vilnius, 1996) written by Zenonas Norkus (b. 1958). He is a specialist on the methodology of historical knowledge, the history of Austrian philosophy, (the Brentano school) and the works of Max

Weber. His book, *Istorika*, with the same title as a book by the German philosopher, J. Droysen, is an investigation of the basic premises of historical research from antiquity till the present. In fifteen chapters he follows how history became independent from rhetoric, its scientific pretensions, the period of historicism and attempts to surpass this. The author discerns three philosophical paradigms — ontological, mentalistic and linguistic — which influenced the changes in understanding the premises of historical investigations and resulted in five forms of the theory of history: rhetoric, historicist, critical, analytical and narrativist. This is the first of this type since the work of Karsavin in historical theory in prewar Lithuania.

Alvydas Jokubaitis (b. 1959) translates and discusses postmodern authors and contemporary political philosophy. Two of his articles "Lietuvos filosofine tradicija postmodernizmo akivaizdoje" (The Lithuanian Philosophical Tradition in the Face of Postmodernism) and "Du filosofiniai režimai" (Two Philosophical Regimes) were the first articles speaking openly and touching on painful points of contemporary Lithuanian philosophy. No article has evoked more vivid discussion about philosophy in Lithuania. Recently he published a book *Postmodernizmas ir konservatizmas* (Postmodernism and Conservatism, 1997), in which he argues that postmodern discourse is not possible without conservatism.

Leonidas Donskis (b. 1962), the head of the Department of Philosophy at Klaipeda University, writes on topics of philosophy and culture. His books, *Moderniosios kultūros filosofijos metmenys* (The Outlines of Modern Philosophy of Culture, 1993), *Moderniosios sąmonės konfigūracijos* (The Configurations of Modern Consciousness, 1994) and *Tarp vaizduotės ir realybės* (Between Imagination and Reality, 1995), interpret Oswald Spengler's, Arnold Joseph Toynbee's and Lewis Mumford's conceptions of culture. This special interest of this very productive and engaging author is modern myth and its philosophical reflection. He enthusiastically participates in debates about specific characteristics of modern Lithuanian culture: its openness and closedness, its ethnocultural fundamentalism and the dogmatic character of a monological culture.

A new specialization for teaching philosophy in high school has been established at Vilnius Pedagogical University. The Philosophy Department of this university has already published the fourth issue of the philosophical journal *Man and Society*. The main and perhaps the only other philosophical journal in Lithuania is *Problemos* (Problems), initiated in 1968 and published semi-annually by philosophers at Vilnius University. The authors of *Man and Society* include: Jurate Baranova (1955), Rita Serpytyte (1954), Nijole Lomanienė (1953) and Liutauras Degesys (1953)<sup>16</sup> and some from Vilnius University: Marius Povilas Saulauskas (1961),<sup>17</sup> Zenonas Norkus and Arvydas Sliogeris.

Does this journal and specialization, indeed does philosophy itself, have enough energy and potential sources to survive?

Philosophical culture is created not only by lectures and an academic public; it needs public discourse. To live it needs influence, not only on politics, but perhaps even more in the other spheres of culture? Cultural critics and publishers can do much in encouraging one or another tradition. The editor of the well known cultural journal *Kultūros barai*, Branys Savukynas, always encourages articles on philosophy and translations, as do the editors of the journal *Baltos lankos*, Saulius Zukas, and *Proskynos*, Antanas Gailius. A promising group of young philosophy scholars gathers around the Catholic culture magazine *Naujasis židinys* ("The New Hearth"). The director of the publishing house "Aidai", Vytautas Alisuskas, encourages the young generation of intellectuals to write reviews and articles about philosophical books.

Arvydas Juozaitis is a chief editor of *Naujoji Romuva*, a journal which publishes texts mostly on cultural life; almost every issue includes philosophical essays or translations.

Writer Vytautas Rubavicius (b. 1952) did much to bring philosophers and writers closer together in Lithuania. For years he wrote essays and reviews on philosophical books for the literary newspaper *Literatura ir menas* ("Literature and Art"). His special interests were M. Heidegger and postmodern authors and culture. His reviews were recently published as *Neivardijamos laisves zenklas* ("The Sign of Unnamed Freedom") (Vilnius, 1997).

Perhaps no one in Lithuania has been as able and productive in sharing his energy between participation in public discourse and academic writing as Professor Arvydas Sliogeris (b. 1944).<sup>18</sup> He writes huge books on philosophy (e.g. *Transcendencijos tyla* ["The Silence of Transcendence"] has 800 pages) and step by step has become a TV personality, participating in public debates and presenting ardent challenging reflections. Sliogeris is not simply an historian of philosophy or interpreter of texts, but speaks a lot about other philosophers (e.g. S. Kierkegaard, A. Camus, F. Nietzsche etc.); his interpretation is very personal so that his writings reveal much of his own insights. He has his own intonations in philosophical discourse and has created his own philosophical vocabulary. Besides the chapter "Lithuanian Philosophical Thought: Between East and West" by A. Sliogeris himself, this volume includes the study by Regimantas Tamosaitis "Arvydas Sliogeris: the Knight of Being".

Contemporary Lithuanian philosophy is not a geographically restricted phenomenon; emigrants too are considered Lithuanian philosophers. The present volume presents two articles about contemporary Lithuanian thinkers abroad. Zilvinas Beliauskas presents a paper "Algirdas Greimas in Lithuania and Abroad" about Algirdas Julius Greimas (1917-1992). Greimas was one of the creators of semiotics. He considered semiotics as a method for the humanities and applied it to the analysis of language, history and literature. Greimas was born in 1917 in Tula (Russia) and the following year his parents returned to Lithuania, where Greimas graduated from the gymnasium in Marijampole and entered the faculty of Law in Vytautas Magnus University. In 1939 on a grant from the Lithuanian Ministry of Education he went for France for studies in languages and dialects, returned to Lithuania to fulfill his military service in 1944 and left for France to get his doctor's degree in Sorbonne. For nine years he taught the history of the French language at Alexandria University in Egypt. Beliauskas in his article presents the broad theoretical and historical context which influenced Greimas's approach to semiotics. Greimas had a rather vivid and ironical mind. He was interested in what was going on in Lithuania and wrote about it critically, searching for paradoxes and encouraging critical thinking.

Vytautas Kavolis (1930-1996), a sociologist living in the United States, kept intense and deep relations with Lithuanian matters as well. He was an editor of the journal *Metmenys* and wrote books on the sociology and psychology of culture in English and Lithuanian. Leonidas Donskis, who considers himself a student of Kavolis with whom he collaborated in giving lectures at Dickinson College in the US, presents a rather broad and rich postmortem review about the works and ideas of his teacher. Presenting Kavolis as a theoretician of civilization and a sociologist of culture, Donskis pays more attention to Kavolis's social and cultural criticism and the peculiarities of his liberalism (versus nationalism), where he finds some parallels to Martin Buber. Both were thinkers of withdrawal and return (using Arnold J. Toynbee's term); both severely and consistently criticized what they perceived as their imagined communities which eventually come into being as nation states; and both had particular intellectual sensibility which Donskis calls theoretical and moral empathy.

The full range of the distinguished Lithuanian philosophers living and working abroad is not covered by this volume. Algis Mickunas (b. 1933), professor in Ohio University (USA), keeps in touch with the philosophical culture in Lithuania; his work *Phenomenological Philosophy* is

translated into Lithuanian. Professor Antanas Paskus (b. 1924), clergyman and psychologist, is author of some books in Lithuanian, *Christian and today*, *Evolution and Christianity*, *Consciousness*, etc., and lectures for students in Lithuania. Kestutis Girnius (b. 1945), son of Juozas Girnius, is more of a political analyst, but also a philosopher who permanently participates in Lithuanian cultural life. Vincas Vycinas (b. 1919) is a scholar of Martin Heidegger who lives in the United States; Juozas Leonas Navickas (b. 1928) treats problems of ethics and has written *Consciousness and Reality: Hegel's Subjective Idealism* (1976).

Kestutis Skrupskelis (b. 1938 in Kaunas) works in the history of philosophy, focusing on American pragmatism. He was one of the editors of a critical edition of the writings of William James (in 17 volumes), and now has edited James's letters (published in 3 volumes) and published a bibliography of books about William James.

There is special interest in philosophers who can be considered "Lithuanian" only by the ending of their names, e.g., Emmanuel Levinas (born in Kaunas, Lithuania) or Alphonso Lingis.

This volume is a first attempt to present the tradition of Lithuanian philosophy to the English speaking reader. We ask to be excused by the many deserving philosophers we have not mentioned or for whom broader articles are lacking here because of limited possibilities. This volume has been prepared with the collaboration of the Institute of Sociology and Philosophy. It is a beginning.

*Vilnius Pedagogical University*  
*Department of Philosophy*

## Notes

1. Edited by Lubomir Novy, Jiri Gabriel, Jaroslav Hroch and published by general editor, George F. McLean, in the broad publishing project of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy "Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change" in the series devoted to Eastern and Central Europe.

2. A. Toynbee, *Postizenije istorii* (Moskva, 1991), pp. 142-146.

3. E. Gudavicius, *Latecomer to Latin Civilization, Lithuania in the World*.

4. A. Sliogeris, "Lietuvos filosofine mintis: tarp Rytu ir Vakaru" in the work *Konservatoriaus ispazintys, 1988-1994 metu tekstai* (Vilnius, 1995), pp. 95-109.

5. A. Jokubaitis "Lietuvos filosofine tradicija postmodernizmo akivaizdoje", *Naujasis zidinys*, 1994, No. 11; A. Jokubaitis "Du filosofiniai rezimai", *ibid.*, 1995, No.3.

6. The author of the books *Kulturos filosofija Lietuvoje* (Philosophy of Culture in Lithuania) (Vilnius, 1983) and *Steigtis ir sauga* (Sketches of Philosophy of Culture, 1996).

7. Translation from Russian into Lithuanian of his book *Philosophy of History*.

8. A. Konickis, *Vienintelej is begalybes vietu nuskirtoj* (Vilnius, 1996).

9. Published a book *Meno filosofija* (Philosophy of Art) (Vilnius, 1990).

10. Published books *Tiesa ir vertybe* (Truth and Value) (Vilnius, 1980); *Metodologiniai marksistines filosofijos bruožai* (Methodological features of Marxist philosophy) (Vilnius, 1986).

11. Professor Romanas Pleckaitis described the reasons and conditions for the emergence of philosophy in Lithuania, analyzed the role of Vilnius University in the advancement of philosophy and identified the systems of philosophy in various schools in Lithuania. For his work *Feudalizmo laikotarpio filosofija Lietuvoje* (Lithuanian Philosophy in the Feudal Epoch. Philosophy in the Schools of Lithuania in the 16th-18th Centuries) (Vilnius, 1975). R. Pleckaitis was awarded the National Prize of Lithuania.

12. Published books: *Svietėjai ir jų idėjos Lietuvoje* (Enlighteners and Their Ideas in Lithuania) (Vilnius, 1972); *Ese apie mastytojus* (Essay about Thinkers); *Renesanso filosofijos metmenys* (The Sketches of Renaissance Philosophy, 1988); *Pasakojimai apie Lietuvos mastytojus* (Stories about Lithuanian Thinkers, 1994); *Senovės filosofija* (Ancient Philosophy, 1995); and *Lietuvos filosofijos istorijos bruožai* (The Sketches of the History of Philosophy in Lithuania, 1997). For some time B. Genzelis was the Chairman of the Education, Science and Culture of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. He was also among those who signed the Statement of the Restoration of Lithuanian Independence.

13. *Antikines filosofijos istorijos bruožai* (The Features of the History of Antique philosophy" (Vilnius, 1976).

14. Author of several books: *Zmogus ir jo idealai* (A Man and His Ideals) (Vilnius, 1975); *Siuolaikine katalikiskoji filosofija* (Contemporary Catholic Philosophy, 1976); *Modernizmas siuolaikineje katalikybeje* (Modernism in Contemporary Catholicism, 1976); *Laimė* (Happiness, 1983); *Tautos kultūros savimone* (The Self-consciousness of National Culture, 1989); editor of selected readings *Grozio konturai* (The Contours of Beauty, 1980) and *Gerio konturai* (The Contours of Goodness, 1989). Professor B.J. Kuzmickas is a signer of the Statement of the Restoration of Lithuanian Independence.

15. Published books: *Loginis empirizmas ir mokslo metodologija* (Logical empiricism and the Methodology of Science, 1979); *Tikimybinis žinojimas* (Probabilistic knowledge — in Russian 1987 and Polish 1992); *Filosofijos ivadas* (Introduction to Philosophy, 1993).

16. Jurate Baranova: doctoral thesis "Conception of Truth in the Pragmatism of William James" (1986); three textbooks: *Political Philosophy* (1995), *Philosophy of History* (1996), *Philosophical Ethics* (1997). Liutauras Degesys: doctoral thesis on the philosophy of George Santayana (1985); working on the philosophy of education. Nijole Lomanienė: doctoral thesis on "Ernest Nagel's Philosophy of Science"; now lecturing on logic, philosophy of science and language. Rita Serpytyte: doctoral thesis "The Role of Legal Consciousness in the Development of Society" (1988); now working on problems of religion, and translating from Italian.

17. Marius-Povilas Saulauskas is the head of Department of Logic and History of Philosophy of Vilnius University. He was one of the founders of the Lithuanian Liberal Union and is its vice-chairman. He is writing on political and social philosophy, social theory, ex-communist societies, and analytic and hermeneutic philosophy. His 1987 doctoral thesis "The Analytic/Hermeneutic Controversy: the Problem of Verstehen — an Historical-methodological Analysis."

18. Main books: *Zmogaus pasaulis ir egzistencinis mastymas* (Human World and Existential Thinking, 1985); *Daiktai ir menas* (The Things and Art, 1988); *Butis ir pasaulis* (Being and the World, 1990); *Sietuvos* (1992); *Post scriptum* (1992); and *Transcendencijos tyla* (The Silence of Transcendence, 1996).



## Chapter II Glimpses of Lithuanian History

*Alfredas Bumblauskas*

### **Lithuania — Geographical Center of Europe**

It was noted long ago that, if one drew lines on the map of Europe connecting Gibraltar and the northern part of the Urals, Scotland and the Caucasus mountains, the southern islands of Greece and the North of Norway, almost all of those lines would intersect in Lithuania. This is the geographical center of Europe.

Quite recently the French National Geography Institute carried out new calculations, according to which the perpendicular of the center, dropped geographically from the altitude of 180 km, is located 25 km to the north of the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius. These are the co-ordinates of Europe's center: latitude 54' 55' N, longitude 25' 19' E. Lithuania lies on the same geographical latitude as the westward-situated South Sweden, Denmark, Scotland; the same longitude as Finland to the north and Romania, Bulgaria and Greece to the south.

Lithuania lies on the road between East and West Europe; the most direct route from Germany to Russia crosses Lithuania. The great German eastward assault, as well as that of the Russians to the West, went through Lithuania. Somebody has remarked to this point: "If Switzerland is characterized by high mountains, Italy by its works of art, and Finland by its lakes, then Lithuania should be characterized as a land that is very unsafe for a small nation".

In spite of Lithuania being the center of Europe, it is often considered a part of East Europe. But this is in terms of the country's geopolitical, not geographical, situation, as it was occupied frequently and made part of the Eastern neighbor in the 19th and 20th centuries. Lithuania belongs to Central Europe from the point of view of its civilization. Unlike Eastern Europe, since the Middle Ages individual peasant farms rather than communities were formed here. A civil society rather than an Eastern despotism was rising; Catholicism and a Western cultural orientation predominated over Orthodoxy and Byzantine civilization.

Today Lithuania guides itself in terms of its politics not only to Central, but also to Northern Europe and desires to maintain good relations with all her neighbors.

### **Main Data about Lithuania**

*The state:* Official name, the Republic of Lithuania; Highest political body, Supreme Council; System, parliamentary; Republic capital, Vilnius.

*Borders:* with Latvia, 610 km; with Byelorussia, 724 km; with Poland, 110 km; with Russia, (Kaliningrad region) 303 km; sea border (Baltic Sea), 99 km.

*Area:* 65.2 sq.km.

*Longest distances:* from the east to the west, 373 km; from the north to the south, 276 km. Population, 3,723,000; density of population, 57.1 per square kilometer; 68.5 percent of the population resides in towns. Major towns: Vilnius, 592,500; Kaunas, 429,700; Klaipeda, 206,200.

### **The Main Dates of Lithuania's History**

- 1009, St. Bruno discovers Lithuania, July 6;
- 1253, Mindaugas, the ruler of the newly formed Lithuanian state, crowned King;
- 1385, by the treaty of Kreva Jogaila, the Grand Duke of Lithuania becomes King of Poland and the rapprochement between Lithuania and Poland commenced;
- 1387, baptism of Lithuania;
- 1410, the battle of Zalgiris (Gruenwald); joint forces of Poland and Lithuania crushed the Teutonic Order, which had greatly menaced the existence of both states;
- 1569, The Lublin Union established a joint Polish-Lithuanian state;
- 1795, Russia, Austria and Prussia divided the Polish-Lithuanian state among themselves, with the larger part of Lithuania going to Russia;
- 1863, the largest uprising, directed against the Russian oppression. Its suppression began a period of very harsh reprisals and Russification;
- February 16, 1918, under German occupation, the Council of Lithuania headed by J. Basanavicius, proclaimed the reconstitution of the independent state of Lithuania;
- June 15, 1940, implementing the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the Soviet Union invaded the Republic of Lithuania which it then annexed. A puppet government was formed, and the establishment of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic was announced;
- 1944-1953, the period of reprisals, deportations, mass collectivization, organized by the Soviet Union, and of armed resistance in Lithuania;
- March 11, 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Lithuania proclaimed the reconstitution of The Republic of Lithuania.

### **The Grand Duchy of Lithuania: State and Civilization**

Lithuania's difference from the other two Baltic states — Latvia and Estonia — lies in the fact that in the Middle Ages, from the 13th and up to the 18th century, it had created and sustained its own state, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Its territory extended far to the East (the area of the state was 1 million square kilometers at the beginning of the 15th century). It became a great power and a significant political force in the East and Middle Europe. This enabled it to oppose the aggression of the Teutonic Order and to achieve, together with Poland, the decisive victory at Gruenwald in 1410. For 200 years after the end of the 14th century the Lithuanian dynasty of Jogailaiciai held the throne in Poland (and at the beginning of the 16th century also in Bohemia and Hungary). Most often the representatives of that dynasty ruled both Poland and Lithuania. However, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania remained an independent state till the second half of the 16th century, when the might of the Russian state became perceptibly stronger, and Lithuania was forced to conclude a closer alliance with Poland. In 1569 the joint Polish-Lithuanian state was formed within which the Grand Duchy of Lithuania retained its sovereignty. This is important because European historians often erroneously consider the Polish-Lithuanian state to have been purely Polish and refer to it as Poland. In the 17th and 18th centuries that state experienced economic and political decline. Although at the end of the 18th century attempts to reform and reinforce the state were obstructed by neighboring Russia, Prussia and Austria who in 1795 divided and eliminated the Polish-Lithuanian state, with the main part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Lithuanian territories going to Russia.

After its baptism in 1387, Lithuania took a decisive turn towards Western culture. In the following 200 years it could only study the experiences of other Middle European peoples and try to catch up. The spread of learning in Western universities began to yield its first perceptible results



in the 16th century. The printing of books began (1522); the Reformation soon followed, creating the conditions for the appearance of the first Lithuanian book (1547). In 1579 Vilnius University was established.

The process of Europeanization found its expression also in Lithuania's efforts to develop Gothic and Renaissance architecture. European architecture in Lithuania attained its highest achievements in the Baroque epoch, when a unique and independent Baroque school was formed. Generally the development of the European architectural styles, starting with Gothic and ending with Classicism, are best reflected in the old part of Vilnius, which is an impressive manifestation of the old civilization of Lithuania.

## **Vilnius — The Capital of Lithuania**

Vilnius is the historical capital of Lithuania. Some specialists guess that the capital of Mindaugas, the first King of Lithuania, was here. The first written mention of Vilnius was in 1323, when Gediminas, Grand Duke of Lithuania, wrote his letters to the Western rulers from Vilnius as his capital.

In 1387, during the baptism of Lithuania, Vilnius acquired the right to self-administration — the Magdeburg Rights. Although Lithuania and Poland had common rulers during that period, some were buried at the Vilnius Cathedral, rather than in Cracow. Vilnius remained the capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania also after the joint Polish-Lithuanian state was established and up to its elimination in 1795.

During the formation of the new Lithuanian state, the Act of the Reconstitution of the Independent Lithuanian state was signed in Vilnius in 1918, proclaiming Vilnius the capital of that state. Although the Soviet Union ceded Vilnius and the surrounding area to Lithuania, Poland seized it in 1920. As capital, Vilnius was returned to Lithuania only in 1939.

Now Vilnius is not only the capital of the Republic of Lithuania, but also its largest town. Its population is 592,500 people, among whom 51 percent are Lithuanians, 20 percent are Russians, 19 percent Poles. The area of the town is 26,000 hectares of which forests and parks account for half.

The Neris, Lithuania's second largest river, flows through Vilnius.

## **Vilnius University**

Its sources lie in the Collegium, established by the Jesuits in 1570. On April 1, 1579, the Grand Duke of Lithuania and King of Poland, Stephen Batory, signed a privilege, according to which the Collegium was transformed into the Academia et Universitas Vlnensis, which was confirmed on October 29, 1579 by Pope Gregory XIII. It was the most easterly of the European universities.

Vilnius University was famous for the high level of its teaching in logic, rhetoric and poetics. The University flourished especially in the Age of Enlightenment, when it began to pay more attention to secular sciences. Adam Mickiewicz, a poet of European fame, was a graduate of Vilnius University. The university functioned till 1832, when it was closed by the authorities of the Russian Empire. When the Poles seized Vilnius, the University began to function once again. Future Nobel prize winner, poet Cz. Milosz, studied at Vilnius University at that time. The University's activities were resumed after World War I, when Vilnius became part of Poland. After Lithuania regained Vilnius in 1939, the University was reorganized as Lithuanian. At present it

contains, among other departments, internationally recognized schools of mathematicians, physicists and Baltic linguistics, all functioning at Vilnius University.

*Vilnius University*

### Chapter III

## A Latecomer to Latin Civilization: The Lithuanian Way to World History

*Edvardas Gudavicius*

The history of modern European states dates back to what the well known French historian, Jacques Le Goff, described as "medieval Western civilization". Through the centuries these nations developed a lecture in the Latin tradition. Almost all European nations had joined the Latin cultural domain by the 11th century. Lithuania lagged behind the other Central European countries by some 400 years and took up Latin civilization only in the 14th century.

The Germans played an important role in the Europeanization of Poland, Bohemia, Hungary and Scandinavia. Although there were elements of German colonization, these countries managed to retain their national identity. Poland exerted the strongest cultural influence on Lithuania without colonizing the country. Nevertheless, the Lithuanian nobility adopted the Polish language for everyday communication. What were the reasons behind this process?

First and foremost, Lithuania was a latecomer to Latin Christendom. In the 9th and 11th centuries, Central and Northern European nations were assimilating the culture which spread through the monasteries; written language was not a determining factor in the development of this society. Lithuania absorbed the urban and university culture only in the 14th century. Being without a written language it had to establish an effective literary culture before integrating into Europe.

While Bohemia and Poland took Latin civilization gradually and in small portions that became larger with time, Lithuania adopted it within a very short period. One example, it took 200 years to set up a record-keeping system in Poland, whereas Lithuania's Grand Duke Vytautas the Great (1392-1430) established on the moment an efficient network of official penmanship. This created a completely different situation with respect to the local language. There were more German colonists in Bohemia and Poland compared to the Poles who had moved to Lithuania, but there were few German scribes there. They had to speak the language of the local residents, which became the cornerstone of learning, although Latin was the prevailing written language of the times.

In Lithuania, however, there was yet another reason for ejecting the Lithuanian language from the society. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania was a state of many nations, of which Byelorussians constituted the larger part of the total population. As the Byelorussians had already mastered written language, when record-keeping facilities were being set up throughout Lithuania, the authorities engaged educated Byelorussians, along with Poles and Germans, to accelerate the process. Therefore, the Byelorussian and Polish languages, not Lithuanian, formed the foundation of written communication. It was not the Polish or Byelorussian teachers who learned Lithuanian, but vice versa. Lithuanian students had to learn the language of their teachers, and it was easier to master Byelorussian or Polish in a short time than to adapt the Lithuanian language for writing purposes.

As in the whole of Central Europe, a class society was emerging in Lithuania. The less developed the urban areas, the more pronounced was the influence of the nobility. In Lithuania, the nobility enjoyed extensive powers. It made sure that only Lithuanians could serve as bishops, but this rule was not applied to the common clergy. Neither did the Lithuanian nobility expand the

system of elementary schooling. Lithuanian schools were created spontaneously and the number of Lithuanian priests and teachers grew slowly — this too predetermined the dominant role of the Polish language.

Such were the main features of Lithuania's Europeanization. Nevertheless, there was a positive side to this process. By the beginning of the 16th century Lithuania managed to assimilate — although on a low level — the basic values of Latin civilization. Written language emerged as an essential social factor. Books were compiled in Lithuania and taken abroad for printing. Incunabula and paleotypes conveying knowledge that corresponded to the educational curriculum of the seven liberal arts, i.e. that of the European schools, became popular among educated people. The first national chronicles appeared at the beginning of the 16th century. The First Lithuanian Statute — a code of laws adopted in 1529 — surpassed the law collections of the neighboring countries. Lithuania attained a cultural level which made her open to the ideas of the Reformation. The University of Vilnius was founded in 1579. In the second half of the 16th century, the Lithuanian society and nation acquired all the features characteristic of a European state and became a leader in the race for European cultural standards.

However, the price for Lithuania's achievements was high, since historical success is never delivered free of charge. By the end of the 16th century, the Lithuanian nobility had switched over to the Polish language. But this did not change their national consciousness, and they retained a Lithuanian spiritual identity. The country and its people, however, became bilingual. Russia forced Lithuania into forming a confederacy with Poland in 1569 — the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. 200 years later Russia annexed the commonwealth of the two nations. The loss of statehood and the joint struggle against Russia altered the national orientation of the Polish-speaking gentry which ascribed itself to the Polish nobility. However, at that time Lithuania began to feel the effects of European education and a large group of democratically-minded intellectuals began to promote nationalist ideas among the local population in the 19th century.

In the second half of the 19th century, the Lithuanian people joined the national liberation movements of Central and Eastern Europe. In 1918, Lithuania regained its independence and embarked on a process of Lithuania's Europeanization which was laborious and complicated. Nevertheless, Lithuania managed to attain high European standards and retain its national identity intact.

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## Chapter IV

# Lithuanian Mythology

*Gintaras Beresnevicius*

Lithuanian mythology underwent its formation at the time when the active and belligerent tribes who were the ancestors of modern Lithuanians were distinguishing themselves from the bulk of the Baltic protonation, circa 500 AD. At this time the Lithuanian tradition acquired its specific character. The mythologies of Lithuanians and other Balts are versions of the common Indo-European field of mythological images, but the Lithuanian and Baltic traditions preserved archaic Indo-European images, which disappeared from other European regions before the early Middle Ages. Since the most important characters of the Lithuanian pantheon were common to all Balts, we will begin by describing their common elements.

### Gods and Heroes

The highest figure in the Baltic pantheon is Dievas, in Prussian Deywis or Deyws, and in Latvian Dievs. This god is of Indo-European origin, and his name, as in some religions of the Near East, has been expanded to embrace all gods (God — the name of the highest of gods, god — the name applied to all gods). Earlier Dievas or Deivas simply denoted the shining dome of the sky, cf. ancient Indian *deva* ‘god’ and *dyazts* ‘sky’, Latin *deus* and *dies*, originating from the Indo-European root *deiuo-s*, which means both God and sky. Dievas, Dievs, Deivs is also related to the Greek Zeus. In Lithuanian dialects his name is sometimes Pondzejis, Avestian Daeva, Luvian Tiwat, Lidian Tiyaz, as the German Tiwaz. The Finns took the name of Dievas from the Balts, cf. Finnish *taivas* and Estonian *taevas* ‘sky’.

In the mythology of the Balts, Dangaus Dievas (God of the Sky) retains quite a few original Indo-European characteristics — he lives in heaven, is related to shining celestial bodies and is imagined as a light, radiant person deciding fates. For Prussians and Lithuanians, however, Dangaus Dievas becomes an inactive god, *deus otiosus*. In some lists of Prussian gods he does not figure at all, while in Lithuanian tales he takes part in the creation of the world and its aftermath. In Latvian songs Dievas is much more active — he goes down the hill on which he lives and walks around a field of rye carrying bliss and fertility to the earth. And although traditionally it was possible to rely upon him when striking a contract, making a vow, or in times of crises, his cult among the Balts was doubtful. In any case, sacred places devoted to Dangaus Dievas are not even mentioned in Baltic mythology.

If Dievas was the highest character in the pantheon, then Perkunas, Latvian Perkons, Prussian Perkuns, Perkztno, the god of storm and thunder, master of the atmosphere and all celestial matters, and evidently Dievas’ son, was the most important and prominent. The name of this god is believed to have originated either from words denoting oak, cf. Latin *quercus* (from *perkwus*), Celtic *herc*, or a related root meaning a mountain, like in Hittite *parunas* ‘a rock’ or Sanskrit *parvatas* ‘The top of a hill’. In Baltic mythology Perkunas is linked both to a mountain — in Lithuanian mythology Perkunas lives on the top of a hill reaching the sky — and to oaks, growing in sacral places, or to sacred oak woods. Related to Perkunas are such Indo-European gods as Slavonic Perun, Parjanya who is mentioned in the Rigveda, the Germanic goddess Fjorgyn, the gods Donar,

Thor, etc. Perkunas's functions coincide with thunder gods of the Near East; with Baal, for instance, he is related by his care of fertility.

Perkunas is pictured as middle-aged, armed with an axe and arrows, riding a two-wheeled chariot harnessed with goats, like Thor. As is obvious, Perkunas enters the common field of Indo-European and Near Eastern thunder gods, just like Dievas, corresponding to deities of these religions — from An, or Anu, of the Sumerians and Babylonians, to Germanic Tiwaz.

The Balts must have been aware of a chthonic god opposed to the celestial ones. This is the Lithuanian Velnias, Velinas, Latvian Vels, Prussian Patolas (from *pa-* 'under', *tula, tola* 'earth, ground'). This name is found in late sources, but the equivalents of a certain chthonic god are seen everywhere. It is the god of the underworld, cattle, magic and wealth, related to the Indian god Varuna and Iranian Ahura, Germanic Wotan, Odin, Slavonic Veles. From a historical point of view, however, Velnias lost its original meaning, and only in Prussia did Patolas remain significant, in some lists — the First, the god of wise men.

There exist no doubts as to the existence of these gods in the Baltic nations, but occasionally historical sources mention distorted or euphemistic names of gods, which makes their identification in the early period rather difficult.

Russian sources of the 13th century mention Lithuanian gods, but unfortunately their names, as has been mentioned above, are not quite clear. Giving an account of the baptism of Mindaugas in 1252, the Chronicle of Volyn asserts that the baptism of the king of Lithuania was deceptive and that he secretly made sacrifices to his own gods, 'the First — Nunadievis and Teliavelis and Diveriksas and Zuikio Dievas and Madaioa.' In 1258 it goes further, to the effect that Lithuanian warriors called upon their gods, Andajus and Diviriksas. An insertion in the translation of the Malala chronicle of 1261 recounts that Sovijus, the religious hero, made sacrifices to Andajus and Perkunas called Thunder, Zvoruna called Bitch, and Teliavelis the Smith who made him a sun to illuminate the earth, and who "threw the sun to him in the sky."

The First — Nunadievis and Andajus, who was mentioned in two other places — would correspond to Dangaus Dievas, but the names do not carry any meaning in Lithuanian. It is possible that here we come across euphemisms applied to the same god. This is a usual case in Baltic mythology. The Prussians called Dangaus Dievas, Occopirmzts, i.e. 'the First', while Andajus could mean 'Antdievis' (super-god), i.e. the god of gods, the Highest God. The meaning of Nunadievis is not yet clear. The only Lithuanian word with the same root, *nunai*, means 'now', thus Nunadievis could denote the actual, reigning god, the God of the present. Still, this name remains obscure.

Diveriksas or Diviriksas is a euphemistic name for Perkunas. Till quite recently his name was avoided, replacing Perkunas by Dundulis, Barskulis, etc. In Lithuanian Diviriksas could mean either *dievo/dievu rikis* 'bishop of god/gods', i.e. ruler of gods empowered by God (cf. *rikis* — Latin *rex* 'king'), or 'the rod of God'. He is mentioned immediately after the highest God, which would correspond to its religious meaning. Lithuanian mythology describes Perkunas as the master of thunder and lightning, living on a high mountain and in charge of worldly matters. To do that he was empowered by Dievas, who does not afterwards pry into worldly matters. Thus Dievas hands his might and actual power to Perkunas, and the latter becomes the senior god, just like Marduk in Babylon, Baal in West Semites, etc. In Lithuanian religion Perkunas also had a military function — he is the warrior called upon to cover the Daugava River with ice so that Lithuanian warriors could reach the other bank.

Judging from the glossary, in an insertion in the translation of the Malala chronicle, Teliavelis could be considered a cultural hero, the smith-god. His wondrous deed was the forging of the sun

and throwing it ‘up into the sky,’ which implies that for Lithuanians the sun was not a deity, but just a piece of hot metal (as the Greek philosopher, Anaxagoras claimed). His name can be read as Teliia-Velis, the first root relating to *telias* ‘a calf’, or *tellus* ‘the earth’, and the second to Velnias or Velinas, the god of the underworld. One more possible reading of Teliavelis is Kalvelis, i.e. *kalvis* ‘smith’, which does not remove him from the chthonic personages; it is said in Lithuanian folklore that the first smiths were devils, and that they taught men the smith’s craft. Teliavelis would thus take Velnias’s or Patolas’s place and complete the Lithuanian trinity.

The goddess Medeina or Zvorina, who is mentioned beside the three male gods, could mean one goddess, the mistress of forest and wild animals (Medeina originates from the root *med-*, meaning ‘tree’ or ‘hunting’ and Zvoruna from *zveris* ‘wild animal’). She would be close to Diana or Artemis, and in all probability originated from the image of some archaic Goddess, Mother Goddess, or the Mistress of Wild Animals. Zuikio Die, mentioned in the chronicle, is evidently a misunderstanding, which arose from Mindaugas’s habit or superstition while hunting — if a hare (*zuikis*) crossed the road, it was considered a bad omen, Mindaugas, retreated in this case, he did not ‘worship’ the hare, but simply observed a bad omen.

13th century writings reflect gods worshipped by warriors and rulers, and thus provide an ‘official’ pantheon. Later sources provide less competent descriptions of peasant beliefs, which were by then considerably degraded. With the disappearance of the layer of prophets, the ancient religion declined to the level of separate cults and superstitions — thus, the number of gods and demons. Jonas Lasickis’s notes on Samogitian gods in the middle of the 16th century, presented a great multitude of names of gods, goddesses and demons, which were very often unheard of either in other sources or in folklore. In 1582 Motiejus Strikovskis mentioned the main God, Prokorimos (evidently a euphemism stemming from *prakorauti* ‘to do something before others’); further, however, he lists fifteen other very specific gods, not known from other sources. Therefore, already by the 16th century there existed a non-unified pantheon; data from different sources did not correspond one with another, and local spirits, especially those of the economic field, became mixed up with more general gods and ascended to the level of gods.

## Mythology

The ritualistic myths which have reached us are actually those of cultural heroes. The insertion in the translation of the Malala chronicle contains a myth about Sovijus, who gave rise to the ritual of burning the dead and is, to some extent, about the first dead.

Sovijus kills a fabulous wild boar, but when his nine sons eat the boar’s nine spleens, he becomes angry and goes to ‘hell’, where he enters through the ninth gate. In hell one of his sons ‘causes him to sleep’; on the first night he buries him in the ground, but Sovijus complains that reptiles and slugs have been eating him all night. The second night Sovijus is put in a tree, but there he is bitten and stung by insects. The third night he is thrown into a fire — and in the morning he says he has slept ‘sweetly, like a baby in a cradle.’ From then on he becomes the leader of the dead, taking them to the after world, thus introducing a new cult of gods. It seems that the myth reflects the beginning of the burning of the dead in the Baltic countries (around the 13th century BC), but some of its elements are much more ancient.

The same myth mentions Teliavelis, who forged the sun and threw it up into the sky. A similar event was recalled by only ‘one tribe’, described by Jeronimas Prahiskis, who in 1401-1404 visited Lithuania. This tribe worshipped a hammer of enormous size, which had fallen from the sky. The story went that once upon a time a wicked king locked the sun in a tower of ice, but the signs of

the Zodiac released it with a large hammer. It is plausible that this myth might reflect certain rituals of the New Year. However, it is not clear what these ‘signs of the Zodiac’ were, or to what extent this myth is related to that of Teliavelis.

Lithuanian ethnological legends recorded at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, are not myths in the true sense, although some of the things they contain do reflect ancient cosmogony. According to legend, in the beginning of the world there are two gods — Dievas and Velnias, who created the world together. Dievas sends Velnias to the bottom of the water to carry sand or soil, which he later places on the water, it expands and becomes land — the Earth. In the process of creation there was competition between Dievas and Velnias, but the present shape of the world is born from the activities of both. Velnias creates the lakes, marshes, rocks, fens, while Dievas’s idea was to create the Earth smooth. Dievas created all useful animals and birds, while Velnias — all that are harmful or possess chthonic features. This primordial pair of gods has twin-like traces, and it is not clear, whether some other Dievo Dievas — god of gods — does not exist above them, like Hittite Alalu, Anu, etc., especially bearing in mind the fact that there are gods with primordial names in Lithuanian mythology, but the sources where they are mentioned either do not describe their functions, or simply ascribe them to the economic sphere.

The legends contain an original cosmogony. Dievas, walking beside the waters ‘to answer the call of nature,’ spits and walks on. On his way back he sees in that place a creature which he cannot recall creating. Dievas asks this creature what it is and where it comes from, but it does not know. Dievas eventually remembers that he spat here on his way — thus, this creature sprang from his saliva, and this is man. Legends concerned about the origin of woman solve it in a rather simple way — according to them, Dievas spat twice, hence the first man and woman. Another legend says that while Dievas was washing his face in heaven, a drop fell on the ground, and that’s how man was created. From our point of view these legends are grotesque, but their main idea is clear — man is the copula of human and divine substance, it is only in form that the manifestations of this idea are rather unusual. It should also be noticed that in these legends man appears not as a purposeful product of divine creation, but as a completely accidental phenomenon, Dievas did not even think of creating him.

Ethnological legends present a rather peculiar version of the fall: after the creation of man, his body was covered with a shell-like coat. People did not experience any disasters or illnesses and lived forever. Later, however, when they transgressed (usually through laziness or neglect, although the reasons are not always indicated), Dievas took away this coat, leaving as a memento, only the nails on fingers and toes.

Lithuanian ethnological legends abound in number, but in many of them it is difficult to distinguish between Christian and archaic contents. The legends mentioned above seem to be sufficiently original and reflect the elements of ancient mythology.

## **Cult**

Genetically, the oldest Baltic sacral places had to be *alkai*, sacral places situated on hills close to waters; rites could be performed at sacred stones. In Lithuania alone over 250 of the so-called mythical stones have been found, and in the opinion of the archaeologists, rites were performed at them from the Neolithic or early bronze ages. It seems that offerings took place at these stones for an extended period, sometimes as late as the 17th and 18th centuries. Some of these stones have been turned over, evidently at the time of missionaries or after the christening of the country. Wayside shrines with figures of saints were built close to these stones in Lithuania till quite recent



times. As late as the 17th century a post would be built in these sacral places — this would resemble the *massera* and *ashera*, a combination of a wooden and iron post at the sites of the cult of Western Semites and Hittites.

Sacred woods, mentioned in different sources from the end of the 12th century, and sacred trees should also be treated as the most ancient sacral places. In relation to this, some authors mention ‘the cult of nature’ in the Baltic region, but it seems that there was no ‘cult of trees’ as such. Trees were treated as the abode of gods or the place of their annunciation. Jeronimas Prahiskis, who was in Lithuania in the early 15th century, speaks of a very old oak, more sacred than all other trees, which was considered the abode of gods. Once, when Jeronimas was about to fell a sacred wood, women complained to the Grand Duke Vytautas about the missionary’s intention ‘to deprive the god of its abode where they would always beg the god to stop the rain or sun. Now they would no longer know where to look for the god as his abode had been taken from him.’ There exists sufficient evidence to assert that trees had religious meaning not by their own virtue, but because places of divine epiphany were discerned in them. Both stones and trees or sacred woods could mark the places of a cult as they did in other ancient religions. It is possible to observe here the performance rites under the open sky, which were characteristic of many religions in the early period of their development.

It is difficult to say when and why the Balts began to build shrines. In different Indo-European religions it happens most often under the influence of those of the Near East, while shrines are not built by those who are in the early stage of development. They appear later and either co-exist with open places of a cult or never acquire the classical forms of a temple (here the Baltic religion is close to the Germanic and Celtic religions). The first known Baltic shrines were simple and modest round or oval structures on the top of a mound. Inside, there probably stood an idol, and a fire was kept burning.

The center of a cult which functioned for a considerable length of time is believed to be on the site now occupied by the Cathedral in Vilnius. Traces of altars, steps, a well that was possibly related to rites (the well of offering, perhaps?) were uncovered beneath it. The description of Perkunas’s shrine found in the so-called Chronicle of Rivius would in fact correspond to the archaeological findings. The shrine was of an elaborate design, arranged in several levels, with different premises, and a wooden idol of Perkunas. On particular days animal offerings were burned there, and an eternal flame was burning. It is surprising that, according to the Chronicle of Rivius, the shrine was without a roof — this would resemble shrines dedicated to the celestial gods in other religions. Simultaneously it would manifest that the shrine in Vilnius developed from sacral places under the open sky. The most important temple of the Prussians was also without a roof. Jan Dlugosz mentions a cult structure in middle Lithuania, on the bank of the Nevé is river — a sacred flame guarded by priests was kept burning in a tall tower on a mountain. It is obvious that following the example of the ancient alkos/sacred an offering was to be performed under the open sky, not ‘enclosing’ the gods.

### **Man in the Presence of Gods**

The gods in Lithuanian religions are not very distant from this world. A Lithuanian Olympus never came into existence, therefore the most important gods live ‘above and below’, in heaven and in the underworld. Irrespective of their abode, they could appear among people. Perkunas lives in the clouds or on a high hill, but one can meet him in the woods or simply at the doorstep of one’s house, where he appears chasing his eternal enemy, Velnias.

Perkunas is heard — it is said that in a storm the thunder comes from the rolling of his iron wheels. His fiery arrows are visible and appear on earth as little stone axes. Dievas lives in heaven, but many legends say he walks on the Earth disguised as a beggar. He checks whether people follow his commandments; he punishes those who violate the virtues of hospitality, mercy and generosity, and awards the righteous by inviting them ‘to visit him’, i.e. to heaven. Velnias lives in the underworld, but the underworld emerges at the surface in marshes, lakes or other low-lying places, and in times of trouble man goes to these places to ask for Velnias’s help, or, if there is a need, descends even into hell itself. Velnias himself offers his help in village inns, roadsides, appearing at entertainments of young villagers or at weddings. When a baby is born, the goddesses, who wait under the window, determine its fate. Humans and gods are very close in the Lithuanian outlook on the world, which would resemble the mythologies of the Greeks or Celts.

All around there is a great number of signs of the gods; one only has to know how properly to read them. The chronicles of the Orders often mention Lithuanians telling fortunes — about the future or things taking place far away. Unfavorable lots make one reject some previous idea and retreat as fast as one can. A Lithuanian marching at the head of a platoon casts lots right there in the road; if it is unfavorable the soldier announces danger — and at once German knights attack from ambush. The imprisoned Lithuanian duke is looking for omens in the cracks on a bone — and exclaims that judging from the signs his brother is in grave trouble, which before long turns out to be true. Jogaila, a Lithuanian king of Poland, would not make any decision prior to throwing lots. All these signs can provide the answer to any question, ranging from meteorological conditions to issues of life and death. Thus, the gods check, reward and punish, and in this way supervise whether moral commandments are observed. ‘Outward’ things such as a feat of arms, weather conditions, or crops also depend on their will which can be experienced from signs.

And still, this rational and transparent relation is accompanied by a rather gloomy background. Man is not the product of the purposeful activities of the gods, but came into being when Dievas spat incidentally. Man himself is not valuable, but purely accidental. He can live in a community and in it experiences the manifestations of divine will; he functions in the community and for it. In cases where disease, misfortune or the death of a relative disturbs his balance or makes him a burden to the community, he very easily resorts to suicide. Such habits of the Lithuanians have been mentioned in sources from the 13th century. In one village 50 widows hang themselves because their husbands did not come back from war. Lithuanian warriors scattered around enemy territory after a lost battle hang themselves in woods. Because they do not want to be taken prisoners, defenders of a castle commit suicide when the enemy is attacking. In the Middle Ages life in Lithuania was resolute, energetic and short, after which the journey to the gods awaited.

### **The Image of the Posthumous Life**

Death and the other world are separated by a shorter or longer period during which the deceased has to stay in this world. First of all it was believed that Dievas allots a certain ‘number of years’ to each. If one does not survive all these years — is killed or commits suicide earlier — he must stay on the Earth till his allotted day, reincarnated in plants, or more often in trees, animals and birds. There was also a belief that the dead can only leave this world on the Easter of Souls, i.e., Holy Thursday, or at Halloween, until which time the dead must stay on Earth. Thus, a certain number of the dead remain on the Earth. Under the influence of Christianity such souls are identified with the dead repenting in purgatory, and in folk belief the Christian purgatory was

moved down to the Earth. A very archaic system of belief in metempsychosis, the remains of which abound in the Lithuanian tradition, facilitated images of this kind.

The cosmic mountain, on the top of which Dievas or Perkunas lives, is the centre of the afterlife. The heavenly abode of the dead is right behind it or at its top, where it is warm and light, a wonderful garden. Sometimes it is believed that in climbing that mountain souls have to use their own nails and those of predatory animals that are burnt in the funeral pyre. Sometimes a dragon is mentioned at the foot of the mountain. One rare belief asserts that there is a little bridge leading to the top of the mountain; the souls of the righteous cross it very easily, bad ones, however, fall down and are taken by the dragon.

Vicious people are doomed to the place of posthumous punishment ruled by Velnias. This image has also been influenced by a system of belief in metempsychosis: in hell vicious masters, having turned into horses, drag heavy loads — tar, logs or tree stumps. Despite the influence of Christian images and ecclesiastic iconography, such images survived up to the 20th century.

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## Chapter V

# Lithuanian Messianism: Its Origin

*Vytautas Berenis*

The past is the source of myths and ideologies, but it often turns into a myth itself. In Claude Levi-Strauss's words, the Lithuanians can be called a "hot ethos", i.e., a community shaping its ideals according to the values of the past. It was Jonas Basanavicius (1851 - 1927) who declared in "Ausra" that the main principle of the nation's cultural revival was expressed in an ancient sage's simple words: those who are ignorant of history will always remain children.

For the Lithuanian nation formed on the basis of the peasantry in the second half of the 19th century ethnic consolidation and resistance were most important; therefore, history occupied a significant place in its ideology. Its interpretation was based on present realities. Thus, the following principle of selection regarding past events was formed: admiration for pagan Lithuania, glorification of Lithuanian Dukes, "Lithuanization" of the history and culture of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

Realizing the necessity for methodological research in history, perhaps one of the most outstanding Lithuanian historians of the period between the two wars, Zenonas Ivinskis (1908 - 1971), wrote that "all this idolatry of the past shows what the real life has deprived the Lithuanians of". To be sure, it has deprived them of quite a lot — of the understanding of reality. Ivinskis's efforts to rationalize history were directed against romantic ideology and the model of 20th century patriarchal culture taking shape on its basis. Generally speaking, the difference between a rational and a romantic consciousness lies in the attitude toward cognition. In the first case, the past presents only the historical limit of the subject's perspective which is being conceptualized within the three modalities of time: the past, the present, the future. In the second case, the myth of the past becomes itself the object of cognition, thus refusing to comprehend the sequence of events in time and space and ousting the historical subject from real life and action. "The idea of an eternal return" is the major principle of this "mythologized" consciousness. Self-sacrifice (the myth of Pilenai), the nation's charismatic leader (Vytautas the Great), heroism (the battle of Salgiris), and other didactic themes of history surviving from the early 19th century presented the nation with a wide field of action and a high level of national self-consciousness.

In the Soviet period Lithuanian "history" struggled against values of this kind cherished in independent Lithuania. "Real history" was said to have begun with the emergence of the proletariat, and the epoch of feudalism was merely an illustration of the peasants' miserable life and their "inhuman" exploitation. Nevertheless, philologists, historians and art historians worked as best they could: investigations of the native language, studies of folklore, literature and regional ethnography embodied the precept most urgent to the Lithuanian culture in all times: to survive. At the same time it seemed that "workers on the ideological front" were "taking care of" folk culture and turned a blind eye to activity which was not quite acceptable to them. The motivation for this view, to my mind, is simple: the nation survives, but sooner or later it is bound to lose the power of cultural regeneration, being unaware of the signifying context of world culture. Yet this cannot be said about a nation whose ideologues are seeking to make a piece of its past absolute by assigning to the subject of this process — the nation — a universal significance in general history.

Messianism as an ideology of progress and eschatology came to thrive in the first half of the 19th century in groups of Polish emigrants. Whatever our assessment of the phenomenon of

Messianism may be, we have to agree that its ideologues discerned certain signs of the spiritual crisis in Europe. Reaction against the philosophy of rationalism and its mundane equivalent — the necessities of life — formulated the problem of man's disintegration in Western civilization. One constructs his life from individual fragments which, being predetermined by circumstances, turn against man's universal nature, understood in a Christian way and separate knowledge from morality. It should be noted that the theory of Messianism failed to acquire a universal foundation, but rather manifested itself in certain theoretical statements which were defined but not expounded. Polish thinkers like A. Cieszkowski and Adam Mickiewicz, created and developed their notions of "Messianism" and "historiosophy"; in their theories they tried to reflect on the historical perspective of the occupied Polish nation. In their books issues of the nation's fate and survival were raised. Certainly, these books and brochures were spread not only in Poland, but used to reach the regions of Russia's western provinces, the former historic Lithuania.

The influence of old Polish literature and romantic ideology on Lithuanian writing is widely acknowledged. Before the emergence of Polish — Lithuanian political, social and cultural antagonism, the impact of Polish literature on the scanty group of Lithuanian cultured people was quite conspicuous. Ideology was no exception. On the whole, 19th century Polish literature exerted a strong influence on the consciousness of the generation at the time of "Ausra" (1884), while the concept of the purpose of the "Polish civilization" formulated by Messianists and later expounded by Polish scholars was reflected in the substantiation of the cultural subject of S. Salkauskis's (1886 - 1941) theory "Lithuania as a synthesis of East and the West". This concept obviously represented the theories of interaction between the Eastern and Western civilizations and Slavonic Messianism; it has nothing in common with the theory of an organic Lithuanian culture. The school of Polish-speaking Lithuanian Romanticists which stirred up so many discussions on the tradition of history and literature was based on the German concept of nation (J.G. Herder), whereas in Poland the major values of classicism and "Jacobinic" Romanticism, extolling a society of free citizens, were still enjoying popularity. Part of society's elite of that time, having faced the decline of the class isolation of life and the values it declared, made an attempt to coordinate three levels of self-consciousness of the liberated person: particular, regional and universal (recall the three cities dearest to A. Mickiewicz — Naugardukas, Vilnius and Rome), and in this way sought to conform to the context of values typical of European culture, sometimes affirming, but more often denying, the values of bourgeois civilization.

The key statement of the ideology of romantic Messianism was "exclusiveness in universality". Having failed to liberate itself from Russian oppression in 1794, 1812 and 1831, the Polish nation faced the issue of its survival as a political nation. Ordinary political and diplomatic means did not produce the anticipated success; thus in the face of the political, cultural and moral opposition of European nations to the Polish nation it acquired supposed exclusiveness and superiority in Messianism.

Let us read excerpts of A. Mickiewicz's (1798 - 1855) book *The Polish Nation and Pilgrimage* (a year later, in 1833, it was already translated into Lithuanian). The poet, referring to the principle of "struggle against everybody" and following the biblical rhetoric, in his aphorisms expressed a concept of the relation between politics and morality totally different from the West. "So the Frenchmen created themselves an idol and called it pride; this idol was called the golden calf in pagan times; the Spaniards created themselves an idol of strength and power, Baal; the Englishmen — an idol of ruling over the sea and trade, Mammon; the Germans — an idol of replete and good life, Moloch."<sup>1</sup> Being a romantic personality, not recognizing a pragmatic interest in politics and seeing political hypocrisy and devaluation of words in bourgeois states, A. Mickiewicz

warns his supporters: "Thus verily I say unto you: you must not learn the ways of the strangers' civilization, but you must teach them the ways of the proper Christian civilization."<sup>2</sup>

The Polish nation to A. Mickiewicz is not an ethnic, but a synthetic element: this concept includes both a Pole, a Lithuanian and a legionary struggling against European monarchs. The absolutism of the "concept of nation" creates the evaluative norm for European history. Catholicism, being a source of hope and strength and having preserved the identity of word and deed remains the only pattern of culture worth following. Yet in the past the former Polish-Lithuanian state also was a country of good and honest historical patterns. A. Mickiewicz opposes them to the geopolitical arguments among European states: "And they were endowed by God, since the great Lithuanian nation was united with Poland, like husband and wife, like two souls in one body". Or: "Does a Lithuanian argue with a Pole about the Nemunas border, Gardinas or Baltstoge? This I say unto you: a Frenchman, a German and a Russian must be similar to a Pole and a Lithuanian."<sup>3</sup>

J.I. Kraszewski (1812 - 1887) stood apart from the ideology of Messianism, but in his work "Lithuania" he revealed the most important historic mission performed by the Lithuanian nation — stopping the Mongolian-Tartarian invasion into Europe. Without analyzing the historical validity of this statement, we should note that having accomplished its historic mission, a nation must disappear. In J.I. Kraszewski's opinion, features of national character, the nation's ideas, growth, maturation and decline constitute the meaning of Lithuania's history. Pre-Christian civilization was distinguished for its maturity, and the pagan faith integrated the Lithuanians as a nation. After the eradication of this faith, the Lithuanian nationality as such was destroyed. Christianity turned the Prussians into Germans, and the Lithuanians into Poles or Russians. Though Lithuanian peasants have preserved the language, customs, legends and songs, they are not capable of creating new values, as they do not have their own concept of genealogy (history), they do not have inner passion (creative power) and recall "a polyp devoid of developed organs but notable for its mass."<sup>4</sup>

There has been a tendency to avoid recognizing that the Polish-speaking Romanticists of historic Lithuania. J. I. Kraszewski, T. Narbutas (1784 - 1864), Wl. Kondratowicz-Syrokome (1823 - 1862) and others had a considerable impact on the problematic paradigm of Lithuania's national history. Contrary to the majority of Romanticist noblemen, S. Daukantas's (1793 - 1864) vision of the nation's future recognized all sovereign rights of the Lithuanian peasant nation and claimed that power originated from a "civil treaty" — the state which was created had to defend people's property and civil rights. Yet paradoxically, S. Daukantas's idea of turning the nation into citizenry did not exceed the boundary of legal rationalism; having turned into a nation, people do not become a society.<sup>5</sup>

The outlook of Polish Messianism treats society as a spiritual substance. The concept of struggle of egoistic interests of individuals and social groups, and the search for compromises found in bourgeois society was alien to this outlook. Messianists who disparage the written law as "partial and incomplete truth" consider that the only possible outcome of the vision of perfect life is a charismatic leader crowned with the idea of justice (not law), a man capable of surpassing adherence to party principles and accumulating in himself the power of the whole nation. The great Polish poet A. Mickiewicz did not hold democratic views and — one more paradox — while struggling against the Russian empire, he secretly admired some features of administration in the Russian monarchic system.

Nearly the most dangerous feature of the Messianistic ideology is the absence of progression from the past to the future. Descendants of brave ancestors turn into an epitome of virtue, and the

idealization of the past becomes a source of progress. Certainly, on the other hand, the nations of East and Central Europe, contrary to other European nations, have not yet learned to smile at their past due to the sequence of tragic events in their history. But it is not necessary to do it — there has been so much blood and treachery in our history that romantic heroism is but "a tale" with a tragic but happy ending. It also must be realized that history is an equation with many unknown quantities. Lithuanian philosopher A. Maceina (1908 - 1987) denies that history is a science. "Not being able to surpass the present, a person attributes the features of the present both to the past and to the future and in this way revives these dimensions of time, but not the way they were or will be."<sup>6</sup> Therefore history always has been an interpretation of the subjective present in which the person lives. Every person who reflects on the cultured world having a dimension of time can become a historian to the extent to which he is interested in the problem of being in this world. To a citizen of Western Europe who has not read a single historical book in his life, the past is alive through historically-formed institutions, organizationally established markets and sensual festive-carnival traditionalism. Perhaps this is the reason why such words as "history" and "nation" are uttered with great respect, but never capitalized.

There is need for a deep and comprehensive analysis of the problems raised by the historian of Lithuanian literature, Pranas Augustaitis's (1883 - 1941), in his study *Elements of Lithuanianism in Polish Romanticism* written in the early 20th century. In this sense it is hoped that the issue tackled in the present article — the influence of Polish historiosophy on Lithuanian political-cultural thought — will extend the investigations of Lithuanian cultural self-consciousness and the sources of its mentality.

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## Notes

1. A. Mickiewicz, *Księgi pielgrzymstwa narodu Polskiego* (Krakow, 1911), p. 6.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
4. J.I. Kraszewski, *Litwa* (Warszawa, 1847), vol. 1, p. 18.
5. V. Merkys, *Istorija ir tautine kultura // Vakarinės naujienos*, 1992, lapkrièio 13 d.
6. A. Maceina, *Asmuo ir istorija* (Chicago, 1986), p. 85.



## Chapter VI

# The Development of Professional Philosophy at the University of Lithuania

*Romanas Pleckaitis*

In the absence of a center which could mobilize initiative and cultural activity, in the absence of a university with studies in philosophy, philosophic life of Lithuania in the early 20th century was inevitably dull. But the need for philosophical ideas was evident. In the discussions of the current processes of social stratification the enlightened public of the time developed and published various projects, opening new paths for the nation. These projects required philosophical understandings. The Lithuanian press of those days met the requirement by publishing philosophical articles. The *Draugija*, edited by A. Dambrauskas-Jakstas, was the most successful in this field. At that time propagation of philosophy was hard work, because its tools — Lithuanian philosophical terms and other semantic means — still had to be created. The enlightened public got over this hardship and showed that the language was suitable for expressing complicated philosophical constructions. Many of the terms, offered in the text-book of logic<sup>1</sup> by Dambrauskas-Jakstas, were successfully chosen and still are used today. R. Bytautas may be considered one of the initiators of the Lithuanian philosophical language.

Thus, when the University of Lithuania was founded, the country already had quite a number of educated people capable of engaging in philosophy, not only on a publicist but on a professional level. The best prepared in the field were graduates of philosophical studies in West European universities, who had obtained doctor's degrees there. Most of them graduated, having prepared and defended their doctorate in two Catholic centers — The Higher Philosophy Institute at Leuven University and Freiburg University in Switzerland: Leonas Bistras — doctor of philosophy, thesis: "Justification of Goodness or the Moral Philosophy of V. Solovjov", Freiburg, 1921; Pranas Kuraitis — doctor of philosophy, thesis: "The Theory of Knowledge of W. Wundt", Leuven, 1911; Vincas Mykolaitis — doctor of philosophy, thesis "The Aesthetics of Vladimir Solovjov", Freiburg, 1922; Antanas Maliauskis — studied philosophy and social sciences in Leuven and obtained the doctor's degree, thesis: "Cooperation in the Agriculture of France". He also obtained the doctor's degree of political sciences, thesis: "Agricultural Syndicate Union of Southeast", Freiburg, 1912; Mecislovas Reinyš — doctor of philosophy, thesis: "V. Solovjov's Theory of Moral Principles", Leuven, 1912; Stasys Salkauskis — doctor of philosophy, thesis: "The Universal Soul in V. Solovjov's Philosophy", Freiburg, 1920; Izidorius Tamosaitis — doctor of philosophy, thesis: "V. Solovjov's Criteriology", Freiburg, 1920.

They were the main persons able to work professionally in philosophy and parallel sciences in the new University of Lithuania. In preparing their theses for doctor's degrees at Freiburg and Leuven they were orientated toward the study of the heritage of Solovjov. Their good knowledge of Russian enabled them to acquaint the scientists of Western universities with the heritage of this prominent Slavic philosopher, whose ideas held public attention at the time.

Salkauskis read the lectures of logic and introduction to philosophy in the Humanities section of Kaunas High Courses. P. Dovydatitis read lectures of philosophy too, and had begun the philosophy course with the lecture "Lithuanian Philosophy among the Philosophies of Other Nations: Goals and Methods."

## The Studies of Philosophy in the University of Lithuania

These studies were concentrated in two faculties of the University: theological-philosophical and the humanities. Despite the twin nature of philosophy studies, the existence of parallel departments was constantly questioned. Nevertheless, the situation remained unchanged and was evaluated positively as the expression of theoretical variety in Lithuanian philosophy.

The theological-philosophical faculty became the main center of philosophy studies within the Philosophy section of the Humanities faculty. In order to qualify in philosophy the student had to choose a main discipline or specialty and two complementary disciplines. In the philosophy section one could choose from: philosophy, philology/classical languages, Lithuanian, German, French language and literature, world history, the history of Lithuania, psychology and pedagogics, sociology and geography. Four subjects were obligatory for students of the philosophy section: introduction to philosophy, logic, psychology, methods of the scientific work.

There were three branches of philosophy: 1. Philosophic system: the introduction to philosophy, logic and methodology of science, epistemology, ontology, philosophy of nature, theodicy, ethics with philosophy of jurisprudence, aesthetics, philosophy of culture and psychology; 2. History of philosophy: ancient philosophy, philosophy of the Middle Ages, philosophy of the modern age and epistemology; 3. philosophy of nature: introduction to the natural sciences, philosophy of nature, psychology and ontology. In addition there was the branch of sociology: sociology, ethics, philosophy of law.

The wide spectrum of specialties and specialization was understandable, since most graduates of the philosophy section became teachers in the gymnasium, and thus they were able to teach several subjects. As pedagogy and psychology were obligatory for the licenses of gymnasium teachers, there was a Department of Pedagogy and Its History, and a Department of Theoretical and Experimental Psychology.

There were two Departments of Philosophy. P. Kuraitis headed the Department of Introduction to Philosophy and History of Philosophy for years. He lectured in epistemology, ontology, history of philosophy: modern and world thought; and sometimes in theodicy and the philosophy of the Middle Ages. In the theological faculty he sometimes gave courses in Catholic social doctrine and special theology: in 1929-1937 he served as the dean of theological-philosophical faculty. He published and edited the Catholic magazine *Tiesos kelias* (The Path of Truth) cooperated in *Logos*, *Zidinys* (Hearth), *Lietuvos mokykla* (The School of Lithuania), *XX amzius* (20th Century) and other publications. He took part in the activities of the Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Sciences and was the spiritual leader of the religious organization "Ateitininkai". He began his work as a docent in the University with the traditional inaugural lecture "The Position of Epistemology Today and the Main Principles of Its Orientation" on April 8, 1922 (*Logos*, 1921-1922, N. 3-4). In the autumn of the same year he was promoted extraordinary professor, and in 1935 full professor.

He had great influence on all the students as the dean for many years. Everyone was aware of his stubborn and patient efforts in defending the faculty from the plots of the authorities. Kuraitis distinguished himself by impartiality and justice, in allotting the grants for students and other affairs. In applying to him people felt at ease since he was reputed for direct simplicity, not for formal officialdom.<sup>2</sup>

L. Bistras headed the Department of Systematic Philosophy. He studied medicine at the universities of Geneve and Tartu, but he had turned to philosophy. He lectured on the philosophy

of nature, philosophy of law, political economy, theory of the state, theodicy. He took an active part in the Christian Democratic party and was a member of the Lithuanian Parliament in 1926. Bistras published his thesis for a doctor's degree (in German) and several articles.

Dovydaitis, the head of the Department of the History of Religions in Theological section, lectured on ancient philosophy and the philosophy of the Middle Ages. He was signatory of the Independence Act of February 16th. Dovydaitis had studied law and graduated from Moscow University as a jurist, but he did not like jurisprudence and began working in philosophy, when he was still a student. Dovydaitis read the history of religions to the students of the theological seminary, and the ancient history and philosophy of history to the students of history, but most listeners were attracted to his course on the history of education. He was invited as a docent to the University of Lithuania, was promoted extraordinary professor in June 1922 and full professor in 1928. Evaluating his overall work, the faculty conferred a degree of doctor of philosophy on Dovydaitis in 1935.

He lectured in his own specific style: no written notes for his lectures, a broad array of books (mostly in German), magazines, articles, extracts around himself from which he translated on the spot into fluent and rich Lithuanian, adding his own commentaries and evaluations. Dovydaitis knew his subject well; the lectures were weighty. He usually lacked time to prepare lectures, because he was involved heavily in huge publishing and editorial work, a huge of one person.

He established and edited the philosophical journal *Logos*, the journal of natural sciences *Kosmos*, *Soter* which served as the organ of the Department of the History of Religions, *Lietuvos mokykla* (The School of Lithuania), *Ateitis* (The Future), and *Naujoji vaidilute* (The New Priestess). Dovydaitis not only wrote the articles for these journals, translated from other languages, and commissioned articles, but was also the founder of other activities. He was one of the founders of the religious organization "*Ateitininkai*", and chaired it until 1927, later becoming honorary chairman, organizer of Catholic teachers, etc. He wrote more than 100 major scientific articles, and many shorter ones. In 1930-1934 alone his published articles would form seven books with 340 pages each. "Thousands of pages — not a single large work"<sup>3</sup> because of his preoccupation with editing. The significance of the journals edited by Dovydaitis was invaluable for the Lithuanian life of those days. The main body of the intelligentsia of that time contributed to the journals, edited by him. The contributors to *Kosmos* were all Lithuanian naturalists. Dovydaitis was a scientist and encyclopaedist, a true enlightener of Lithuania.

Salkauskis had turned from jurisprudence to philosophy, too. He did not go to Freiburg to study philosophy empty-handed, but had published the study "Church and Culture" in *Draugija* (Society). Salkauskis was invited as a docent to the University of Lithuania in 1922, was promoted to extraordinary professor several months later and to full professor in 1928. He headed the Department of Pedagogy and Its History in the theological-philosophical faculty. He lectured in pedagogics and its history, and also read the introduction to philosophy, logic, philosophy of culture, aesthetics, methods of general scientific work and other special courses: the science of morality, the principles of social education, special problems of culture, theory of terminology, etc. Salkauskis gradually reduced the number of his courses and passed them to other lecturers. Even the course of philosophy of culture in which his contribution was considerable was given over to A. Maceina. Salkauskis was particularly fond of pedagogy and its history and methods of scientific work. He prepared the lectures carefully, with full texts.

Salkauskis also was active in social work. He was the ideologist of the "*Ateitininkai*" and their chief leader. He collected the articles devoted to this organization into the book *Ateitininku ideologija paskutiniu laiku formavimosi vyksme* (The Ideology of "*Ateitininkai*" in Shaping Recent

Times, K., 1933). He was one of the founders of the Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Sciences and for some time edited the periodicals *Romuva* (Haven) and *Zidinys* (Hearth). Salkauskis did not engage in politics, but in 1935 he wrote a letter to President A. Smetona urging him to change the authoritarian party regime into a democracy. Salkauskis was very productive and in his works created concepts important for Lithuanian philosophy.

Maceina began to work in the section of philosophy in this faculty in 1935. He graduated from the University (studies in philosophy and pedagogics), and took advanced courses in the universities of Leuven, Freiburg, Strasbourg and Brussels. He received the doctor's degree with the thesis "National Education" in 1934 and his habilitation with the thesis "The Process of Education" in 1936. In the philosophy section he lectured on the methods of general scientific work, philosophy of culture and history of pedagogy. Maceina was a productive author. Over the years he spent in the university he published five books, many articles in *Naujoji Romuva* (The New Haven), *Logos*, *Tiesos kelias* (The Path of Truth), *Naujoji vaidilute* (The New Priestess) and others and took part in the activities of the "Ateitininkai" and Christian Democrats.

The seminar of philosophy in the section of philosophy was led by Kuraitis, who was in charge of the library of the seminar and subscribed to five or six philosophical journals in German and French in order to expand the range of information channels.

The largest number (31) of graduates from the section of philosophy of theological-philosophical faculty was in 1929. In other years the number of graduates varied from over a dozen to nine, eight, seven, five and only two in 1938. Very few (16) people completed studies in the section of philosophy in the faculty of Humanities — only four, three, two, one and in some years none. But many students from other faculties, for whom the subject of philosophy was obligatory or optional, attended lectures read by the professors of this faculty.

In the beginning there was only one Department of Philosophy in the faculty. Vosylius Sezemanas was invited to be the head of Department in 1923. He was born in Vyborg of a Swedish father from Finland, and a German mother from St. Petersburg and received his education in philosophy and the classical languages at the University of St. Petersburg. As a promising scholar Sezemanas was sent for advanced studies to the universities of Marburg and Berlin. On returning, he became a private docent at the University of St. Petersburg, but during the Bolshevik period was not in St. Petersburg. He received an invitation from the University of Lithuania with joy and began learning Lithuanian which he mastered so well that he spoke it without any accent and wrote without any mistakes. He even assisted Salkauskis with the preparation of the Lithuanian philosophic terms. For some years he read lectures in German, but later in Lithuanian. Sezemanas published his lectures on logic read in the University of Lithuania under the title *Logika* (Logic) in 1929. He lectured in the main courses of philosophy: logic, introduction to philosophy, epistemology, cosmology, aesthetics, ancient philosophy, philosophy of the Middle Ages, modern philosophy, and held seminars and proseminars in these subjects. Sezemanas gave special courses: Russian philosophy, Hegelian philosophy, English aesthetics, philosophy of organic nature, the problem of freedom, the problem of suffering, etc. For Sezemanas's election to full professor of the University of Lithuania in 1928, the prominent European philosophers, N. Lossky, S. Frank and N. Hartman (Sezemanas's friend from St. Catherine German Gymnasium in St. Petersburg) sent recommendations. Sezemanas published major works on the problems of cognitive theory in *Eranus* published by the section of philosophy of the faculty, and in German philosophical journals.

When two departments of philosophy were established in the section of philosophy, Sezemanas headed the Department of the History of Philosophy, and Iz. Tamosaitis, former head

of the Department of general and experimental philosophy, became chief of the Department of Systematic Philosophy. From 1923 Tamosaitis, professor since 1924, lectured on the introduction to philosophy, logic, ontology, ethics, philosophy of religion, general psychology and read special courses on social philosophy, the ethics of M. Scheler, and the social philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. He edited the *Eranus, Vairas* (The Helm), the theoretical magazine *tautininkai*, and published studies in *Logos, Zidinys* (Hearth) and other periodicals.

Johanas Strauchas (born in Trakai and graduated from the University of St. Petersburg, where he studied philosophy, history and the natural sciences) worked as a docent in the section of philosophy. At the same time he acted as principal of Kaunas German Gymnasium. Strauchas lectured in logic, psychology and the history of philosophy. He translated works by Laski, Solovjov and Petra ycki into German. He prepared a textbook of philosophy, but the war prevented its publication in Kaunas; after the war he did a German edition for publication there.

In 1923-1926 Smetona lectured in philosophy: ethics, courses on Plato's poetics and the stylistics of the Lithuanian language in the Humanities Faculty. He translated the dialogues of Plato, and published articles in ethics and history.

Maliauskis, head of the Department of Sociology for many years, lectured in sociology, ethics, theodicy and other subjects. He wrote articles on politics and the issues of social life, and studied the problems of ethics. He published the following works in this field: *Demokratija* (Democracy, K., 1924), *Etika* (Ethics, K., 1935) and *Teodiceja* (Theodicy, K., 1931).

Professors and docents in other specialities at the University also published philosophical works: Silkarskis published articles not only in Lithuania, but in Polish philosophical journals, J. Eretas wrote articles on German mysticism, and in his work *Katalikai ir mokslas* ("Catholics and Science", K., 1935) studied the relationship between faith and scientific knowledge. Devoting himself to philosophical investigations, L. Karsavin advanced historiosophy, studied problems of metaphysics and distinguished himself as the historian and philosopher of culture. His strong engagement in Orthodoxy enabled him to pass easily from philosophy to theosophy. The latter circumstances was pointed out by K. Ambrozaitis, in his review of Karsavin's book.<sup>4</sup> J. Keliuotis, who lectured in journalism, had studied theoretical problems of aesthetics and artistic creations. The natural scientists of the University studied the philosophical problems in their respective fields of physics, astronomy, biology, publishing mainly in the *Kosmosas, Kultura* (Culture).

Conferences and symposia were not in fashion at the time, but philosophical life was intensive in Kaunas, as is seen from the publications, through more narrow.

Professors of philosophy went abroad to take part in the philosophical congresses and anniversary celebrations of eminent philosophers, where they made reports. Kuraitis took part in the celebration of the 200th anniversary of Kant's birth in Konigsberg in 1924 and delivered a speech in the name of the University of Lithuania. He took part in the international congresses on Thomistic philosophy in Rome in 1925 and 1936, and the social week of Catholics in France, 1937. V. Sezemanas together with Kuraitis took part in the second international Hegel congress in Berlin. But the philosophers of the University of Lithuania did not arrange conferences on problematic themes and there were no philosophical symposia attended by foreign scientists in Kaunas.

The theological-philosophical faculty had the right to confer two philosophical degrees, the licentiate and doctor of philosophy. A graduate of the University could receive a licentiate, too, by preparing a work on that level. The diploma papers of most graduates were also distinguished by high quality. In 1932 Maceina presented an exceptional diploma work "Religijos reikšme kulturai" (The Importance of Religion to Culture) (104 pages, manuscript). The diploma prepared by J. Girnius in 1936, "Heideggerio egzistencialines filosofijos pagrindai" (The Principles of

Heidegger's Existential Philosophy) (181 pages, manuscript) was in fact a modern doctoral thesis. In this work Girnius made a far-sighted analysis of Heidegger's philosophizing and gave a precise Lithuanian version of the complicated constructions of existential philosophy. All this indicates at least two things: an adequate level of philosophical studies in the University of Lithuania and gifted youth who were able to make a good showing in their diplomas and showed the promise of research in the future. Only a few theses for doctor's degree were defended in the University, but there was a good practice of sending gifted students to the West European scientific centers to prepare dissertations. P. Mantvydas defended his doctorate in the theological-philosophical faculty in 1938. After graduating from the philosophy section he spent four years in Paris, Munich, Cologne, Leuven and prepared this thesis for doctor's degree "Osvaldo Kiulpes kritiskasis realizmas" (The Critical Realism of Osvald Kulpe) (264 pages, manuscript).<sup>5</sup> High level dissertations were also prepared in the theology section. For example, V.M. Mankeliunas, after completing the theological studies in Kaunas, extended his knowledge in the Gregorian University of Rome and in Leuven, and defended the doctorate "Kultūros ir religijos santykis" (Relationship between Culture and Religion) (358 pages, manuscript) in Kaunas in 1938.<sup>6</sup> This dissertation gives a broad panorama of the philosophy of culture, and discusses the latest theories on the philosophy of culture by M. de Unamuno, J. Maritain and others. Later Mankeliunas was successfully engaged in psychology, holding a professorship in the University of Javeriana in Bogota from 1952, and was awarded the National Colombia Prize for his scientific psychological research in 1976.

### **The Object and Method of Catholic Philosophy**

Catholic philosophy in the theological-philosophical faculty reflected the horizons of Western scientific centers. Neo-Thomism dominated in Catholic philosophy. Some of its representatives, considered conservative, declared Thomism to be open to needed expansion and improvement, but that in principle Thomas Aquinas had expressed everything required for Catholic philosophy. Such conservatives were in the minority in neo-scholasticism: Kuraitis was their most prominent representative in the University of Lithuania. A second group in Catholic philosophy did not consider the revival of the thought of Thomas Aquinas to be the ultimate goal. It regarded Catholic philosophy as open to progress, development, and Thomism to be subject to enrichment through the adoption of ideas from modern trends of philosophy; all philosophical conceptions, suitable for Catholic philosophy, were to be used and adopted. This orientation dominated in the theological-philosophical faculty of the University of Lithuania.

During their studies abroad the future professors of the philosophical faculty attended by lectures of the most eminent representatives of neo-Thomist philosophy or familiarized themselves with their work: Cardinal D.J. Mercier, founder of the Leuven Higher Institute of Philosophy, and other eminent neo-Thomists who worked in Leuven: sociologist S. Deploige, epistemologist L. Noel, in the philosophy of natural science, D. Nys, and historian of philosophy M. de Wulf, and others.

Salkauskis drew from M. de Munyck, a Belgian Dominican, professor of the Freiburg University as well as Maritain known for his works *Three Reformers*, *The Dream of Descartes*, and especially his work: *Integral Humanism*. Kuraitis translated into Lithuanian in 1926 the work of the famous historian of philosophy, A. Stockly, *Features of the History of Philosophy*. Even today this work serves as a comprehensive and thorough teaching aid for students.

The program of the Leuven Higher Institute of Philosophy made the following assertion:

Neo-scholasticism is obliged to come into contact with the current philosophic trends and with the special sciences, to draw from these sources and to improve on their base. As regards the reference to special sciences, the program distinguished between two things: facts and interpretation of facts. Accordingly Catholic philosophy has to take into account the facts of science, but is capable of creating its own interpretation of facts. The orientation of Catholic philosophy is this: Aristotelian Thomist philosophy is the philosophic system deserving the greatest trust. Aristotle made a universal synthesis of the Greek philosophy. On the basis of Aristotelian philosophy St. Thomas Aquinas incorporated into the universal synthesis the valuable achievements of the ancient and Middle Ages. Nowadays the philosophy of neo-scholasticism, based on the Aristotelian Thomistic system, has been further developing and is trying to make a universal synthesis of the achievements of the ancient and Middle Ages along with achievements of the modern thought. This is philosophy that lasts forever, *philosophia perennis*. It covers broadly all the problems of world outlook and solves them not unilaterally, but in this unitive and synthetic respect.<sup>7</sup>

Salkauskis defines the relationship between philosophy and the special sciences in this way:

(a) the special sciences are not allowed to interfere in philosophy; (b) philosophy is not allowed to interfere into the special sciences; (c) philosophy must know the achievements of the special sciences, draw on them and interpret them by its means; (d) philosophy has a right to warn the special sciences about possible errors and the special sciences must take the warning into consideration and check its conclusions.<sup>8</sup>

Here Salkauskis was concerned with the immanence in the development of philosophy: philosophy has its principles and concepts and is advanced on their basis. Therefore, in agreeing with b) and c), one still has to tackle a). The special sciences are able to reveal that a recent conception in philosophy is outdated in that it does not reflect the latest achievements of the special sciences: for example, quantum physics and the theory of relativity have added new content to the philosophical conceptions of space, time and movement; genetics has done the same with the conception of expediency and inheritance. Modern logic has extended the conception of the process of knowledge, the creation of multi-valent logic has revealed that the laws of logic are not apriori but plastic and subject to changes, and that some laws of logic may be rejected.

Point d) is also formulated in a different way today after bitter experience with the warning role of philosophy (when philosophy turned into a kind of censor) starting with the Middle Ages through the Soviet period when a Marxist scholasticism persecuted progressive scientific ideas and their spokesmen. Today point d) is formulated in this way: philosophical problems arise in the special sciences, especially in research on the foundations of sciences; the special sciences have no means to solve these and therefore borrow from philosophy.

The professors of the theological-philosophical faculty gave a slightly varied interpretation of the structure of philosophy, its disciplines and the correlation. The system of the disciplines forming neo-Thomistic philosophy was not yet finally set. Salkauskis's description of the system was most complete and grounded.<sup>9</sup> The philosophy of culture was its most significant element. At that time the philosophy of culture was only being formed. Maceina even pointed out that the University of Lithuania was the first to introduce the philosophy of culture into the programmes of the Universities as a separate course. In Western universities the philosophy of culture was presented in the course of the history of philosophy. It would be expedient to check whether the University of Lithuania really holds priority in this respect. Even if it were not the first to introduce

it, it cannot be denied an avant-garde role in this matter, because of the efforts of Salkauskis and others.

Neo-Thomism was not the only system of Catholic philosophy. It was particularly enriched by the developing philosophical anthropology, notably, the works of Scheller who employed the phenomenological method for the creation of a theory of values, cultural anthropology. Iz. Tamosaitis was an enthusiastic propagator of Scheller's views in Lithuania.<sup>10</sup> His basic attitude was not a consistent Thomism, but strove to modernize Thomism. He played the greatest role in familiarizing our society with philosophical anthropology and axiology. K. Dausa, stimulated by Iz. Tamosaitis, plunged into philosophical anthropology and did further studies in Vienna and Berlin. He graduated from the Humanities faculty in Kaunas with the diploma thesis "Makso Schelerio filosofines antropologijos bruožai"<sup>11</sup> (The Features of M. Scheller's Philosophical Anthropology). Working at the faculty as senior assistant, K. Dausa lectured in philosophy and pedagogy and published many articles in which he introduced the problems of philosophical anthropology.

Although there were numerous dissertations on Solovjov, there were no followers of Solovjov in the University of Lithuania. For example, Salkauskis, as a student in Moscow University, took part in the activity of the Solovjov society, and prepared his first published work "Church and Culture" under the influence of this Slavic philosopher, though with some reservations. However, even before his Freiburg studies Salkauskis had become critical of his former idol, passing from Solovjov's philosophical prophetism to Thomistic intellectualism. Dambrauskas-Jakstas was the only one who remained loyal to Solovjov in Lithuania. Dambrauskas-Jakstas valued this Slavic philosopher above Thomas Aquinas, as can be seen in his spiritual independence.

Sezemanas, a man of broad philosophical culture, was influenced by several philosophical trends of that time — the neo-Kantian school of Marburg, phenomenology, realism — without becoming an advocate of any of these. Although he made use of the phenomenological method, he showed its weak side and thought; he considered the phenomenological method not to be universal but in need of being complemented by other trends.

## **Conceptions and Ideas**

### *Logic*

At the beginning of the 20th century logic was being transformed in Europe and America, changing from the traditional Aristotelian logic. The value of the new symbolic or mathematical logic was discussed in Catholic philosophy. Under the influence of the achievements of the Lvov-Warsaw school, the Polish neo-Thomists became the avant-gardists in the rejection of traditional logic. This they epistemologized and supplemented with psychology, which began to lose the actual problems of logic.

Their neighbors in Kaunas, however, pursued another way. They had heard about modern logic and referred to it, but nobody proposed, as did the Polish neo-Thomists, that the old Aristotelian logic should be replaced with modern logic. Further the philosophers of Kaunas considered the new logic not to be promising as it turned from the theory of reasoning into a technique of reasoning. The negative assessment of modern logic arose from poor acquaintance with its theories. The theorists in Kaunas lecturing in logic and writing about logic — Dambrauskas-Jakstas, Dovydaitis, Salkauskis, Iz. Tamosaitis, L. Bistras and J. Strauchas — had



followed the conservative view of Western neo-Thomists, represented by the Leuven school of D.J. Mercier and his followers, regarding the value of the new logic.

Sezemanas had a better understanding of modern logic. His textbook *Logika* (Logic) was of a higher level compared to A. Jakstas' textbook. Perhaps, Sezemanas tried to adapt to the view of Kaunas philosophy professors. He approached the study of the important problem of modern logic — paradoxes — from the philosophical epistemological view<sup>12</sup> and published other large works, investigating the problems of philosophical logic from the epistemological standpoint.<sup>13</sup>

Although the professors of Kaunas were not distinguished by their modern orientation, some familiarized themselves with modern logic independently. For example, in 1933 K. Raicinskis, a graduate from the section of philosophy in the theological-philosophical faculty, prepared for the licentiate degree the thesis "The Method of Mathematical Logic."<sup>14</sup> It was the first work in Lithuania, which gave a more systematic interpretation of the object of mathematical logic, its sources, method and goals.

The mathematicians of the University discussed the problems of modern logic. The new logic was a method for researching the problems of the foundations of mathematics foundations and eliminating the paradoxes of set theory. The mathematicians of the University discussed three trends of mathematical substantiation — logism, formalism, intuitionism and their logical method.

### *Epistemology*

There were hardly any philosophers who did not apply epistemological approaches to the problems under investigation. Articles on problems of epistemology were published by Dovydaitis, Iz. Tamosaitis, M. Reinys, Sezemanas, and the status of epistemology in the structure of neo-Thomistic philosophy was discussed by Salkauskis. But only one work in epistemology was published: *Pagrindiniai gnoseologijos klausimai* (The Main Problems of Epistemology, K., 1930) by Kuraitis.

Epistemology did not have a strictly determined formal place in neo-Thomistic philosophy. Neither Aristotle nor Thomas Aquinas had left any work dealing specifically with epistemology. As a subject it was formed in modern times when Locke, Kant and others came to consider the investigation of cognition and not of being to be the main problem of philosophy. The contribution of modern authors to epistemology was so substantial that the old position of Thomas Aquinas on the problems of cognition was no longer satisfying. As an essentially new science epistemology integrated many actual, living problems ignored by St. Thomas, but dealt with by Kant, the outstanding philosophers of the 19th and 20th centuries. Epistemology treated the following problems: the character of epistemology as a science, its historical development, its main trends and directions, the problem of truth, the problem of the limits of cognition.

Salkauskis considered all the trends — rationalism, empiricism, realism, transcendentalism, etc. — to be unilateral and defective. In his opinion neo-Thomistic epistemology had to take from the many epistemological trends their positive elements and reject others.<sup>15</sup> As a result, Neo-Thomistic epistemology is based on an objective, realistic view: reality exists independently of the subject. One part of reality is material, the other spiritual, but both are real and can be known objectively or as they are in themselves. Neo-Thomistic epistemology is ill-disposed toward subjectivism, and advances a cognitive optimism. However, its weak point was that loyalty to the tradition won over its renewal. Neo-Thomistic epistemology remained out of touch with the achievements in logic and psychology of the time, whereas hormism, behaviorism, gestaltpsychology and psychoanalysis had enriched epistemology. Neo-Thomist epistemology in

the University of Lithuania remained archaic, its most eminent theoretician, Kuraitis, adhering to the belief that epistemology created its explanatory means independently of the cognitive level in the other sciences, and afterwards applied those philosophic interpretations for results in the special sciences, that truth does not change but is independent from the conditions of space and time and from the knowing cognizing subject. Kuraitis had an accurate insight into the weak points of the modern epistemological trends, but he had difficulty in exploiting its positive trends. This fact was observed by Sezemanas, who reviewed the work of Kuraitis.<sup>16</sup> In spite of the one-sided orientation, *The Main Problems of Epistemology* was the first textbook of epistemology in Lithuanian; it was characterized by profundity, precise wording and adequate terms.

The contents of the latest epistemologic trends were discussed by lecturers in their class, as well as the articles, of which Sezemanas was the first. He spoke about the decisive role of this method and the extent to which the trends of epistemology took the latest achievements of the special sciences into account. For example, he pointed out that the conception of essence was the weak point in the phenomenological method. Modern science indicates that there are no stable essences, that the stability of constants is only relative: the new physics operates on variables, which are determined only in the frame of a certain system and only relatively. The natural sciences demonstrate that the view of a structure of the world as permanent and based on a system of absolute constants is not accurate. Sezemanas emphasized the creative activity of the subject in cognition: the subject not only represents, but also creates in cognition, through the use of instruments and measuring and cognitive models and fills them with truth. He concludes that idealism is wrong in opposing mind as absolutely different and diverse from nature. Ideal schemes, created by the mind, become real when they convey the main tendencies and structural features of the world, and the models created by the mind are dependent on universal determinism.<sup>17</sup>

### *Ontology*

This is the key subject of the whole system of neo-Thomism. The only author who dealt with the problem on the theoretical level was Kuraitis, who published a large work *Ontologija* (Ontology), t.I, K., 1931, t.II, K., 1933. This work was not finished. Other authors made only a passing reference to the problems of ontology.

The old ontology (metaphysics) as a science about being was questioned by the French Enlightenment, Kant and positivism. Kant called his pre-critical period, when he worked under the influence of Wolff's metaphysics, a dogmatic somnolence. Catholic philosophy revived the old tradition of ontology as a discipline of general metaphysics which also comprises cosmology, psychology and theodicy. Though psychology had divorced philosophy at the time of W. Wundt and had become an independent science, some philosophers regretted this separation and remained loyal to the so-called philosophical psychology, which was trying to retain psychology in the orbit of philosophy.

Reinys presented philosophical psychology in the theological-philosophical faculty. In 1922-1931 he was the head of the department of theoretical and experimental psychology in the faculty, and after 1932 moved to the Department of Systematic Philosophy. Reinys read the introduction of psychology; general, comparative and pedagogical psychology; and psychology of religion. He published articles in psychology and philosophy.

Kuraitis defined ontology as the science of the first elements of being. Owing to the negative attitude of many philosophic trends of the time to traditional ontology, substantiation of ontology became a pressing issue. How is such ontology possible if it draws its materials from all of

experience, scientific and non-scientific, and is an essential part of the philosophic methodology of the other sciences, while being independent of them? If only the world of physical nature be recognized, it is a puzzle how ontology, theorizing by its method of philosophical abstraction the material of ordinary non-scientific experience and being independent of scientific progress, is able to provide foundations for the special sciences, or how its fundamental conceptions and laws could have objective meaning. Scientists found such ontology suspicious and began at once to question what is the value of the conceptions and principles of ontology created without taking into account the latest achievements in the sciences and offered for the use of the sciences. Following Aristotle, the old ontology looked at reality through the glasses of a teleology: every object seeks the end which corresponds to its nature. Science in modern times looks at reality through the glasses of determinism instead of teleology. It was anachronistic to declare in the 20th century that matter was passive and only form gave it activity. Modern representatives of Catholic philosophy liberated themselves from form, perfection and other old meanings.

Kuraitis extended the competence of philosophy to the investigation of specific philosophical problems: the methodological and social function of philosophy, the relation between professional philosophy and common sense, nationality and philosophy, etc.

### *Philosophy of Nature*

Discussions have never ceased over whether considering the general conceptions and principles of the natural sciences, nature philosophy can explain nature as a whole by the principles of ontology. Naturalists by definition denied the possibility of such a philosophy of nature and the philosophy of nature was not included as a component of the many trends in modern philosophy; the development of a philosophy of nature was considered a rather wasteful, non-progressive, anachronistic undertaking. A philosophy of nature as a whole was regarded as impossible. Only philosophy of its integral parts — philosophy of physics, philosophy of biology, etc., are seen nowadays.

There were two reasons for the weaker development of the philosophy of nature in Lithuania. First of all, philosophers lacked a profound education in natural sciences. L. Bistras, who lectured in the philosophy of nature had some education in natural sciences, but had not published anything in this field. Sezemanas, who lectured in a special course on philosophy of nature had studied medicine for one year but inclined to philosophical problems in biology that appealed more to him. Dovydaitis had educated himself in natural sciences independently. Another reason was that studies in the natural sciences had just begun in the University.

Dovydaitis distinguished himself in the explanation of philosophical problems in the natural sciences. In the journal *Kosmos* he published news from worldwide research in the natural sciences, organized discussions about the theory of evolution, the interpretation of quantum physics, the theory of relativity and problems of cosmology. He prepared special issues of the journal in honor of the eminent scientists of the world, and himself wrote articles on the philosophic interpretation of problems raised by achievements in the natural sciences and the history of nature. Influenced by Catholic philosophy, he considered that the achievements of natural sciences could be interpreted in a way to suggest the influence of teleological factors in the development of nature.<sup>18</sup> Dovydaitis was impressed by neo-vitalism formed at the end of 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, which was best described in the *Philosophy of the Organic World* by the German biologist, H. Driesch. To explain life, the processes of its functioning and

development, Driesch introduced not efficient causes but final determinants. Dovydaitis popularized these views.

Sezemanas spoke against the theory of Driesch, pointing out that even if this theory destroyed the mechanistic conception of life, its acknowledgement of non-mechanical final factors (*entelecheia*) was not acceptable unless reduced to efficient physical energy. This, however, was a contradiction in terms. The precondition of teleological factors was unacceptable for a mechanistic view of the natural sciences, for it would abolish the hegemony of efficient causality in animate nature.<sup>19</sup>

The naturalists of the University, notably, physicists and astronomers — A. Puodziukynas, P. Brazdziunas, P. Jucaitis, A. Zvironas, P. Slavenas, A. Juska and others — familiarized the society with the philosophical interpretation of modern cognitive procedures in natural sciences. Their doctoral theses had been prepared in foreign universities. They shaped a modern scientific worldview through the discussions of philosophical problems of physics, astronomy, mathematics in books and articles, especially in *Kosmos*. In their abstracts on new scientific findings they introduced the new cognitive models and their philosophical interpretation. "A. Zvironas, one of the greatest representatives of neo-positivism in Lithuania, private docent in the Department of physics of the Vytautas Magnus University, docent since 1939, propagated indeterminism in a neo-positivist spirit".<sup>20</sup>

### *Philosophy of Culture*

Salkauskis and Maceina were the ones who wrote the most in this field and created significant works.<sup>21</sup> They were persons of great erudition, enlightened in the latest investigations of the philosophy of culture. Salkauskis and Maceina not only referred to these investigations, but were able to argue their points and advance further. They overpowered the conservative conception of the purpose of culture, in which humanism was attributed not to culture, but to the sacral sphere reducing culture to a minor activity.

Theories of the Western cultural crisis were discussed in Europe at that time e.g. by Spengler that culture blossoms, lives and dies; that civilization is the last period of cultural development; and that the West is heading to its downfall in an exhaustion of human creative strength; and by Berdiaev that culture is a failure in the cognition of truth, the creation of beauty, and the formation of moral and legal relations in the creative conquest of nature; that in his creative activity man hoped to win reality by his works but won only symbols; and that "religious transfiguration", i.e. turning to God, is the only way out of the tragic human situation.

In his evaluation of Spengler's theory Salkauskis made a pointed remark about its main error — the treatment of culture by analogy to an organism: that just an organism is led by its spiritual life, so culture is led by a soul hidden within it. His conclusion was that "following this trend, Spengler did not pay sufficient attention to the fact that culture was a human reality related with social life, and there was no need to resort to a cultural soul in order to elucidate the phenomenon of culture".<sup>22</sup>

Salkauskis made a precise evaluation of the relationship between culture and civilisation, pointing to their interdependence. A civilization collapses not because of its senility and the end of culture, but because the foundations of the civilization — its cultural approaches, attitudes and motives — are destroyed. The failure of a civilization still does not indicate the collapse of a culture: if cultural attitudes survive, society retains the possibility of re-creating civilization. Salkauskis's evaluation of this problem is precise. A similar assessment is made by K. Popper, one

of the great methodologists of modern science: let us imagine that a global catastrophe occurs and that the economic system, the industrial and social organization are destroyed; but if technical and scientific knowledge has survived, the recreation of material culture and social organization is possible.

Salkauskis pointed out that civilization has recurrent effect upon culture and is capable of inspiring both positive and negative phenomena in the society — weakness, consumerism and perversion. A dangerous situation arises where those who have created the riches are not permitted to use them because others have usurped them. This process is known as social alienation, but the methodological views of Salkauskis did not yet allow him to label it this way.

He analyzed this process as a problem of moral and cultural degradation, and he proposed overcoming it by educative means: to rear a society, bent not on consumerism, but on active, creative cultural production. In this connection Salkauskis and Maceina studied Prometheism, pointing out that the way out of the Promethean tragedy, brought about by excessive confidence in the power of culture, was to move from the cultural field into that of religion. Religion encourages culture to follow the path of required progress; culture finds completeness in religion. Both our eminent theorists of culture maintain and that religion does not absorb culture, but only indicates its direction.

However, the grounding of the philosophy of culture in Christian its postulates that "Christian anthropology is the only one capable of unfolding the human problem. . . ." <sup>23</sup> This should be taken as the enthusiasm of the young Maceina. But explaining human problems by a single truth or single explication is quite risky. Human problems must be explained pluralistically; no single trend of philosophy has the right to claim absolute validity, and no single trend may presume to have discovered and solved all the problems of human existence, but may operate only in the frame of its postulates.

In ascribing a decisive role in the cultural process to creation and considering creativity the essential sign of the human, Maceina strove to present the humanization of nature as the meaning of creation. But he wrote that at the time the Western world had just encountered ecological problems, which were still non-existent in Lithuania. Maceina's argument to the effect that creation implies over-powering nature and subduing it to one's spirit, that the appearance of the human spirit in the world means the arrival of God for man — such arguments are no longer valid in this time of ecological crisis. Today we must support the outlook of ancient Stoics: to adapt ourselves to nature, not to subdue it to our spirit.

The study by Maceina of the three spirits — bourgeois (satisfaction with reality, non-creativity, superficial peace, hedonism and utilitarianism), Promethean (inclination to revolt against the Creator through self-assertion) and Christian — was one of the most original analyses in the Lithuanian philosophy of culture. <sup>24</sup> The developmental perspective of these spirits was defined as follows: the bourgeois spirit as a superficial relation of man with reality will survive forever but will be driven to the margins of history; it will have no effect on public life. That will be regulated by the Prometheans, in whose hands will be the future, Christianity, having relieved itself of its bourgeois forms, will fight Prometheism not in public life but in its foundations. Thus, the fate of Christianity is paradoxical — the future does not promise it the role of a regulating factor in public life, but it will hold the victory in the spiritual world of man.

Salkauskis's conception of Lithuanian culture as the synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures (detailed by the author in the work *Dvieju pasauliu riboje* (*On the Boundary of Two Worlds*), to which he constantly returned and which he elaborated further, won him some advocates, such as J. Dambrauskas-Jakstas, and some critics. The critics maintained that this synthesis eliminated the

originality of Lithuanian culture, that being accessory to anything cannot be tolerated even if this "anything" is described by such a broad concept as West or East.<sup>25</sup> Maceina made the following appraisal of Salkauskis's conception: the idea of synthesis is real, but the synthesis of German-Slavic elements proposed in this conception is unacceptable and indefinite. Lithuanians are just open to influences coming from Slavic and German elements but this influence serves only as an impetus stimulating what has been hidden in Lithuanian individuality since ancient times. It has to be synthesized and not taken from elsewhere.<sup>26</sup>

The theorizations of Salkauskis and Maceina in the philosophy of culture are of high international level. Maceina called them a cultural theism: divine creation is not complete, but is completed by man.

### *Ethics*

The philosophers of the University published many articles in ethics; they also touched upon the problems of morals theory in works dealing with other problems. Both historical and theoretical problems of ethics were analyzed. In addition, the problem of goodness was discussed in ontology where Kuraitis examined goodness as a feature of transcendental being, explained the causes for the existence of evil, and applied the interpretation of ontic goodness and badness to the field of morality. However, only a few large works in ethics were written: Bistras, who had lectured in ethics, published his doctoral thesis.<sup>27</sup> Maliauskis published a work which could pass for a textbook<sup>28</sup> surveying the historical development of ideas of ethics and explaining the theoretical problems by the principles of neo-Thomism. He used them to explicate the nature of morals, morality and immorality, the moral goal, the norms of behaviour, conscience and other phenomena of morality. He declared human nature to be unchanging, and its principles as providing the basis for norms of behavior.

Ontological ethics, like Kant's theory of morals, meets with difficulties: if the norms of morals can be grounded on the basis of principles, then the grounding of the principles becomes complicated as well. "Not a single moral theory is adopted universally. The Catholics also do not agree on the moral evaluation of concrete actions and on the theoretical substantiation of ecclesiastical teaching".<sup>29</sup> At that time meta-ethics, researching the grounding of ethics by logic and semantic means, was just in the making. Therefore the University of Lithuania still lacked conceptual means for the determination and solution of the problems in a modern grounding of principles of behavior.

Blazys, the head of the Department of Neurology and psychiatric diseases in the medical faculty of the University, examined the significant problem of tolerance. The very title of his book<sup>30</sup> was indicative of its orientation not to regard tolerance as a principle of morality alone, not to ethicize the problem, but to treat it in a broader context. Although the bulk of the work was devoted to the historical development of the idea of tolerance, with a very superficial theoretical part, the book, written in a secular manner, was the first attempt to address the Lithuanian readership on a significant theme in this field.

### *Aesthetics*

Alongside of the specific disciplines of aesthetics, lecturers in aesthetics elaborated a general philosophical aesthetics, "which has as its task to study the most general principles of beauty and art".<sup>31</sup> Salkauskis, who applied the principles of neo-Thomistic philosophy to the investigation of

the problems of aesthetics, considered order, as the arrangement of the whole and its various elements according to a certain base of unity, to be an objective factor of beauty. He pointed out the traditional requirements of Thomistic aesthetics for aesthetic order: integrity or wholeness — no missing or redundant components; clarity proportion — harmony of the components; and clarity — arranging the nuances and even the contrasts of the components into a harmonious whole. The base of unity, arranging and organizing the whole into a purposeful and harmonic aesthetic whole, is the form. In this is grounded the assertion that beauty is appreciated for its form and not for its matter. Salkauskis's aesthetic conception could be taken as intellectualism since it is concerned with clarity as the cognitive feature of beauty perceivable by mind. On the other hand, Salkauskis also aimed to enrich aesthetics with the latest ideas and trends. This is true as well for Girnius, who had the longest record of lecturing in aesthetics in the theological-philosophical faculty. He had written a systematic work of Catholic aesthetics: *Grozis ir menas. Estetikos pagrindai* (Beauty and Art, The Principles of Aesthetics, K., 1938), prepared on the basis of his lectures on aesthetics. The work deals with the main problems of aesthetics of that time: the objectivity and subjectivity of beauty, the work of art, artistic creation and artistic truth, the personality of the creator and others. The principles of aesthetic and even psychoanalytic theories were analyzed.

Sezemanas was a professional lecturer in the course of aesthetics and an expert student of its problems in the humanities faculty. He had good knowledge of the historical development of aesthetics and of most modern trends, and was able to make a critical assessment and qualified theoretical reflection. The work *Estetika* (Aesthetics, V., 1970), published after Sezemanas's death, is an original expression of long years of studies. It is the weightiest work on aesthetics ever published in Lithuania, resulting from the courses of aesthetics he read in the universities of Vilnius and Vytautas Magnus.

### *Social Philosophy*

A specific research center or social problems, "Lietuviski socialiniai kursai" (Lithuanian Social Courses) was opened in Kaunas as early as 1909. It was organized on the initiative of professors from St. Petersburg Ecclesiastical Academy, especially, J. Matulaitis, who had started to lecture in sociology in the Academy. Dambrauskas-Jakstas, P. Bucys, J. Staugaitis, and J. Maciulis-Maironis had lectured at this centre too. Social problems were most topical for the country, which had won independence and begun developing new social relations.

The problems of social philosophy were not specifically defined; they were discussed first of all by philosophers and sociologists in works and articles devoted to the philosophy of culture, philosophy of history and sociology. These problems were studied on the basis of Catholic social doctrine by Maliauskis in *Demokratija* (Democracy), by K. Paltarokas in *Socialinis klausimas* (Social Problems, K., 1921), and by K. Saulys in *Sociologija* (Sociology, K., 1911), second edition in 1920. It was the first textbook of sociology in the Lithuanian language. The sociologists and the researchers of social problems of the younger generation also studied these problems. P. Dielininkaitis, who lectured in the courses of social philosophy and pedagogics in the theological-philosophical faculty, published extensive articles on the corporate system.<sup>32</sup> Catholic social philosophy was looking for the explanatory principles of social life not only in the structure and development of society, but in the nature of man as a Divine creation. Therefore, social problems often were transformed into moral problems with their main solution being the moral improvement of man.

On the other hand, Catholic social thought on actual social relations proposed solving them according to a moral attitude, and regulating social relations in accordance with the principles of Christian morality in a non-violent way and through reform. The younger generation of Catholic orientation saw the improvement of Lithuania's state system as a project for an organic society and state. This project was signed by 16 eminent scientists, workers of culture and public men in the so-called "Romuvieciu deklaracija" (Declaration of the Members of Romuva).<sup>33</sup> The Declaration tried to liberalize state life in Lithuania, "in order to remain in the family of European nations" and to realize the idea of a national state, organizing social and economic life "through business, practiced by the population in corporate spirit". The state, organized on the principles of authority, liberty and solidarity, justice and love. The cooperation of different classes was to facilitate formation of "conditions for better social relations, a fair distribution of wealth and stimulation of cultural progress".

Although similar conceptions of the corporate society and state are critically evaluated by modern democratic theory as insufficiently expressing the political organization of society, the Declaration of the Romuvieciai was a significant document for political life in Lithuania, since it expressed sincere concern over the authoritarian regime which had formed in the young state of Lithuania, and proposed an alternate. Young Maceina, researching the social problem, formulated it as a problem of social justice and expressed it in the work of the same title *Socialinis teisingumas* (Social Justice, K., 1938). For him social justice was both economic inequality and a moral problem; the social issue included not only the struggle for improvement of economic conditions of life, but the struggle for the recognition of human value. Noting that social justice could only be accomplished by evolution and reform, Maceina proposed, first of all, to reform the human spirit by changing the attitude to wealth and property through grounding this attitude on the principles of Christian social life. The project of Maceina shows a deep concern for the condition of the poor. On the other hand, the orientation towards the ancient ideal, propagated by the Fathers of Church, indicates, that young Maceina trusted too much in philosophical models, and was insufficiently familiar with the trends of real social development.

### *Existential Philosophy*

Juozas Girnius was the initiator of this trend in Lithuania. He was guided by Kuraitis and mastered Thomistic teaching, but did not turn Thomist. Girnius turned toward modern trends in philosophy, in particular to existential philosophy. He studied this independently and then published the first works on this field in Lithuania.<sup>34</sup> He took advanced studies at the Universities of Leuven and Freiburg, and in Paris at the College de France. He attended the lectures of M. Heidegger at Freiburg University. When in 1941 the Philosophical faculty was re-established in the University, Girnius was nominated by the Provisional Government as chief assistant of the Faculty. Alongside of the usual courses in philosophy he lectured on psychology and general scientific methods, and organized a seminar for the study of authors whose work belonged both to literature and to philosophy. In 1944 he emigrated to the West, met Heidegger again as well as another classic existentialist figure, K. Jaspers, and had long discussions with them.

The very first works of Girnius indicate that he grasped the problems of existential philosophy and mastered its conceptual apparatus. In his diploma work Girnius not only presented the views of Heidegger, but was able to evaluate them critically: Heidegger had dematerialized ontology; his projected metaphysics was not metaphysics in the real sense of word; in the conception of openness to death the physiological processes of body were not adequately identified with the whole human



life; the category of concern lost touch with historical concreteness, etc. A Christian existentialism was needed to overcome the contrasts of the anthropocentric nature proposed by Heidegger. In his articles Girnius showed that existential humanism was not capable of adequately grounding the value of human existence. After receiving the doctor's degree in philosophy in the University of Montreal for the thesis "La métaphysique existentielle de Karl Jaspers" in 1951, he published it in Lithuanian.<sup>35</sup> It is the only study in Lithuanian, researching the main ideas of Jaspers: truth, faith, liberty, morality, and ciphers of existence. Even today the book is a manual for everyone engaged in similar research. It is a precise analysis and persuasive in its critical argumentation. While applying to Jasper's metaphysics a view close to Christian existentialism, Girnius did not agree that an effort to ground metaphysics by morality could be fruitful. He agreed, however, that philosophy is, as a search for real existence, not only a problem of pure mind, but the drama of a concrete living person, that the truth needs to be lived, and that no philosophy defends liberty more energetically than does existentialism.

The result of Girnius's contemplation of many years is *Zmogus be Dievo* (A Man without God, Chicago, 1964). It is a psychological and philosophical analysis of a non-believer. The work possesses features characteristic of Girnius — thoroughness, frankness, sincerity and purity of mind. The sense of human existence — the fundamental question of the work — is revealed through individual faith in divine values. Thus, objective values are discovered in looking at the world with a theistic outlook, with which a man participates in the meaningful entirety of existence and its greatness is hidden in the call for eternal life. In this way existential theism affirms and transcends moral ideals as objective values.

Juozas Girnius is a classic of Lithuanian philosophy. Having started his studies of existential philosophy on Lithuanian soil, he proceeded to the European. His works on nation and national faithfulness give meaning to the existence and fate of our migration.

Equally important in this field are the works of Maceina, another classic in philosophy. His existential thinking began during his work at Vytautas Magnus University, but it was not so conspicuous. His existential thinking was elaborated in exile in *Jobo drama* (The Drama of Job) and in one of the most significant works of Lithuanian philosophy, *Filosofijos kilme ir prasme* (The Origin and the Sense of Philosophy, Rome, 1978). Maceina created the works of Lithuanian Catholic existentialism, influenced by those Catholic modernists of the Western world who strove not only to enrich Catholicism with the ideas of existential philosophy, but to interpret Christianity as an essentially existential world outlook. These theorists asserted that the truths of Christianity are more like an invitation for believers to perceive their tragic situation in the world and to live authentically — not in a stable calm condition, but in anxiety, concern and self-projection. The value of existential thinking for Maceina is not so much in the accuracy of its conclusions, as rather in the search or discovery of problems and in their presentation in a way that stimulates further thinking. His works, expressed in clear language, serve as a standard for expressing the complex constructions of existential philosophy in Lithuanian terms.

### **The Creation of Lithuanian Philosophical Terminology**

The need to develop Lithuanian philosophical terms was understood even before the establishment of advanced studies of philosophy in Kaunas. Salkauskis was the one who responded to this need in the University. For him as lecturer in the general methods of scientific work, work on terminology became his favorite. Salkauskis published the first Lithuanian theory of terminology in 1925.<sup>36</sup> On its basis he developed and standardized the general terms in philosophy,

which he published in 1937. The section of terminology in the Lithuanian Language Society (chairman Dr. P. Skardzius, the secretary A. Vaiciulaitis, and members: J. Balcikonis, Colonel J.M. Laurinaitis, Dr. A. Salys, Professor Salkauskis) had 35 conferences. After the discussions of the reviews submitted by Dambrauskas-Jakstas, psychologist Dr. J. Pankauskas, Bishop Reinys, Professor Sezemanas, Professor J. Vabalas-Gudaitis and artist A. Varnas, it approved the supplemented and amended dictionary of philosophical terms, including 1600 entries, compiled by Salkauskis.<sup>37</sup>

Pranas Skardzius accented the terms, and Sezemanas checked the equivalents in German and Russian, and Schmittlein, who was lecturer of French in the University, checked the equivalents in French. In the notes on the use of the dictionary the specifics of the use of terms was indicated: synonymy in the philosophical terminology, the usage of international terms, the functioning of terms in context. It is the only Lithuanian dictionary of philosophical terms to date. It is featured in the article "Philosophical Dictionaries and Encyclopedias" of *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* in the following way:

"Lithuania. Lithuanian contribution to history of the dictionaries of philosophy is the article of 97 pages by Salkauskis, titled "The General Terminology of Philosophy"; it covers the whole issue of the periodical journal of philosophy, *Logos*, published in 1937 in Kaunas. The article includes about 1500 Lithuanian terms, used in philosophical discussions, with their equivalents in French, German and Russian. The list is supplemented with the discussion of various Lithuanian synonyms of terms in philosophy. In 1938 Salkauskis made a list of more than 1500 philosophical terms in German with their Lithuanian equivalents, published in the same journal.<sup>38</sup>

The first Lithuanian dictionary of terms in philosophy was not a defining dictionary — it did not contain the concepts defined by the terms. Our young philosophy did not feel strong enough to compile such a dictionary. But the explanations of terms and examples (total 300), attached to the dictionary, offered a plausible compensation for the absence of definitions. In these the semantic family, the main term and its possible derivatives are indicated, and their meaning, followed by examples, is explained.

The initiative of Salkauskis in terminology was presented professionally, and the dictionary of philosophical terms compiled by him survived the test of time. The standardization of terms, given in the dictionary, has been accepted and recognized today; only a small part of proposed terms have not taken root and are not used. The author of the dictionary remained true to the principle that the international terms could not always be replaced by Lithuanian terms where they did not express the semantic meaning conveyed by the international terms. The study of Salkauskis benefited much from the author's sober attitude to terminological work. No language can be absolutely logical or absolutely pure. There are always illogicality and barbarisms in a language. If they are firmly set and may not be removed without breaking the established rules of language, they must be tolerated, consenting to the status quo for the sake of the stability of the language. The studies of Salkauskis on the Lithuanian terminology of philosophy are unique, the only ones of its kind thusfar.

## **The Inheritance**

In what sense are we the heirs of the philosophical legacy created in Vytautas Magnus University? The famous scholars engrossed in philosophy produced what had not, until then,

existed in the sphere of Lithuanian thought. They enriched the Lithuanian world with their originality and stretched its boundaries.

The situation in philosophy has essentially changed over the time since the loss of Vytautas Magnus University half a century ago. New trends have formed, new problems have emerged. But time has not destroyed most of the ideas, propagated in the departments of the University. These ideas have enriched our philosophical life. They have also enriched those who support interpretations different from the trends of that time and recognize that the identification of problems is essential in science. The philosophers of the University of that time are now equally close to everyone as the discoverers of problems of real significance, as the scientists who introduced existing problems into Lithuanian life.

*Lithuanian Institute of Philosophy and Sociology*

## Notes

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4. K. Ambrozaitis, *Sub specie aeternitatis aut durationis? Logos*, 1930, N. 1.
5. Lietuvos Centrinis valstybes archyvas, F 631, ap. 18, b.13 (The Central State Archives of Lithuania, Fond 631, file 18, dossier 13).
6. *Ebenda*, F, 631, 18, d. 12.
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8. *Ebenda*, p. 90.
9. *Ebenda*, p. 101-104.
10. Iz. Tamosaitis, "Vertybiu filosofija" *Vairas*, 1933, N. 5; "Zmogus - asmuo," *Vairas*, 1938, N. 15-16; Makso "Schelerio etika", *Eranus*, 1938, t.IV.
11. *Eranus*, 1935, t. III, p. 87-143.
12. "Zum Problem der logischen Paradoxen", *Eranus*, 1935, t. III, p. 5-85.
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18. P. Dovydaitis, "Siu dienu gamtos mokslu problemos katalikiskos programos sviesoje," *Zidinys*, 1925, N. 2; "Siu laiku biologu paziuros i gyvybes reiskinius/Bibliografines apzvalgos bruozai", *Logos*, 1933; 1934, N. 2; 1935, N. 1-2; 1937, N. 1; "Mendelio uzmirsimas, prisikelimas ir triumfas", *Kosmos*, 1935, N. 4-6.
19. V. Sezemanas, "Organiskos gamtos filosofija. - Speckursas, skaitytas humanitariniu mokslu fakulteto filosofijos skyriuje" (masinrastis) (Philosophy of Animate Nature. - Special

Course, Lectured in the Section of Philosophy of the Humanities Faculty) (typewritten, the Library of the University of Vilnius), F. 122-74.

20. K. Masiulis, *Moderniojo mokslinio pasaulevaizdzio formavimasis Lietuvoje* (Vilnius, 1992), p. 68.

21. On the basis of his lectures S. Salkauskis published the work: *Kulturos filosofijos metmenys* (The Sketch of Philosophy of Culture) in 1926. He improved his lectures and left the manuscript "Specialiosios kulturos filosofijos problemos" (Special Problems of Philosophy of Culture). On the basis of his lectures Maceina published the work "Kulturos filosofijos ivadas" (The Introduction to Philosophy of Culture) in 1936; issued the study "Pirmines kulturos pagrindai" (The Principles of Primary Culture) *Logos*, 1933; 1934, N. 2; 1935 N.1,2; 1937, N. 1, the other study "Kulturos sinteze ir lietuviskoji kultura" (The Synthesis of Culture and Lithuanian Culture", *Zidinys*, 1939, N. 4-7, 10-12. They both published large articles on the philosophy of culture.

22. K. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vol. II, 15 (London, 1986).

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30. J. Blazys, *Tolerancija kaip kulturos principas* (K., 1936).

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32. P. Dielininkaitis, *Korporacine santvarka. - Lietuviu Kataliku mokslo akademijos suvaziavimo darbai*. T. II (K., 1937); "Pastaraju laiku bandymai socialini klausimi susvelninti," *Zidinys*, 1938, N. 2.

33. "J organiskosios valstybes kurybi", *Naujoji Romuva*, 1936, N. 8. "Del organiskosios valstybes kurybos", *Naujoji Romuva*, 1936, N. 9. Signators of the Declaration: J. Ambrazevicius, P. Dielininkaitis, J. Grinius, J. Grusas, Z. Ivinskis, J. Keliuotis, A. Maceina, I. Malinauskas, P. Mantvydas, K. Pakstas, E. Pakuckas, J. Pankauskas, A. Salys, I. Skrupskelis, A. Vaiciulaitis, B. Vitkus - were connected with Vytautas Magnus University as its students, and the majority of them later became professors and docents of the University. S. Salkauskis who had not participated in the creation of the Declaration, later published an approval of the Declaration.

34. J. Girnius, *Pastaba apie egzistencializma. - Lietuviu Kataliku mokslo akademijos suvaziavimo darbai*, t. II (K., 1937); "Jvadas i Heideggerio egzistencialistines filosofijos pagrindu svarstyma", *Logos*, 1936, N. 1; "Heideggerio egzistencialistines filosofijos pagrindu kritiskasis svarstymas", *Logos*, 1936, N. 2; "Egzistencialistine filosofija ir ateities filosofavimo rupesciai", *Zidinys*, 1939, N. 5-6.

35. J. Girnius, "Laisve ir butis. Karl Jasperso egzistencine metafizika", *Aidu leidinys*, 1953.

36. S. Salkauskis, "Terminologijos teorija ir lietuviskoji filosofijos terminija" *Logos*, 1925, N. 1.

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## Chapter VII

# Vydunas: The Essential Features of His Philosophy

*Vaclovas Bagdonavicius*

Vydunas is an extraordinary figure in our culture, as is his personal and creative fate and his extraordinary status in our cultural consciousness. Although he achieved a great deal and contributed significantly to the national culture, for a long time he remained in nearly total oblivion. It is said that the best tests of values is time; that only true values remain alive, while those which do not resist the trials of time fall into the passive stock of the past. This usually is the case. However, even true and significant values do not always survive — sometimes they are buried under an historical avalanche and it takes time for the archaeologists to arrive. Vydunas's case is of this latter type. For the younger generations of the post-World War II period he was nearly dead. His dramas which constitute the treasure load of Lithuanian dramatic composition had long been shelved in obscurity, and his philosophical treatises were for some people too frightening to look at, let alone delve into. Vydunas's works and ideas were non-existent in our culture, and, as a matter of fact, neither were they missed. Today we experience a need for the values so consistently and deliberately presented by Vydunas to the nation.

### **life**

Who was Vydunas for the Lithuanian nation; what values did he propose? His life path, albeit long, was quite uncomplicated. He was born in Jonaiciai (Silute district) on March 22, 1868. His real family name was Storosta, first name — Vilhelmas. His childhood and early schooling years were spent in Naujakiemis, near Pilkalnis (presently Dobrovolsk), followed by Pilkalnis preparatory school and Ragaine teacher training seminary. Before 1892 he was a schoolmaster in Kintai (Silute district) and until 1912 in the nine-year secondary school for boys in Tilsit. He was of delicate constitution (consumption was hereditary in the family); thus he retired quite early in life, at the age of 44 (in 1912). Later he made sporadic attempts at teaching: in 1918 he taught Lithuanian language in the Eastern seminar at the University of Berlin; in 1919 he taught the Lithuanian language to adults at the Tilsit Gymnasium; in the summer of 1923 he lectured in the teachers' course in Palanga; in 1920-1923 was visiting teacher of literature at the Telciai gymnasium; and in 1924-1927 he read a course in the history of culture at the music school of Klaipeda.

In his regular teaching years, during the summer time he took courses in Greifswald (1896-1898), Halle (1899) and Leipzig (1900-1902), and after 1912 Berlin universities, where, through the lectures of famous German philosophers and other scholars of the time, and individual studies, he went deeper into the history of philosophy, literature and art, the philosophy of culture, religion, history, art and law, and into sociology, and also learned English, French and Sanskrit. He did not take any examinations and therefore received no university diploma.

So much for the factual biography of Vydunas. It was interwoven with another much longer creative and cultural biography. In 1895 Vydunas became Choirmaster of the Tilsit Lithuanian Church, which in 1897 was reorganized into the Lithuanian Society for Secular music, and gave Lithuanian performances and concerts in different places of Prussian Lithuania. Vydunas

performed as choir master, performance director, playwright and even composer. Collections of songs and plays written by him were published in separate editions. The Society was active until 1935, when, alongside other Lithuanian groups, it was banned by the Hitlerite authorities. The main goals of Vydunas's cultural endeavor were to foster the national self-awareness and self-appreciation of the Prussian Lithuanians, stimulating their spiritual activity, drawing them to aesthetic values, as well as "exhibiting the Lithuanian character," i.e., demonstrating to the aliens, particularly Germans, the creative ability of his own nation, its cultural richness, uniqueness and attractiveness.

The philosophical activity of Vydunas which started in the early 20th century as part of his cultural work was directed along the same lines. During his studies in Leipzig Vydunas joined the German Theosophical Society, and in 1902 he founded a theosophical circle in Tilsit. In Klaipeda, Silute, Tilsit and many other places of Prussian Lithuania he read public lectures in philosophy and later summarized or narrated them in local Lithuanian or German newspapers. In 1905 he started publishing the bi-monthly theosophical journal *Saltinis*, and upon its termination in 1907 started publishing philosophic treatises in separate books. At that time he began using Vydunas as his literary pseudonym, which became his penname. He considered the most important goal of his activities to be neither the development of his own philosophical theories nor the intellectual enlightenment of his fellow countrymen, but stimulating people "to aspire to a more ideal humaneness" in order "to strengthen the nation". The ideas borrowed from the wealth of universal philosophy were also to serve the stimulation of the people. He propagated these ideas in the magazines *Jaunimas* (1911-1914), *Naujove* (1915) and *Darbymetis* (1921-1925), for which he wrote. He himself published many philosophic and publicistic articles for the Lithuanian periodicals of East Prussia and Lithuania, and made numerous presentations on different occasions.

On his sixtieth birthday in 1928 Vydunas was conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Kaunas University. In 1925 he was elected honorary member of the international PEN Club and in 1933 honorary member of the Lithuanian Writers' Association. There was even an idea of nominating him for the Nobel Prize.

Upon the establishment of the Fascist dictatorship in Germany, Vydunas was subjected to persecution and bitter insults. The greatest hatred of the Nazi was roused by his historic work *Sieben Hundert Jahre Deutsch — Litauischen Beziehungen* (in the German language) which appeared in 1932 and showed the actual results of the seven hundred-year long denationalization of Lithuania Minor. The book was treated as "harmful for the vital interests of the Reich" and confiscated by the police. Fortunately, that was not done promptly and part of the print run was disseminated.

Vydunas was not broken by threats and persecution. His undisturbed, Gandhist demeanor had a maddening effect on the Nazis who tried to give the thinker "a lesson". The opportunity presented itself in early 1938 when the financial police detected an infringement of the rules for holding money abroad. The essence of the matter was this: in Lithuania money was raised through donations for Prussian Lithuanians (to purchase a house). The money was transferred to one of the Lithuanian banks. Vydunas who acted as Chairman of the Prussian Lithuanian Associations (while it was functioning — until 1935) signed the bank papers. Subsequently he was considered to be having money abroad, i.e. in Lithuania, which was not declared by him and made him liable. The fact that the Lithuanian associations had not been functioning for three years and that Vydunas did not consider himself to own the money was of little importance for the authorities. On March 11, 1938 he was arrested and imprisoned in Tilsit. Two months later he was released from prison as a



result of worldwide protest calls, since the Lithuanian Writers' Society had sent a memorandum to the creative and philosophy organizations, editorial offices of literary publications and famous cultural figures in many countries. However, the charge was not lifted and the case was not closed until early 1940.

Upon his release from prison life became easier, and the persecution and threats ceased. Lost in unvoiced suffering about the atrocities of the war, he dedicated himself to writing and to philosophical contemplation on the doings of his time. In that period his major philosophic works appeared: *Human Consciousness in Religious Tales, Scripture and Holy Symbols* and *Considerations on the Mysteriousness of Consciousness* (in German). The fate of both works was tragic: the first was published in 1941, however, no permission for dissemination was granted and the whole print run was lost in the war; the manuscript of the second was submitted to the "Medhein" publishers in Berlin and destroyed in its ruins. The manuscript of the major historical work *50 Years of National Prussian Lithuanian Societies* was also lost. Several other minor works in philosophy, literary studies and autobiography were written by him during the war and post-war period: "The Emergence of a More Noble Humaneness", "Recollections and Considerations Related to Religious Faith", "Imprisonment — Liberation", "Religion through the Millenniums of Human History" (in German), "In the Demon's Hands", "The Basic Issue" (in German), "Life in Prussian Lithuania around 1750 as depicted by Kristionas Donelaitis" (in Lithuanian and German), and a number of articles published in the periodicals of Lithuanian emigration.

On October 2, 1944 Vydunas fled from Tilsit under bombardment and moved into inland Germany. For a short time he stayed in the manor in Povarbiai (near Königsberg), then in Rugenwald. From April 6, 1945 to July 17, 1946 he stayed in the village of Eikfier in Pomerania. After that he was sheltered in a refugee camp in Stetin for two weeks. Due to extremely harsh conditions he left the camp and found himself in a hospital in Lubeck. A month later, owing to the efforts of his Lithuanian friends he moved to the comfortable town of Detmold (Westfalen) in the British zone. There he spent the busy and quiet last seven years of his life. Having contracted pneumonia which started as a flu, Vydunas died on February 20, 1953, one month short of his 85th anniversary. He was buried in the old cemetery of Detmold, and in 1991 re-buried in the small cemetery of Bitenai (Silute district, Lithuania).

## **The Genesis of His Philosophy**

His creative heritage is vast, comprising over 60 books of fiction, philosophy, historiography, language, autobiography, complete sets of magazines written and published by himself, many articles on philosophy, literary studies, popular writings in the periodicals of Lithuania Minor and Lithuania Proper, over a dozen of unpublished works. This multi-sided heritage, as well as immense efforts in the domains of culture, and the remarkable results of this work create a basic phenomenon of the nation's life which could be called Vydunism. Philosophy lies at the heart of this phenomenon. His philosophy constitutes an ideal programme, realized by Vydunas through his life, creation and multi-sided activities.

However, considering Vydunas exclusively as a philosopher might put him at a certain disadvantage, since one could detect some weaknesses and imperfections, for example, a vague philosophical system, indistinct logical framework, lack of criticism and of precise philosophic definition, the poetic nature of his philosophic style, etc. Vydunas is impossible to imagine in a strictly philosophic frame; as such a Vydunas would not exist in our consciousness as the phenomenon which we perceive and visualize today. Among the philosophers of the current

century Vydunas stands out as highly unusual: he did not graduate from any universities, did not defend any dissertations, did not have the title of professor, did not purposefully develop his own philosophical system, did not criticize the systems or conceptions of other thinkers. Philosophy for him was not the sphere of self-expression on which he made a living.

Nevertheless, for Vydunas philosophy, although not the sphere of his professional self-expression, meant much more than for those who are called philosophers. Vydunas reminds one not so much of an intellectual of the 20th century, but rather of an ancient man of wisdom for whom philosophy was the mode and essence of life. He was not only and concerned not so much about expounding wisdom, but more about embodying it in reality through his behaviour and works. Thus, the idea which is born of tranquillity and absorption, its expression in words, and of the latter in deeds and works make up, in the words of V. Mykolaitis-Putinas, "a consistent harmonious whole, impressive by its compatibility and unity".<sup>1</sup>

The aim of Vydunism as a phenomenon is to rouse the nation for the fulfillment of the sense of human and national life, that is, to strive for "a more ideal humaneness".<sup>2</sup> Vydunas wrote his philosophic works in such a way as "to make the readers respond to the call of devoting more of their selves to the essence and sense of life".<sup>3</sup> Notably, this suggestive nature of philosophy occasioned an unusual, non-academic character, a lack of logical distinction, and a specific, more literary than philosophical, presentation. These circumstances must have been responsible for the fact that until today the philosophical considerations of Vydunas are not taken seriously, as having no system or consistency.

A deeper scrutiny of Vydunas's philosophy reveals that its formation was not only affected by the philosophic and religious conceptions of many countries, but also had a clear logic and line in selecting the conceptions, and a close typological or genetic link among the selected conceptions. Through this selection and grouping, constructing an integral perception of the world, the personality of the thinker is also outlined. One gets an impression that this is a naturally developed logically consistent, co-ordinated and motivated philosophical system on which the author put no special emphasis.

Surprisingly philosophy, which constitutes the bulk of Vydunas's creative heritage and the ideal programme which he tried to realize in his life, did not become his main objective. His philosophical investigations began in search of solutions for the practical, painful problems of life, not as theoretical considerations. In pursuit of these objectives Vydunas developed into an original practically oriented thinker, striving to respond instinctively to the topical issues of the national life and to contribute to its perfection. The main impetus which set the direction and range of the problems in his philosophic investigations was the need to aid his compatriots in effective resistance against methodical national assimilation. His activity began at the end of the 19th century and lasted through the 1930s, i.e., during the period when the relentless Germanization policy nearly attained its goal. In his youth he realized that the radical struggle of East Prussian Lithuanians against the powerful efforts of the German authorities was practically senseless, since it could only accelerate and invigorate the national assimilation process, stimulated by the rapidly developing German capitalism.

The search for measures to help his oppressed compatriots resist the national enslavement constituted the bulk of his philosophical endeavors. It guided him to the concept of the spiritual perfection of man and nation, the practical application of which should, according to him, not only rescue the nation from extinction, but also give impulse to its intensive cultural creation. Namely, in this search the exceptional phenomenon of Vydunism — strikingly resembling the Indian phenomenon of the time, Gandhism — was shaped, strengthened and manifested in all its splendor.

The analogy to Gandhism is by no means accidental. Vydunas and Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) were united not only by the struggle against national oppression, which was evolving in analogous settings, but also by the same theoretical sources which shaped their course of action in their struggle against oppression. Philosophic research during his studies in German universities led Vydunas to ancient Indian philosophy. There he found the essential answers to the problems that had been worrying him and which had already interested him in his childhood. The social environment shaping his philosophic nature seemed to be driving him to that philosophy.

## Religion

Vydunas grew up in a religious milieu. His father had completed missionary studies in Berlin, but due to his poor health could not engage in overseas missionary activities and had to preach at home. The father subtly imbued his children with religious outlook, closely associating it with the moral essence of man. Frequent ailments, with death always breathing on his back, urged Vydunas in his early years, to probe his inner states, to think about the deeper meaning of the surrounding world which is not always visible to the naked eye. The futuristic thinker tried to search for the explanation of that meaning, first of all in the Bible, which he first read on his mother's encouragement at the age of nine. The firm moral principles which had formed in the child's mind were in discord with many episodes from the Scripture, particularly the Old Testament, where "owing to their brutality and heartlessness certain moments were inflicting pain".<sup>4</sup> His personal thinking and his father's guidance enabled him, early in his life, to conclude that the Bible should not be taken to the letter, but symbolically through the philosophical meaning which it gives to the depicted episodes. He got deeply absorbed in works on theology and the history of Christianity, and took an interest in the pre-Christian religious tales of Germans, Greeks, Romans, Parsees and other ancient peoples. He was particularly fascinated by the idea of the immanent and transcendent nature of God — being in everything and above everything, as detailed in the work of J.H. Kurtz, a historian of Christianity. This idea of immanence proved particularly catching, and in later years on the basis of the idea Vydunas would elaborate on the spiritual nature of the human essence and its parity to divinity.

Explorations of this kind pushed Vydunas to philosophic studies. The ideas propagated by Wilhelm Schuppe, professor from Greifswald university (1863-1913), particularly the conception of consciousness, according to which reality is but the content of this consciousness, touched him deeply, since it corresponded to the young thinker's personal trend of spiritual inquiries. The conception became not only the starting point in shaping the philosophical system of the thinker, but also one of the basic postulates of the system, the fundamental substantiation of which he later found also in Indian philosophy.

Vydunas was strongly influenced and considerably benefited from other German philosophers idealists and scholars of the time whom he met in his studies: E. Troeltsch, A. Rienl, J. Rehmke, K. Breysing, A. Laoson, A. Hensler, K. Lamprecht, G. Folkelt, W. Wunndt, U. von Willamowitz-Moellendorf, E. Lehmann, A. von Harnack and G. Runze. From their lectures he could not only compose a picture of the idealist German philosophy of the time, but also familiarize himself with the history of philosophy, particularly German classical philosophy, which during Vydunas's studies was read by some of the above philosophers to summer course students. Direct contacts with German thinkers were maintained in later years as well, since such famous scholars and philosophers as M. Rade, A. Deismann, H. Weissel and R. Eucken used to lecture in Tilsit.

Personal talks and discussions which Vydunas had with them "filled him with a variety of incentives for further considerations".<sup>5</sup>

His subsequent in-depth studies of the non-Christian religions (mostly Eastern-Egyptian, Parsee, Chinese, Indian, Arab), scrutiny of holy writings, stories and interpretations was a kind of an extension of his childhood experiences. This was, by no means, a casual object of interest, but a search for answers to the same topical questions. Only this time these questions acquired a more conceptual meaning — the thinker became increasingly concerned with humaneness as a philosophical problem, as a possibility to explain the cultural process and its meaning. "All my studies and all my reflections were driving me deeper to the mysteriousness of consciousness and, consequently, to what faith and culture actually stand for" — this was how Vydunas described his investigations of the time. — "I was constantly trying to judge from what different people in different countries thought and generated over millenniums, about their spiritual level, including their culture."<sup>6</sup> Summers spent by Vydunas in Leipzig may be singled out as a specific stage of these explorations. There he became interested in the problems of nationality, which were dealt with at length by the founder of experimental psychology, philosopher W. Wundt (1832-1920), and the historian of the positivist liberal trend, K. Lamprecht (1856-1915). Under their influence in Leipzig the issues which for several years had been worrying Vydunas as one working on culture and as a representative of a nation under heavy national oppression became an object of philosophical reflections.

## **Hindu Philosophy**

The earlier trend of his explorations on man, culture, religion and consciousness acquired new impulse in Leipzig as well. These impulses were produced by acquaintance with the theosophers active there (at that time the German theosophic association was centered in Leipzig). Vydunas was fascinated by their ideas and became an active member of the society.

In theosophy the young thinker was impressed by an attempt to synthesize philosophy, religion and science. The practical purposefulness of theosophy, manifested through the intentional move towards the spiritual liberation of man and mankind, became for him highly attractive. This trend enabled Vydunas to realize the social situation of the time and also produced an impact on his cultural activity. In theosophy he believed he came across the ideas which could be of great importance for his oppressed compatriots. Under the effect of these ideas the Prussian Lithuanians should develop brighter consciousness, higher spiritual quality and also better resistance against national assimilation.

The theosophical movement, an active participant of which Vydunas became, was, in fact, one of the attempts to overcome the crisis of religion, particularly Christianity. Theosophy must have looked attractive for Vydunas as a form of non-orthodox religiosity turned philosophical, as a doctrine which propagated no primacy for any religion asserting the same esoteric truths in different languages. This movement was responsible for the thinker's increased respect for the old religion of Lithuanians which came to have special treatment both in his fiction works (trilogy "An Eternal Flame") and his historiosophic and philosophic writings. These works accentuated the idea that the old religion of Lithuanians was not second to any religion in appreciating the origination of the world from the spiritual absolute, but doing so in a specific way. Its pantheistic nature, manifest through the animation of natural elements, shows not only its archaic character, but is also a sign of great maturity.

Theosophy was neither the last nor the main spring from which Vydunas drew on his path as a thinker. However it was important for him, since it led him to another source which put a decisive touch to his philosophical system. Absorbed in the works of theosophic authors (mostly H.P. Blavatsky, A. Besant, E. Schiure, F. Hartmann, A. Sinett, B. Chatterji, etc.) Vydunas had an opportunity to peruse the ideas which these theosophers had taken from different sources. The principal among these sources was the old Eastern, particularly Indian, philosophy. The theosophists supplemented it and combined it with some ideas of the philosophy of antiquity (especially Pithagorism, Platonism, Neoplatonism), Christian mysticism, and European idealism of the modern age, notably pantheism. Thus, in familiarizing himself with theosophy Vydunas gained knowledge of the essential postulates of Indian philosophy. Under their effect he plunged into the primary sources of Indian philosophy, the basic assertions of which formed the nucleus of his own philosophy. Following his direct contacts with Indian philosophy, the rest of the ideas coming within the range of his intellectual interests were important for him to a degree where they were able to confirm and complement the assertions of his philosophy.

He was also under the effect of Western philosophy, which gave an impetus to his engagement in the area in which he was quite proficient. However, in his investigations of Western philosophy he concentrated his attention on moments with a distinct consonance with Eastern, particularly, Indian philosophy. Apart from Indian philosophy, Vydunas had a good knowledge of the antique Greek philosophy, in which the ideas of the Orphists, Pythagoras and Plato, which were close to the East, held for him, as for all theosophists, special charm. The Lithuanian thinker made a thorough analysis of the works of the Christian mysticists J. Boehme, J. Eckhart and philosophers of the modern age, Nicolaus Cusanus, B. Spinoza, G. Bruno and G.W. Leibniz, in which distinct analogies or points of interaction with the oriental concepts of being and man can be found.

In Indian philosophy which appealed to him most Vydunas thought he had found things particularly close to his spiritual investigations and which, in his opinion, were best suited for his nation, which was badly in need of inner strength. Indian philosophy attracted him by its moral purposefulness, care for man, elucidation of the sources of his sufferings and by the indication of means for overcoming suffering. Each idealistic system of Indian philosophy (eight in all) has a specific way of solving the problems of ontology and epistemology. However, they have a more or less common approach to the problems of ethics, explaining the principles and ways of human liberation. Another feature common to nearly all Indian philosophy, namely its close relation to religion, the intertwining of religious and ethical problems, was naturally very close to Vydunas, educated from childhood in a religious spirit. Another factor which made the ideas of Indian philosophy particularly dear to Vydunas, was, as mentioned above, the correspondence at the time of the formation of his outlook and joining the national movement of Prussian Lithuanians, with the beginning of his cultural endeavor and search of its principles. Specifically under the effect of Indian philosophy Vydunas chose cultivation of a moral revival of the nation as the most suitable way. In search of ways which could make the oppressed Lithuanians resist national subjugation the thinker urged his fellow countrymen to advance their culture (taking an active part in the action himself), to look for support in the national values, to seek human perfection, "to grow from the inside", to morally surpass their oppressors. This attitude, born of daily affairs, conditioned the humanist specifics and problems of Vydunas philosophy, namely, to reveal and substantiate the essence of humaneness, to show the ways leading to it, and to disclose the nation's role in the advancement of humaneness and the context of being. For solving these problems Vydunas resorted mostly to ancient Indian philosophy.

It should not be assumed that Vydunas was equally affected by all Indian philosophy. The basic materialistic ideas of Lokayata were absolutely unacceptable for him, and the conceptions of the idealistic systems originated in the Middle Ages — Vedanta, Mimamsa, Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisesika, Buddhism and Jainism — were not all close to him.

When the philosophy of Vydunas is taken as a complete system, as a result, it is impossible not to see his affinity to that trend of Indian philosophy which included the ideas propagated by his almost contemporary figures in the Indian national movement and the reformers of one of the basic religions of the country — Hinduism. The most outstanding among them were R. Roy, D. Tagore, Ramakrishna, S. Vivekananda, S. Dayananda, Sri Aurobindo, B. Tilak and M.K. Gandhi. We do not possess evidence that our thinker was familiar with their actual writings. He never mentioned them, except Gandhi, nor quoted except a few dicta from Ramakrishna presented in the magazine *Naujove*. The analogies between him and some Hindu reformers (particularly S. Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, M.K. Gandhi) and their conceptions, problems and solutions, are striking. These analogies were not the result of direct or literary contacts, but can be explained by the fact that both Vydunas and the Hinduism reformers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries found their inspiration in the same sources of the ancient Indian wisdom and were in analogous conditions of national oppression. They were moved by the same national and broader social issues, and the old Indian wisdom prompted similar answers. In the words of the Russian Indologist R. Rybakov, the majority of them had a task of "rousing the feeling of national dignity and shame for their humiliating position among their compatriots, a shame, which, in its own turn, would stimulate a desire to change the life."<sup>7</sup>

The affinity of Vydunas and the Hindu reformers is best seen through his and their relation with their own culture and the principles of using the culture in the struggle against national oppression. The Hindu reformers, in their efforts to incite their people under colonial oppression, to invigorate their national dignity, tried to revive respect for their ancient culture and to reveal its authentic content, distorted over the long centuries by orthodox religion. The key principle of the Hinduism reformers' activity was not a blind adoption for the old culture, but its modification to suit the current needs of the nation. This principle was used independently by Vydunas as well. It is even more surprising that Vydunas, like the Hindu reformers propagated among his fellow countrymen the universal worldview of humaneness, which rested on the most important postulates of old Indian philosophy. In his opinion the new worldview would stimulate and not subdue the national awareness of his compatriots. It has this potential since its roots reach far back into the ancient times and are had also by the ancient Lithuanians, expressed in a different form. The reviving nation should, actually recollect the essence of the ancestral worldview. In this sense Vydunas was a kind of a reformer himself who tried to develop a non-orthodox attitude of his countrymen to their Christian faith. Without urging the believers to give up the Protestantism or Catholicism they practiced, Vydunas strove to imbue in their consciousness the awareness that these religions, likewise all the rest, should be treated as one of the many forms of expression of the universal theist worldview acceptable for all mankind.

Analogies between the outlook of Vydunas and the Hindu reformers are close not only in typological, but also in genetic terms — the same philosophical source. Not the whole of ancient Indian philosophy, or even one of its layers uniting all its systems, but one sole system, and its most outstanding monuments should be considered the common source.

The reformers of Hinduism were followers of Vedanta, one of the eight philosophic idealistic systems structured in the Middle Ages, which constituted the philosophic basis of Hinduism. In tackling problems current in their time they made use of the ideas propagated in the sources of this

system and integrated them accordingly. Basic among these sources are the Vedas (four collections of the Hindu scriptures from the 12th and 7th centuries B.C.), Upanishads — philosophical commentaries of the Vedantic mythology, the ideas of which were first systematized by the philosopher Badarayana (3rd and 4th centuries) in his "Brahmasutras". Alongside the Upanishads themselves these Sutras were commented upon and their ideas advanced by a number of famous philosophers of this system. The most prominent among them is Sankara from the 8th century, who developed the conception of pure idealistic monism (*advaita*), the thinker of the 11th and 12th centuries Ramanuja, who worked out the conception of limited idealistic monism (*vishishtadvaita*) and the author of the dialectic dualism (*advaita*) conception, Madhva (13th century) Another particularly popular source of the Vedantic ideas is the philosophic poem *Bhagavadgita*, a constituent part of the 3rd century B.C. epic *Mahabharata*. The philosophy of each Hindu reformer of the 19th and 20th centuries was, in fact, an interpretation of the Vedantic postulates of the above sources, addressed to the philosophical, largely ethical substantiation of the meaning and tasks of the national movement. To that end the ideas of the *Bhagavadgita* were exploited most attentively.

The newly treated Vedanta was called by its interpreters neo-Vedanta (S. Vivekananda), integral Vedanta (Sri Aurobindo) and the like. Vydunas could be called the Lithuanian neo-Vedantist. His relation with the Vedantic sources and ideas are analogous to the relation of the reformers with these sources. Vydunas himself indicated on several occasions that he "clarified his visions" with the help of the principal sources of classical Vedanta. The exceptional place of the *Bhagavadgita* in the philosophical biography of Vydunas is seen from the fact that he translated it into Lithuanian. From the three trends of Vedanta mentioned above — *advaita*, *vishishtadvaita*, *dvaita* — the philosophy of Vydunas is closer to *vishishtadvaita* (limited monism) created by Ramanuja, which also constitutes the basis of the "Bhagavadgita". In this trend, postulating the unity of spiritual being does not negate the reality of the world. On its basis Vydunas explains that spirit and the material world constitute two opposite manifestations of the absolute. The absolute is not only eternal and unchangeable as in Sankara's conception of *Advaita*, but is capable of changing, manifesting itself through the formation the world-involution — in space and time. Evolution, which negates involution, gradually brings the objects of the world back to the absolute. Involution and evolution make up the eternally moving cycle of being, which contains not only the opposite extreme states of the absolute, but also a multitude of other stages of reality characterized by different relations between being (consciousness) and non-being (unconsciousness).

Vydunas gives the following description of the meaning of involution and evolution: "Everything emerges from the unknown unity, passes through the dreamed plenitude and goes back to the known unity".<sup>8</sup> This "dreamed plenitude" is a kind of play, illusion of the absolute, as defined in the Vedanta. The stages of the absolute are just the phases of reality distinguished by a different relation between consciousness: they are unconsciousness, and divided into four spheres of the phenomenal world and three spiritual ones. According to Vydunas, to the material world belong the spheres of inanimate nature (*prakrti*), plant life (*prana*), animal activity and desires (*kama*), and human reason (*kama-manas*). To the spiritual sphere belong the spheres of omnipotence, wisdom, love (*atma-budhi-manas*). The seven spheres making up the universe also have their expressions in man, which is treated by Vydunas as a microcosm, model of the universe. Man is also the highest phase in world evolution. The essence of humaneness (a variety of *atma-budhi-manas*) is already ascended above all the material spheres and belongs to the sphere of pure spirit. What in man is associated with the material sphere — body (inanimate nature — *prakrti*),

life (*prana*), instincts (*kama*), reason (*kama-manas*) — are the means of expression of the essence. The spiritual essence itself can be seen from the human self-consciousness (this self-consciousness is an expression of the spiritual absolute itself), wisdom, intuition, morality, consciousness, love, ability to overcome egoism, feel and create goodness and beauty.

What makes up the social nature of man, the result of the millennia-long formation in Vedanta, is sought by Vydunas in the metaphysically perceived absolute. The spiritual essence of man is a sparkle of the absolute or divinity. Therefore, according to Vydunas, as an adherent of the system of Indian idealistic philosophy, particularly of Vedanta, man belongs both to the spiritual and material spheres of the absolute, and is a combining link of these spheres, an explicit evidence of substantial unity.

## **Culture**

On the basis of the Vedanta conception of man and being, Vydunas developed his own conception of culture, which constitutes one of the most original and distinctive parts of the Lithuanian philosophy of culture. For the thinker who looks through the prism of Vedantic philosophy culture is indispensable, i.e. an ontologically conditioned evolutionary part of the cosmic whole. Its origin is related by Vydunas to the emergence of the humane sphere in that evolution. Through humaneness the evolution of the whole has already arrived at the level of pure spirit, where it awakens the self-consciousness of the absolute, finding its expression in the spirituality of man, his individual self-consciousness, which becomes one of the conscious factors in the development of the world. With the awakening of man as a spiritual being there begins an active, conscious overpowering of the "dreamed plentitude" and a purposeful return to the "reality perceived", i.e., a process which could be compared to the synthesis phase of the Hegelian triad.

Culture is defined by Vydunas as the relation of the spiritual essence of humaneness with the world, as the objectivization of the former in the latter, as the spiritualization process of that world. The values born of this process are defined by the thinker as cultural values. They are in fact the values of spiritual culture. Vydunas does not deny the importance of material culture, i.e. civilization: however, he does not grant it the status of true culture. According to him this is an auxiliary product of culture. If it is turned absolute, its creation is overemphasized and is a threat to true, i.e., spiritual, culture. The signs and tendencies of such crises were discerned by Vydunas in the life of his time. Thus, both his philosophic and belles-lettres create a kind of warning about the need to stop the spread of these tendencies and to concentrate on the advance and strengthening of spiritual culture. The main goal of culture is to strengthen humaneness, i.e., the spiritual essence of man, to liberate it from dependence on nature, and to achieve the maximum freedom of expression for this essence. In his opinion this is the goal for individual, nation and mankind.

Science, art and morals are considered by Vydunas the main spheres of culture, born of the relation of humane essence with the world; these are structural parts of culture. Science enables the humane essence to cognize, master and restructure the material or natural world. Through art the humane essence is embodied, materialized in created objects or works of art, in which it also turns into an object of sense perception. The work of art is as perfect, valuable in every aspect, strong, powerful, pure and moral, as is the spiritual essence, i.e., the humaneness of the artist-creator. The moral is in the core of culture. It expresses the relation of the humane essence or spirituality with the subhuman, i.e., natural, side of man and reveals the functioning of that relation in the behavior of both individuals and societies as human interrelations. Morality, in his words,



can be found only where the essence of humaneness prevails at least minimally over the natural side. In the absence of that prevalence any talk of moral and culture is pointless.

In treating man as the principal subject of culture Vydunas attaches particular importance to his personal improvement. In his ethical conception, which is part of the cultural conception, he outlines the main guidelines for his improvement, i.e. shows how one has to overpower the natural elements and make one's own self, one's spiritual beginning stronger and more free. The guidelines proposed by Vydunas are closely related with the principles of Indian Yoga, particularly with the ways of perfection indicated in the *Bhagavadgita* — a selfless way of action (*karma-yoga*), devotion (*bhakti-yoga*), wisdom (*jnana-yoga*), and strengthening of spirituality.

A specific place in Vydunas's conception of culture is assigned to the nation. The thinker treats it as an indispensable section of man's path to his unity with humanity and the cosmic universe. According to him the nation is given to man at the very being and is ingrown both naturally and spiritually. They are both linked by body, blood and psychological, mental and spiritual relations. On the basis of these relations national culture is formed, and its specific and unique features are revealed, which accumulate and are particularly clearly expressed in the language, which is described as a "national banner" or a specific, unique "song to humaneness". For the specifics of the language and the possibility for its relevant use grow genetically together with the specific body, blood, psychological, mental and spiritual properties which one receives from the nation. Broken bonds with the nation or loss of the mother tongue are a deviation from the natural course of one's spiritual perfection. This is an unmistakable impoverishment of one's moral and overall spiritual condition, and a disharmony with one's own self and the world. When these bonds are severed in a significant part of the nation, in the cultured process both of the nation and of the world, destruction occurs. Vydunas arrived at such a conclusion on the basis of his earlier observation of actual life. Later he only gave this a theoretical substantiation, which resulted in the pathos of his cultural practical activity, and in a deep realization of the mission for a revitalization of the national culture.

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## NOTES

1. V. Mykolaitis-Putinas, *Rastai* (Vilnius, 1969), p. 312. Vol. 10.
2. Vydunas, "Tikrasis Vydunas", *Naujas zodis* (1928, Nr. 1), p. 4.
3. Vydunas, *Rastai* (Vilnius, 1990), p. 364. Vol. 1.
4. Vydunas, *Rastai* (Vilnius, 1992), p. 388. Vol. 3.
5. Ebenda, p. 394.
6. Ebenda, p. 395.
7. R. Rybakov, *Burzuaznaja reformacija induizma* (Moskua, 1981), P. 93.
8. Vydunas, *Rastai* (Vilnius, 1991), p. 109. Vol. 2.



## Chapter VIII

# Stasys Salkauskis: Contours of His System

*Arunas Sverdiolas*

Stasys Salkauskis (1886-1941) is a systematic philosopher. His books, articles, courses of lectures and even his speeches are based on a rigid logical framework made more distinct by a detailed articulation of parts, chapters and sections — it suffices to look at the contents of any of his works or the programme of his course of lectures to understand that, first of all, Salkauskis used to draw up a detailed plan of the work and then set about implementing it. Unfortunately, some of those plans were left unrealized. The rigid framework was often left unfilled. Neither was this systematic thinker fated to create a system of philosophy.

One can try to reconstruct the whole complex of Salkauskis's philosophical views. For the reconstruction of some parts of the whole complex more material is available, whereas for other parts there are only fragments. It is more possible to sketch an imaginary overview, which was not presented by Salkauskis in any of his texts but is witnessed by all his texts, than to produce a real system of his philosophy. Such a sketch should bring to light the fundamental principles organizing Salkauskis's whole philosophical work and bring out the seeds of philosophy from which his philosophy germinated. This should help one understand the real value and meaning of his philosophical investigations. It is appropriate to start with the evolution of his philosophy.

### **The Development of a Philosophy**

Stasys Salkauskis became interested in philosophy while studying at Moscow University. The greatest authorities for him in his youth were Ernest Hello and Vladimir Soloviov who remained important for him in the years to come. The philosophy of the French Catholic polemicist impressed Salkauskis by its author's conceptual rigor and determination in the complicated world of modern thought. However, the basis for his own philosophical thinking was laid by the systematic ideas of the famous Russian idealist.

A series of articles under the common title of "Baznycia ir kultura" ("The Church and Culture") was published in the journal *Draugija* ("The Society") in 1913-1914. In that study, as well as in his letters to the editor of the journal, Adomas Jakstas-Dambrauskas, while closely following Soloviov's philosophy, Stasys Salkauskis tried consistently to present for the first time his philosophical views.

Salkauskis stressed the unity of knowledge, above all of theology and philosophy. This unity is based on the statement that "one and the same truth forms the contents of both theology and philosophy" (12, 18) though these theoretical subjects strive it in different ways. Their objects differ too: "The knowledge of the supernatural order, as such, forms the object of theology, whereas the knowledge of the natural order forms the object of science, and synthesizing these two orders is the specific objective of philosophy" (12, 19). Thus, young Salkauskis attributes a special place to philosophy in the system of knowledge and assigns it a particular task: "Philosophy synthesizes the supernatural order with the natural one" (12, 18).

Salkauskis unfolds the problem of his first philosophical study in the contexts of the task of philosophy as he understood it. Following Soloviov, Salkauskis treats both layers of existence dynamically — the supernatural and natural orders — as independent origins of an integrating

vision. In this way he gives a meaning to the contour of his philosophy of history. "As progress in the supernatural order announces itself in a religious form and progress in the natural order declares itself to be in culture, then the synthesis of religion (the contents of which, according to Salkauskis, lie in the Church) and culture forms the proximate task of philosophy" (12, 19). The universal nature of the philosophical study is especially obvious in the variant of a more complete manuscript published in 1993 in Volume 3 of the *Selected Works* of Salkauskis (13, 62-145), rather than in the study published in *Draugija* ("The Society").

An important feature of Salkauskis's philosophy then becomes manifest — a parallel between the structure of existence seen in the context of the philosophy of history and its "subjective" equivalent, the structure of so-called "life". The place of philosophy is different in these two planes. Reasoning from the point of view of life, Salkauskis states the following: "A full satisfaction of the instinct of an intellectual man can be completed only in the sphere of philosophy, because only the synthesis of the first two kinds of knowledge (theology and science — A. S.) which is achieved in philosophy comprises the whole life of man" (12, 18). At that time his conception of life is not yet formulated but fluctuates. On the one hand, there is the sense of personal existence in everyday use when one speaks, for example, about the meaning of philosophy in life. On the other hand, there is a theoretical sense of the term philosophy when life is understood as the equivalent of the structure of existence in a second ontology deployed on the plane of practical philosophy and in its own terms. These two meanings of "life" are closely related and even merge, but they can be separated analytically.

Using the term of life in the sense of personal existence, Salkauskis underlined more than once that philosophy is a biographic act, a part of his biography. He wrote to A. Jakstas-Dambrauskas: "My love of philosophy developed parallel with the way philosophy responded to my spiritual doubts" (12, 19). While a high school student, he doubted the existence of God and made a positive decision only upon graduating from the University where Soloviov's philosophical studies were of great help to him. Later he had doubts about the place of evil in the world, i.e., the main issue of theodicy appeared. These doubts were also dispelled, which he again relates to philosophical activity:

Then I foresaw a great spiritual elevation which helped me think of the synthesis of the Church and culture. The answer was as follows: if God can really have mercy on our world, the Church and culture forms not only a theoretical but also a practical synthesis (i.e. the problem of their relationship is settled not only by means of philosophical considerations, but also by means of a practical choice. — A. S.): genius and holiness is the norm of our active life (12, 21).

Salkauskis continued later to be concerned about the question of practical self-determination. In his letter of April 16, 1918 to writer Juozas Tumas-Vaizgantas, Salkauskis calls his point of view a "pessimistic optimism". This point of view bases itself on the fact that manifestations of life are evaluated in the "light of Apocalypses", namely the conclusion is drawn that "evil wins in the natural order, therefore, in the supernatural order good does; however, the order of eternity wins over our natural world through the catastrophic wreck of the world. This apocalyptic point of view forms the foundation of Salkauskis's philosophy of history.

What happened in the body of Christ in an individual way, must happen in the history of mankind in a universal way through His Church; only then will the supernatural order be able to overcome the natural order, only then will the sacrifice of atonement find its universal implementation.

Considerations of the philosophy of history, in turn, determine and frame personal choice. Salkauskis calls the apocalyptic necessity of "our world" "the horrible truth". Much courage is required to agree to it; however, it is an "obligation of a Christian" and "the cross of his life".

In his letter to Juozas Tumas-Vaizgantas Salkauskis develops also the second, theoretical concept of the meaning of life in essence, marking already the contours of the philosophy of his life or practical philosophy. He writes about a triple structure of life which corresponds to the structure of existence:

The life of man, being uniform in its essence, can be seen from three viewpoints, i.e. from the point of view of a soul, body and the relation between the two. The first viewpoint embraces the sphere of religion, the second encompasses the sphere of economics (i.e. national economy — A. S.) and the third, broadly speaking, includes the sphere of culture because culture is the cultivation of material life according to the requirements of the soul (8, 536).

### **A Program of Philosophy**

In his written work "The Church and Culture" Salkauskis sought to present "in advance — the programme" part of the work which, he said, he wanted "to realize all his life" (12, 21). In 1914 he thought of choosing this subject matter for his doctoral thesis. Most probably he did not reject this project for some time because there has survived an unfinished extended plan of the work, "The Church and Culture," written simultaneously in Russian and French and dated 1916-1917, which develops ideas published in *Draugija* (Society) (14, 146-153).

However, later Salkauskis evaluated critically his early philosophical efforts calling "The Church and Culture" "a creature of amateurish philosophizing" (10, 36) and stating that the "unconscious philosophizing" in that work "rationalizes theological matters and mystifies philosophical matters" (9, 176). In his letter to A. Jakstas-Dambrauskas Salkauskis wrote that he had "made a severe revision of his world outlook" (12, 40) and in "The Word of Autocracy" published in the journal *Logos*, he rejected the metaphysical foundations of his early study. Salkauskis declared: "Characterizing my metaphysical views, . . . one cannot base oneself on my written work "The Church and Culture" (10, 36-37). The appearance of this critical distance was determined by the main turning point in the biography of Salkauskis as a philosopher and related to his studies at Freiburg University in 1916-1920.

This turning point was not reached at once. In the report "Faith and Scholastic Philosophy" made at the seminar in 1917, Salkauskis wrote: "When taking the course in scholastic philosophy I formed an impression . . . that scholasticism does not provide a synthesis of religion and reason. Sometimes it seems to me that in fear of mystic subjectivism, scholasticism becomes too vulnerable to abstract intellectualism. At the same time, its union with faith without a broad geosiological basis renders faith too dogmatic" (15, 161). Such a synthesis, in Salkauskis's opinion of that time, was provided by Soloviov's idea of the harmony of rational, empirical and mystic knowledge. In his report Salkauskis described his spiritual state as one of "hesitation" between "the old firm conviction" which had formed on the basis of Soloviov's lectures and "new impressions" experienced at Friebourg University which "did not manage to crystallize themselves and merge with the old . . . conviction" (15, 162).

These hesitations were dispelled, though not at once. Writing his doctoral thesis about the conception of the soul of the world in Soloviov's philosophy, Salkauskis thought that he "would succeed in showing something new to the scholastics of Fribourg in defending Soloviov's

conception" (12, 40). "The author, almost to the very end (of his work — A. S.), namely, only without reaching its critical part, cherished the hope of defending Soloviov's conception" (9, 175). However, nearing the end "I had to experience a bitter disappointment at seeing that my mansion did not sustain itself within". Finally, having reached the critical chapter, as Salkauskis himself puts it, "Turning to Saint Thomas for help, I tried to make the whole matter clear, and only then did I understand that infinite power of Thomas Aquinas's logic: since then I am inclined to consider Thomas Aquinas's philosophy as the greatest miracle of reason" (12, 40).

The fatal turning point had been reached — the doctoral thesis became:

the expression of both gratitude and emancipation with respect to the philosopher who was the first to inspire the author's love of philosophy and direct him towards the course of his thought. Captivated by Soloviov's broad synthetic scope, the author tried to make clear and justify the central conception of his intuitive synthetism . . . . However, when it came to putting everything together, it finally became clear to the author that Soloviov's conception of the soul of the world could not be justified in the light of critical thought (9, 175).

The criticism, presented as it was in a laconic way in Salkauskis's doctor's thesis, in essence, related not only to the conception of the soul of the world, but also to the mode of Soloviov's philosophizing as well as to the fundamentals of his metaphysics.

What is the critical thought to which Salkauskis is appealing? In Freiburg Salkauskis studied at the International Catholic University which followed a curriculum reviving scholastic philosophy. The fragments of the notes of Salkauskis lectures and bibliography that have survived show that Salkauskis based his studies of philosophy on systematic neo-scholastic textbooks and lectures on gnoseology, ontological ethics, aesthetics, logic, cosmology, philosophy of history by D. J. Mercier, A. G. Sertillanges, D. Nys, M. de Wulf and others, as well as on special educational dictionaries of philosophy. According to his friend from the university years, geographer Kazys Pakstas, Salkauskis valued Professor M. de Munnynsk most of all (5, 194). It was neo-scholasticism, a real school of philosophy for Salkauskis, that formed the principles of his philosophizing and the fundamentals which, one can say, later remained unchanged and were only adapted to considering those problematic spheres which Salkauskis encountered. Salkauskis no longer considered those principles critically, but where needed, postulated them in his works as valid conclusions of the current stage of the development of the *philosophia perennis*. He based himself on these principles when systematically developing certain branches of philosophy: mostly the philosophy of culture and aesthetics, as well as the theory of pedagogy. They provided Salkauskis's work with a solid, though topically rather narrow, Aristotelianism. With a Thomistic base he constantly made use of the hypomorphic principle, the so-called four Aristotelian causes, and other things. Basing himself on these fundamentals Salkauskis moved towards those parts of the system of philosophy which were not given in neo-scholasticism. On the other hand, he did not continue the established work on neo-scholastic subjects as did his colleague Pranas Kurelis in the Department of Theology and Philosophy. Salkauskis did not write a single work either on ontology, gnoseology or ethics; he only presented in a sporadic way one or two fragments of some parts of that philosophical system.

Salkauskis drew up the program of his philosophical work quite early. A page entitled "The Work to Be Done", dated May 6, 1919 (16, 438-439), includes the system of philosophy, an anthology of general philosophy, a Lithuanian terminology for philosophy, some specific issues of philosophy and social life, as well as measures for their practical implementation, etc. To

comprehend Salkauskis's way of thinking it is important to note that in essence this is a programme both for developing an entire Lithuanian philosophical culture and also for Stasys Salkauskis's personal activity and even that of his philosophical life. From both points of view it is especially capacious — the Lithuanian philosophical culture is far from having implemented it, and the subsequent theoretical and practical activity of Salkauskis himself can be accommodated almost completely in the framework outlined by that program. Thus, one can say that Salkauskis drew up his life program as early as 1919 and it remained only to carry it out as far as his efforts allowed. An existing fragment of his letter, written to his sister Antonina Salkauskaite in 1926, contains in essence, the same philosophical programme (17, 440-441).

## **The Nature of Philosophy**

In 1921 Salkauskis began to work as a lecturer at Kaunas Higher Courses and in 1922 he began teaching "Introduction to Philosophy" at the newly established Department of Theology and Philosophy of the University of Lithuania. At that time he wrote several texts in which he explained what philosophy is. Salkauskis spread an already mature conception of philosophy when speaking about the relations between philosophy and science, as well as when speaking about the relation between philosophy and life. The first issue deals mostly with the specificity of philosophical thinking, whereas the second is concerned with the importance of philosophy from the point of view of its world outlook.

Discussing the subject matter of philosophy, Salkauskis pays attention to the fact that it is undetermined from the point of view of its contents: "All that exists, that is known, is acted upon or being created — all that can be studied by philosophy in the light of reflective reason" (31). The specificity of philosophy depends on its peculiar attitude towards objects rather than on the objects it studies.

What is that attitude? The most important feature of philosophy consists in that it "strives for the latter (objects — A. S.) through the knowledge of the remotest, primary or universal causes" (18, 31). Salkauskis follows closely the definitions of Aristotelian philosophy formulated by the scholastics of the Middle Ages: philosophy is *scientia omnium rerum per ultimas causas* or "knowledge of all the things through their ultimate causes" (19, 76). Its specificity is brought out by opposing philosophy to the specialized sciences. This question has a long history — its beginning can be seen in the opposition of Aristotelian or to be more exact, in post-Aristotelian physics and metaphysics. The sciences investigate the proximate causes, whereas philosophy studies the most remote or ultimate ones; sciences are specialized, whereas philosophy is universal. "Specialized sciences have as their material object a certain part of reality . . . ; general, as well as universal science has as its material object the whole complex of reality which they investigate from general viewpoints" (20, 66). The fact that this traditional differentiation is still relevant in our times is witnessed by historical experience. Salkauskis does not consider branches of science and philosophy as unchangeable — their competence is constantly redistributed; what earlier belonged to philosophy falls into the province of science. The philosopher underlines that philosophy must harmonize or synthesize the data of the specialized sciences, and unite them into a system.

Nevertheless, one can state that the contrast of proximate and ultimate causes does not express exactly enough what Salkauskis considers to be the specificity of philosophy. His fundamental idea is soon obscured by the statements that science is gradually "ascending" from the proximate to the more remote causes, and that philosophy provides science with its conclusions and is thus

"descending" towards it. Thus in principle, science and philosophy, instead of opposing one another, complement each other. This statement obscures, though it does not completely deaden the fact that the ultimate causes, in one way or another, are speculative causes, which is exactly how the traditional metaphysical language expresses the specificity of philosophical investigations.

This is obvious when Salkauskis presents the definition of philosophizing tracing back the history of the Western thought from its very "beginning" in the time of the pre-Socratic philosophers: "The viewpoint whereby philosophy studies its material object or all things cognitively in the light of reason, is the cognition of things from their origin or fundamentals . . . . The fundamentals, or origins, in question, in fact are nothing other than the primary and most remote causes of things" (19, 80). In the range of this fundamental definition Salkauskis renders concrete what these "primary" (because they coincide with the origins of existence) and at the same time ultimate or most remote causes are. They are the results of the way of thinking making use of the conceptual measures presented by his school of philosophy. To study some object philosophically means to open out its "primary" and at the same time its most remote causes. According to Aristotle, these are four causes: efficient (*causa efficiens*), material (*causa materialis*), formal (*causa formalis*) and final (*causa finalis*). Therefore:

When the question is raised what the world is, the material and formal cause is sought, i.e., what the world consists of. . . . When the question is raised where the world came from, its chief efficient cause is sought; and when the question is raised where the world moves toward, its final cause is sought (20, 61).

Salkauskis was especially concerned with the relation between philosophy and life or the importance of philosophy from the point of view of the world outlook. Against the principle of sound reason "first one must live and then philosophize" he brings forward the opposite statement "If we speak about . . . life which man is obliged to know, . . . rather than about life as a whole (i.e., bare existence, life of a living being — A. S.), we shall need *primum philosophari* in order to *deinde vivere*" (18, 29). Thus, the perspective of a specifically human existence forms the basis of the question about the importance of philosophy. This perspective is determined by postulating the dimension of obligation in life which is common to a human being and other living creatures as well.

Considering the importance of philosophy to a particular human life in some detail, Salkauskis first of all differentiates the world outlook based on tradition, opinion or, as he himself puts it, conviction, and the world outlook based on a rational, reflective consideration or, speaking in his own words, assurance. Generally speaking, reason motivates the two world outlooks in its own way because "philosophy raises the obligations of human reason to the highest degree of consciousness". It effects the self-determination of man in an active way — "man's determination in life" depends on philosophy. In the end this determines the importance of philosophy from the point of view of the world outlook: "philosophy which serves truth from obligation liberates man, and this is one of its greatest merits in the life of man" (18, 36).

The question of the specificity of philosophy is organically related to the question of the system of philosophy. There is no point in presenting a broader account of Salkauskis's concept of the system of philosophy — it is more convenient to look at the chart presented at the end of "The Introduction to Philosophy" and its explanations (19, 104). This is a traditional chart which can be traced to Leibniz and Wolff, which was inherited also by Kant (see 3, 576-577). Besides



ontology, or general metaphysics, Salkauskis includes in the system of philosophy three more parts of theoretical philosophy or "special" metaphysics: psychology studying the psychic origin of man, cosmology investigating the physical world, and theodicy (which, following the French tradition, he calls "natural theology") concerned with "the primary cause of the world" (19, 104). The division of theoretical philosophy directly repeats Ch. Wolff. It is sufficient to take into consideration the fundamental — theoretical and practical — division of philosophy; the most important part of the former is ontology, whereas the second part is explained through the German word, *Lebensanschauung*.

### **Theoretical Philosophy: Ontology**

Salkauskis did not present ontology in detail. Therefore, it is important to focus our attention on the fragments scattered in different written works. The section of "General Aesthetics" at the beginning of which Salkauskis says that "the truth, good and beauty are only different viewpoints of one and the same being" is of great importance (21, 511). In the "Terminology of General Philosophy" Salkauskis explains the word 'being' by the following equivalents: *etre* in French, *Sein* and *Seiende* in German. Salkauskis defines the relation between these as follows:

Being . . . means the deepest basis of existence; in a way being is contrasted with essence, which means the deepest contents of being. In being are distinguished essence, i.e., that due to which a thing is really what it is, from existence, i.e., that due to which the essence manifests itself in existence. Being is all that exists in any sense; from this should be distinguished living being which means a certain being, namely, a living being" (11, 61-62).

We can either agree or disagree with these considerations, but, somehow or other, they make Salkauskis's idea clear enough. Ontology is the science of philosophical being and the subject matter of ontology or general metaphysics is "being as such" (19, 104).

This is nothing other than Heidegger's so-called whole of existence. It is not by chance that we recall Heidegger here for ontology in the history of European metaphysics; Salkauskis's conception of ontology corresponds to Heidegger's conception. This is obvious from "The Origin of the Work of Art" in which Heidegger, besides other things, describes how European metaphysics contemplates the thing. It is important that Salkauskis speaks about the being and the thing as synonyms, for his philosophy is determined by the fact that there is no so-called "ontological difference" there, that is, that being there is identified with existence or with the whole of existence.

Further citing the fragment quoted, Salkauskis discusses the expression of being (or existence): " Being, as corresponding to its ideal type, is called real. Being, as desired, is called wealth. Being, as enjoyed, is called beauty. The reality of being is perceptible, the wealth of being is praised, the beauty of being is admired. Reality is positive, wealth is sought for, beauty is enjoyed" (21, 511-512). Here he bases himself on reasoning corresponding to the method of natural theology which attests that the object under investigation is perfect in all respects. Being is defined by describing its specific properties — so-called "perfections": "one and the same being distinguishes itself as real in one respect, as kind in another respect and as beautiful in a third respect . . . . These are three different perfections which can be found in one being and one thing if this being or thing is perfect in all respects". Such subjective wording ("if we want") expresses Salkauskis's ideas in an inaccurate way, which should be understood as expressing the way of

theological reasoning to be discussed later: ". . . The reality of being is nothing but its correspondence to its ideal type. The kindness of being is its concurrence with its natural law. The beauty of being is the bright and harmonious manifestation of its perfection" (21, 514). Salkauskis's aesthetics is on this plane. Ontology, investigating "the most general properties of things or beings", among all other things, must study "to what degree beauty is objective in things" or "what beauty is in the objective sense of this word" (22, 450-451). It brings out "the most general fundamentals of beauty in things themselves" (22, 451).

Discussing the problem of beauty on the ontological plane, Salkauskis first of all raises the question of "the objective" foundation of beauty. Here the Aristotelian conception is repeated: a particular order forms the objective foundation of beauty — "the co-ordination of many and different things according to a certain origin of unity" (22, 454) and the specificity of the aesthetic order is discussed presenting the formal and speculative characteristics of beauty. "Objectively the form needs the following: a) a complete organic whole (*integritas, sive perfectio*), b) unity in diversity (*ordo aestheticus*), c) proper proportion (*harmonia*), and d) clear dominance in the assimilated material (*splendor formae*)" (23, 591). Salkauskis interprets these formal characteristics of beauty realistically, like the whole Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. According to him, the origin of the aesthetic order, studied by ontology, is nothing other than the form of a thing which "takes hold of the matter and at the same time forms one material thing with it" (22, 455). Thus, beauty enters into the fundamental structure of the world.

Ontology is not the only plane within which Salkauskis investigated the problems of beauty. According to Salkauskis, the task of philosophical aesthetics is "to investigate the general fundamental issues of beauty and art" (22, 450). But this task is to be carried out by as many as three branches of philosophy: ontology, psychology and the philosophy of art, or aesthetics in the narrow sense of the word. However, in trying to make clear what beauty is in the "subjective" or psychological sense, one has to keep in mind a certain inconsistency in Salkauskis's concept of psychology. On the one hand, he leaves psychology in the place it occupied in the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition (so-called rational psychology or one of the branches of special metaphysics). On the other hand, Salkauskis has in mind and applies the conclusions and methods of psychological science. Let us say that the description of the artists' creative psychology described in the "General Aesthetics" is of a psychological rather than philosophical nature. At the same time, basing himself on the realistic Thomistic principle, Salkauskis states that "beauty, in a subjective way, is nothing other than the aesthetic impression whose objective cause is a thing capable of exciting it. . . . The aesthetic emotion corresponds to the objective basis of beauty in things themselves" (22, 459). Thus, beauty or the "flowering of the perfection of a thing through its outer form" is perceived by means of a particular aesthetic emotion — "direct perception or intuition" (22, 459).

Finally, aesthetics in the narrowest sense is the philosophy of art — it has to investigate "in what way the synthesis of the objective and subjective beauty must be realized by means of art" (22, 451). These three branches of philosophy which deal with the problem of beauty in different ways were not developed by Salkauskis uniformly: he discussed the first two briefly in his lecture "Beauty in the Light of Philosophy", whereas the third one he presented in a systematic way in the course of lectures on "General Aesthetics". Only the first part of the latter with some omissions has survived. Finally, all three aspects of the problem of beauty were presented systematically, though in the form of a thesis, in the project "Aesthetic Ideology of Ateitininkai" prepared by Salkauskis.

Salkauskis took the principle of realistic gnoseology from neo-scholasticism. He directly related cognitive problems with those of being, besides, subjecting the former to the latter: "The correlation between the form of a thing and the corresponding idea of ours has a very deep basis in that correlation, which, on the whole, exists between the order of being and cognition". The form which is "the basis of all real perfections" in "the order of being" is at the same time "the basis of cognition" too. It is "the basis on account of which the thing can be perceived, and which is the basis for our corresponding idea to be formed" ( 22, 456). Salkauskis even strengthens this realistic orientation of neo-scholasticism by accentuating its Augustinian elements. For example, he states that the form of a thing is nothing but the materialized idea, and the idea, in its turn, is the form dematerialized.

Accentuating the Augustinian basis in this way, it turns out that even beauty is only the embodiment of an insubstantial idea or a visible expression of the ideal basis: "Beauty is the flowering of the perfection of a thing through its outer form" (22, 458).

For Salkauskis the ontological truth, however, is not only the highest guarantee of the cognition of the world: this is also the norm of the "rightness" of the world. "In the deepest sense the truth is the correspondence of a thing to its ideal type, or its first image. The thing is real when it is what it must be". The thing that is especially typical of Salkauskis's way of thinking is the fact that the example (as well as the original view) of such an "obligatory thing" or an obligatory being is man. He goes on: "Every man is a human being, however, not every man is a real human being; as not every man corresponds to his ideal original image; it would be more correct to say that not all people distance themselves equally from their ideal types. Meanwhile, the inadequacy of the thing to its ideal type forms its uncertainty or the lie of its mode of life" ( 24, 282). Thus, in the end truth corresponds with rightness — original images hidden in the absolute reason are not only ontological truths but also ontological norms, not only "the remotest causes" of the existing world but also its "final goals" to be achieved.

The fact that norms and obligations are based in the very fundamental structure of the world shows that Salkauskis was directly concerned with neither ontology nor gnoseology. In fact, no discussion of the principle problems of scholastic ontology are found in his philosophy — relations between the essence and existence, substance and accident, potency and act. These categories do not even exist in his philosophy, excluding potency and act; however, the latter are not discussed either, but are applied in the philosophy of culture and aesthetics. Salkauskis was concerned with other things.

"That which forms the facts of reality which do not depend on man's activity is the object of the purely theoretical sphere, whereas the sphere of human activity is the object of the practical sphere" (21, 464). Nevertheless, we saw that even in the outlines of the most important sphere of theoretical philosophy, presented by Salkauskis, some room for the "obligatory thing" or "obligatory being" was found. In other words, ethics is found even in his ontology, and the structure of obligation is found in his concept of being. Designing his philosophical activity, Salkauskis quite early chose the sphere of human activity as the object of his special investigation. He developed practical philosophy, as it was traditionally called, or life philosophy, as he himself most often called it, directly or indirectly following Wilhelm Dilthey. A. Maceina even makes the following statement: "He (Salkauskis. — A. S.) perceived being and studied it in the sense of life, rather than from the point of view of either cognition, its being in itself or effect. Being lay in different shapes of life in front of him and revealed itself before him as life" (4, 8). To correctly understand that idea of Maceina, we have to take into account the fact that Maceina himself

understood being in the sense of Heidegger, rather than in that of Salkauskis: according to Maceina, "The object of every philosopher is the same, namely, being" (4, 7).

There is some inconsistency or tension between theoretical and practical philosophy in Salkauskis. We saw that practical (life) philosophy had a defined place in the system of philosophy. In essence, however, practical philosophy is the system of philosophy — it includes the whole area of philosophical problems, changes or "absorbs" the spheres of theoretical philosophy and makes them its parts.

The inner tension of Salkauskis theoretical and practical philosophy is clearly seen in his aesthetics. Apart from the above discussed attribution of problems of beauty to ontology, psychology and aesthetics in a narrow sense, which could correspond to the conception of the system of philosophy, another distribution is presented in the course of "General Aesthetics". In defining the object of general aesthetics (which, by the way, corresponds to what in the article "Beauty in the Light of Philosophy" is called aesthetics in a specialized sense), Salkauskis isolates himself from general metaphysics or ontology which investigates "the concept of beauty and the fundamentals of beauty in things" (21, 463). Instead, he renders this concrete: "beauty manifesting itself in nature" (21, 464), the beauty of nature. General aesthetics, having left the issue of the concept of beauty and its "objective foundations in the world" to be considered by ontology, considers "beauty as far as it manifests itself in arts" (21, 464) as the object of aesthetics. This then is the science of "beauty which manifests itself in art" (21, 470), the philosophy of art as a part of practical philosophy.

## **Practical Philosophy**

Salkauskis moves from theoretical to practical philosophy on the whole in exactly the same way. He had an idea of systematically developing life philosophy — he put its three volumes on the list made in 1926 of works being created or planned to be created: the first volume on nature, the second on culture, the third on the philosophy of religion. However, Salkauskis left almost no texts dealing with the problems of the first two volumes. These problems are touched upon in passing in the philosophy of culture. Some elements of the philosophy of nature and especially those of the philosophy of religion can be reconstructed from the theory of pedagogy which, in essence, is an applied equivalent of life philosophy, as well as from sporadic statements found in other written works.

## **Philosophy of Life**

Life, as the most comprehensively understood object of practical philosophy, is the most real horizon of Salkauskis's philosophy. In the sphere of neo-scholasticism, Salkauskis postulated mostly the principles of neo-scholastic ontology and gnoseology, sometimes accentuating Augustinian features and interpreting them in his own way. However, in the sphere of practical philosophy he worked somewhat more independently. Making use of Aristotelian-Thomistic conceptual measures, Salkauskis still tried to create a conception whose essence could be understood by comparing it not only with neo-scholasticism, but also with the German life philosophy. It is difficult to agree to Maceina's statement that life philosophy in the Salkauskis sense is "something quite different from what the Germans call "Lebensphilosophie" which . . . was nothing but the philosophy of life". It is true that life, as Salkauskis understood it "involves both life and the soul and they both unite in a human being and act through them". It is also true that

for Salkauskis "life reaches the transcendental reality too, including God as one of the characters of life" (4, 8). However, only with great reservation can German life philosophy be called the philosophy of life — if we speak exclusively about its biological trend represented by Ludwig Klages and others. This definition does not apply to W. Dilthey himself and his school, nor does it apply to Friedrich Nietzsche who opened the perspective of the way of thinking characteristic of the whole school. Dilthey and Nietzsche understood life as a human reality in a wide sense including the spiritual world and transcendence. Dilthey's and Salkauskis's conceptions of life differ in principle, but the difference does not lie in the understanding of the scope of this fundamental conception.

The "life" of practical philosophy is a peculiar equivalent of being, or "existence" in theoretical philosophy. Salkauskis goes on to develop the above idea of the perfection of being, discussing corresponding perfections of life:

Similarly to a separate being or a separate thing which cannot be perfect without possessing truthfulness, kindness or beauty, the life of a human being is not perfect if it lacks truth, goodness or beauty. . . . The greatest inexpediency of life would be implanted into its very basis of cognition; morals and art could contradict themselves in principle (21, 514).

Let us turn our attention not to the things with which Salkauskis is directly concerned: the harmony between the highest values — truth, goodness and beauty — and the spheres of life corresponding to them, but to the way Salkauskis substantiates that harmony. He states that if these highest values were contradictory, "the greatest inexpediency" would be hidden in the basis of life. In other words, the purposefulness of life is the precondition of this consideration. Purposefulness here is appealed to in the same way as a specialist in logic appeals to consistency, and a specialist of natural sciences appeals to causality. Salkauskis's philosophy is permeated through out by the teleological consideration, taken directly from natural theology. On its basis, Salkauskis presented the idea of a hierarchical structure of life in many a case:

The life of a human being consequently ascends by means of three steps from the material plane to the highest spiritual sphere. Nature moves in the direction of culture so that it could find its natural end or improvement in the latter. Then culture moves in the direction of religion so that it could find its supernatural end in the latter. . . . Each higher sphere of life bases itself on the lower one, as its natural material basis, and on the other hand, completes that lower sphere by complementing and improving it (25, 434).

Finally, "Ascending from one sphere of life into another higher one, a consequent gradation of objectives and means is observed" (25, 426).

### *Philosophy of Nature*

The lowest and fundamental stage of life is nature and human nature which belongs to it, or the inner nature. A. Maceina notes: " To write the philosophy of nature was Salkauskis's lifelong dream. During the years before the war he wanted to present at least its outline because he did not expect to develop it in full. Unfortunately, his death prevented him from fulfilling that task as well" (4, 8). As no manuscripts or plans from that sphere have survived, excluding the headings in the

two aforementioned plans of the intended work, this conception of nature can be reconstructed only fragmentally.

Similar to other stages, Salkauskis studied nature on the basis of Aristotelian causes: "The efficient cause of nature is the laws of nature which function with unavoidable necessity . . . . Matter or the material is the material cause, and the form is the formal cause of nature and, therefore, also its natural cause . . . and its substantial form. . . . Material, formal and natural causes of nature form the substantial foundation of the material world which is subject to stable causal regularity" (25, 426-427). It is namely the substantial form that is the essence of a thing — this is the origin which makes the "thing to be what it is". At the same time this origin is nothing but the "efficient origin of the natural regularity" (25, 427) — here the Aristotelian efficient cause manifests itself as the regularity of nature. Besides, directly translating the essential theistic element of the world outlook into philosophical reasoning — the conception of the world as a piece of art — Salkauskis states that the substantial forms of the material world are nothing but the creatures of "creative reason".

Finally Salkauskis speaks about the purposefulness of nature in a more specialized sense than that discussed earlier — he speaks about the fourth final cause of nature, or about the purpose of nature. According to Salkauskis, that purpose of nature is "the creation of a free and conscientious individual" (25, 428). He confesses that he cannot prove it. In principle, he bases himself on Soloviov's conceptions of the formation of all unity in the essay on the philosophy of history stating that the whole world "turns" in the anthropogenic direction. The source of this idea is the anthropocentric Christian orientation ordering creation in a hierarchic order and placing the human being at the top of this hierarchy. Augustinus and Thomas Aquinas envisage a hierarchy of creation. This orientation has constantly manifested itself in the philosophy of the modern age since the Renaissance — Shakespeare puts the following words into Hamlet's mouth: man is "the crown of creation". In his "The Critique of the Power of Decision" Kant formulated the idea in the same way as did Salkauskis — the purpose of nature is an intelligent and free living being.

### *Philosophy of Culture*

The second stage of the pyramid of life is culture. The philosophy of culture is the most widely developed subject of Salkauskis's philosophy.

K. Pakstas wrote in his reminiscences the following: "His (S. Salkauskis. — A. S.) greatest dream was to write an extensive work "*Philosophy of Culture*" in five volumes. He collected material for that work, thought a lot about it, drew up its plan and read it to me once when he had already written something" (5, 196).

In 1926, at the Department of Theology and Philosophy, Salkauskis published a summary of his lectures "Outlines of Philosophy of Culture," which was destined to become the most important of his philosophy work published while he was still alive. More extensive typewritten lectures on the philosophy of culture, though not completely prepared for publication by the author, have survived also, as well as an additional typewritten course called "Problems of the Special Philosophy of Culture," both published in his "Collected Works" in 1990.

The relation between culture and nature is determined first of all by the fact that nature is the object of man's cultural activity. Besides the regularity which governs nature and the nature of man, . . . the cultural effect realizes a new series of causative actions, within which a certain ideological causality manifests itself. . . . If a simple original material (Aristotelian *materia prima*. — A. S.)

serves as a material cause for nature and the nature of man, the whole of nature and the whole of material human nature serve as a material cause for culture.

Looking at culture from the point of view of his integral life philosophy, Salkauskis states that "in the cultural action of man truth, goodness and beauty (which are both the origins of the same essence and life itself and also their deepest foundation, which is not further studied — A. S.) are already taken as that which must design the life of a human being and even the whole world with new forms which are realized by means of knowledge, morals and art" (that is, culture. — A. S.) (25, 428). The purposefulness of life manifests itself in culture in a peculiar way as the objectives chosen by an intelligent and free living being: "The objectives of culture are placed in relation with those ideals which man creates himself according to his spiritual essence" (25, 428). These ideals are nothing but truth, goodness and beauty.

To define the essence of culture, according to Salkauskis, the most important thing is the concept of human action. "Culture is a conscious activity of a human being with the aim of designing some natural object with the form corresponding to a higher idea" (24, 177). The conception of a cultural action is rendered concrete by applying it to the investigation of different objects of cultivation. Economy, cognition, morals and art are investigated in such a way. These analyses make up the contents of Salkauskis philosophy of culture.

"Internal nature or human nature can become the object of cultural activity. A human being can act upon it in the same way he acts on external nature. This is the sphere of ethics. Acting in an ethical way a human being doubles himself in a peculiar way: "He (a human being. — A. S.) traces out the external purposefulness of the human being, understanding its cause, objectives and tasks, and so-to-say consciously assuming ideal motives and determining to allow his life and activity to be governed by them." (24, 249). Man is born and brought up like a creature of nature, and he depends on the vegetative properties of the soul like all other living beings. However, as Salkauskis puts it, "it (the soul. — A. S.) understands and determines to act, and when governed by the ideas, its activity becomes cultural" (24, 249). Consciously "coming to reason" a human being becomes human. Salkauskis defines moral behaviour as the coordination of the will and the reason, as the subjugation of instincts or vital impulses to rational motives. "Reason determines things as being this or that, and the will chooses from them the one through which it can render the meaning of higher goodness by his choice, and then resolves to implement it by action" ( 18, 35).

Salkauskis's so-called general aesthetics is, in essence, the development of the part of the philosophy of culture investigating art as the form of a certain culture on the whole. The most important thing for the philosophy of culture is the conception of a cultural action, whereas for aesthetics the most important thing is the conception of an aesthetic action. Two other essential aspects of a piece of art — creative regulations and the results of creative action — are interpreted in the light of this action. "An artful action does not altogether differ from a widely understood cultural effect which contains in its nature the ability to attribute a higher form to a certain object" (21, 480). Of course, this is only a generic definition. Aesthetics must define the forms of artistic specificity as well.

True, in the scheme of the system of philosophy, aesthetics is discussed as a normative rather than descriptive subject, like the philosophy of culture. However, it should be said that the opposition of the cognitive sphere and the sphere of value accentuated by the neo-Kantians remained foreign to Salkauskis. The relation of the normative and cognition in aesthetics is not problematic, nor is it in Salkauskis's philosophy on the whole. In solving cognitive tasks, aesthetics

simultaneously fulfills a normative function. "Aesthetics tries to trace that causative regularity which governs the appearance of aesthetic values, their evaluation and their enjoyment. At the same time aesthetics explains what aesthetic enjoyment and evaluation are based upon, on which normal correlation between the object and subject the aesthetic experience rests, what conditions are necessary for aesthetic manifestation to appear, etc. Provided one knows the answers to these questions, he knows also the principle norms which the fine arts cannot violate lest they lose their aesthetic value" (21, 471-472). Aesthetics "teaches the truths of the aesthetic life and establishes what is normal for aesthetic life. And to establish what is normal is, in fact, to establish what must be" (21, 472).

Salkauskis analyses what cultural activity is on the whole, basing himself on the Aristotelian causes. "The executive cause of culture is a free and conscious human person who is capable of creatively completing the purposefulness hidden in nature by means of consciously sought tasks" (25, 426-427). "Culture in the true sense of the word can be found within intelligent and free human beings . . ." (24, 194). Strictly speaking, only the person is the creator of culture.

However, the person as the creator of culture in Salkauskis's philosophy is rather a certain principle than a real, concretely defined being. Salkauskis tries to model the real human being by studying the interplay of two dialectic couples — the individual and the person, the mass and the society:

At the same time man is both an individual and a person. As an individual he forms a part of the mass belonging to the whole complex. As a person he is a free and intelligent member of the society. Thus, each human being belongs to the mass and reveals himself freely in the society, just like a certain aggregate of people is simultaneously an inert mass and a conscious society.

The free and intelligent person and his specific activity of cultural creation are not given things, but remain always *in statu nascendi*. "An animal is only an individual; a human being becomes a person from an individual, that is, the individuality turns into the personality within a human being", and "depending on the degree to which inert individuals become determined persons, the mass itself turns into a conscious society" (24, 213).

The role of ideas in life is considered in a dialectic way. A human being as a person, that is, as a free and intelligent creature, is self-determining on the basis of his ideological motives. However, this is also a principle and norm, rather than a fact. Salkauskis states that "it is one thing to determine the causative role of ideas in principle, . . . and another thing is to determine the causality of the ideas in a specific cultural development of history during a certain period and under certain circumstances" (24, 224). It is namely on the concrete relationship between the two above mentioned sides — the individual and the person, as well as the mass and the society — that the latter thing depends.

On the whole, Salkauskis is apt to speak about the progress on those two planes — the individual and the social. His unquestionable progress of culture is "related to his (the human beings'. — A. S.) ideological growth and improvement by causal ties, that is, with the extent to which this ideological content occupies an ever increasing area in the life and activity of a human being" (24, 225). The increase of the individual "ideological content", in its turn, manifests itself in the life of the society. However, in any case, this dialectical formation remains infinite because "each person always remains an inert individual to a greater or lesser degree, and each society possesses more or less features of the mass". Consequently, "as long as mankind is imperfect, its



ideological content is not a well-established fact, but only an ideal task to be performed in its historical life and activity" (24, 227).

Nevertheless, in spite of a clear bent for a progressive terminology of the Enlightenment in which it is not difficult to trace Kant's lexical influence, Salkauskis leaves the issue of the progress of the universal culture open. According to him, the question of the extent to which "ideological content" can be achieved "within the limits of the historical development of mankind" is an eschological one and it is improper to solve it within the framework of the philosophy of culture. The task of an individual person to reach the "perfect ideological content" on the plane of one's self-determination — and for Salkauskis this means to embody metaphysical transcendence on the life plane — that is, by "free self-determination to realize the ideals of the truth, beauty and goodness in his life and activity . . . is never completely fulfilled in our life, though it always remains compulsory for the individual conscience of a human being" (24, 227-228). Salkauskis's viewpoint of the fundamentals of the development of history and human self-determination remained unchanged from the time he wrote a letter to Vai gantas and even from the earlier period of his first philosophical studies.

The conclusion that man is incapable of achieving "a perfect ideological content", that is, to act absolutely freely and with a conscious self-determination, is fatal for it appears that all culture is in essence insufficient. In the end cultural activity fails to reach its task: "Culture strives to take possession of nature and use it as a means to achieve its tasks, whereas a complete liberation of culture from material dependence on nature can never take place" (24, 325). Man never liberates himself from nature absolutely, he cannot change the laws of nature or transgress the bounds of causality. By comparing culture as the sphere of human creation with nature as a divine sphere of creation, Salkauskis says, man is unable to create substantial forms but only changes accidental ones. Besides, Salkauskis states, even if it were possible to achieve the aim of culture — to take possession of nature, perfect man and society, and implement the ideals of knowledge, morals and beauty — this would not make man completely happy. This would not make man immoral, but it turns out that the immanent aim of culture or the ideal of cultural progress is not able "to satisfy the deepest desires of the human soul which is the longing for complete perfection and absolute happiness" (24, 325). Maceina, explaining this thought of Salkauskis, brings out its religious meaning and writes that culture "cannot complete man as it is incapable of liberating him from evil which manifests itself in the world in the form of error, sin, suffering and finally death" (4, 9). The evil whose existence disturbed Salkauskis from his young days, as well as sin about which he spoke especially and which is an inner evil in man, is nothing but the limit of man as "an intelligent and free creature".

On the other hand, it should be remembered that in Salkauskis's philosophy culture is especially closely related to the essence of man. Humanness manifests itself namely by cultural activity. The philosopher, J. Girnius, even wrote that "The Outline of the Philosophy of Culture" conveys Salkauskis philosophy of man (1, XXVII). It is clear that the essential insufficiency of culture is a tragic thing. In one place Salkauskis himself mentions that culture is the philosophy of tragedy. He analyses the spirit of the tragedy of culture quite extensively when speaking about so-called Prometheanism — that practical orientation and the corresponding philosophy which regards philosophy as the sphere of the expression of humanness and which seeks for the satisfaction of all human desires in culture only.

Yet, the philosophy of culture of Salkauskis himself does not become tragic, as I tried to prove in my book *The Philosophy of Culture in Lithuania* (26). The Promethean spirit of tragedy is not the spirit of tragedy of Salkauskis himself. As is known, the philosophy of culture does not exhaust

the problems of life. For Salkauskis, the essential insufficiency of culture does not mean that life is tragic from its very foundation, but that "the aim of culture is not the final goal of man, . . . man must have an aspiration for another higher goal, which after it has been achieved, could fully satisfy the deepest desires of the human soul" (24, 326). Culture is not the highest sphere of life.

### *Philosophy of Religion*

Thus philosophy too must not limit itself to the analysis of culture, but move towards another stage in the pyramid of life — towards religion. This is how Salkauskis defines this objective of philosophy:

If one really wants to prove that the external purposefulness of culture leads to religion, one should bring to light the facts that moving from one's nature towards culture and then from culture towards religion consecutively, develops the gradation of objectives and measures; that the highest objective of religion is the ultimate goal of human life, that the achievement of this objective abolishes the imperfection of one's nature and culture, and that the religious ideal completely satisfies the deepest desires of the human soul for perfection and happiness.

The philosophy of religion should perform all this; should "complete the philosophy of life and at the same time crown the philosophy of culture" (24. 337).

However, Salkauskis did not develop the philosophy of religion broadly, but only presented its general scheme. By reconstructing these ideas we take into account the interpretations of his students. They, Antanas Maceina, in particular, could base themselves not only on written texts, but on their discussions and conversations with their teacher.

The union of Man and God forms the essence of religion. This should also be developed on the basis of the Aristotelian causes. The material cause of religion is "culture, which rests on the nature of man or even, in other words, the nature of man processed by means of culture" (25, 430). This determines the importance of culture in the pyramid of life. Maceina presents Salkauskis idea of the relation between culture and religion in the following way:

Religion by itself would be helpless in the world if it did not rest on forms created by culture. Religion has no forms of its own because God's action manifests itself through man. Therefore, Salkauskis constantly states that where culture is low, a higher conception and practice of religion is impossible. A barbarous human being has a barbarous religion. High culture creates conditions for the ideas of religion to manifest themselves in their full beauty and nobility. . . . Without culture . . . religion could do nothing because it would have no real prop in life. Therefore, Salkauskis, regarding religion as life completing, considered culture as the preparation for this completion (4, 10).

The formal cause of religion or, in other words, the forms of religious life, according to Salkauskis "correspond to the forms of culture, — that is, knowledge, morals and art, — and endows them with a higher meaning" (25, 430). Stasys Yla explains Salkauskis's idea as follows: "Religious truth and dogmatic confession correspond to knowledge, the moral order of religion corresponds to morals, and the manifestation of liturgy and sacramental source correspond to art" (2, 327). According to Salkauskis, the equivalents of the forms of culture in religion are to be investigated in two ways: subjective, i.e., from the personal point of view as the so-called

theological virtues of faith, hope and charity; and objective, i.e., from the social point of view as the objectivization of these virtues in the life of religious communities, the Church through profession of faith, confession, communion of saints and sacramental practice. The aspiring cause of religion or its aim is also of two kinds: immanent as Church and transcendent as God. "The ultimate aim of religion is God Himself as the final cause of religion. Speaking in other terms, God is sought as the absolute good by religious means" (25, 430-431).

Finally, there are two acting causes of religion — man and God. As the activity of God is unlimited and omnipotent, religion is able to achieve everything that is unachievable to culture. Salkauskis shows this, speaking about the activity of God in the equivalent of forms of culture — in the forms of religion. Science is based on the reason of man, whereas faith is based on reason and revelation; virtue in culture is based on reason and will power, and in religion it is based also on grace; art changes the forms of nature at random, sacrament changes them substantially. Therefore, religion satisfies the highest aspirations of the human soul. The action of God overcomes causality, space, time and death. "Religion abolishes error by proclaiming the absolute truth, testifying to God. Religion abolishes sin, atoning by the sacrifice of God himself. In the end religion overcomes suffering and death, proclaiming the promise of absolute happiness and the resurrection" (4, 9), explains Maceina.

In the book devoted to the problems of the philosophy of culture in Lithuania, in studying the relation between culture and religion, I overindulged in Feuerbach's ideas and stated that religion was needed in Salkauskis's philosophical theory "to ideally compensate" for the essential drawbacks of culture. I disregarded the total experience of the world and life from which Salkauskis's philosophy originated.

True, this experience is not philosophical by itself. Speaking in Salkauskis's own words, it should belong to the sphere of confidence, rather than to that of making sure. Salkauskis's style of philosophizing does not help to grasp it.

Nevertheless, it is essentially the positive theistic world outlook that makes the teleological reasoning possible on which Salkauskis's whole philosophy bases itself. The principle features of that philosophy, though not specifically discussed and considered by Salkauskis, emerge as preconditions of his philosophizing. They are the ideas of creation, the fall of being and life, as well as the ideas of the evil which comes into existence on this account and its supernatural atonement which overcomes evil.

Basing himself on this positive experience, Salkauskis states that culture "demands to be supplemented and completed in a higher sphere of life, which can be only religion" (25, 428). With respect to religion the objectives of culture are mere measures. "Similarly to the way the exterior purposefulness of nature is supplemented and completed by the purposefulness of the nature of man, the exterior purposefulness of culture is supplemented and completed by the purposefulness of religion" (p.429). For a theistically-orientated philosopher culture is tragic by itself alone, whereas life is dramatic but not tragic.

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## Chapter IX The Social Philosophy of Fabijonas Kemesis

*Adolfas Poska*

### **Life and Work**

The Soviet occupation of Lithuania which began in 1940 broke off the natural development of Lithuanian intellectual culture and philosophy; the effort to impose a monopoly of Marxist ideology and philosophy lasted more than 50 years. However, the monopoly of the Soviet ideology was established only in the sphere of official structures, where the censorship of the Communist Party was active: it demonstrated itself by strictly issuing regulations and publishing limitations. The influence of the Communist ideology was limited, because intellectual activities were continued by Lithuanian emigrants in the West and by those who stayed in Lithuania until they were repressed, as well as those who came back unbroken by the monstrosity of Soviet prisons. The texts of these writers, of course, could not be published in Lithuania and many of them disappeared (texts were destroyed by writers themselves or by their relatives for safety considerations, or were destroyed by the KGB). Some of these texts, preserved by devoted people in private archives, afterwards were gradually unveiled and published. Social philosophical texts that belonged to the former political prisoners V. Gustainis, D. Cesevicius and others have been published in various Lithuanian journals. Compared to the situation of other subjects, Catholic philosophy had some continuity because it was allowed to be studied at Kaunas Seminary. There until his arrest in 1953, the main subjects in philosophy were taught by professor P. Kuraitis, who, according to his students, wrote many articles. The majority of his manuscripts were destroyed by the KGB (there exists a document testifying to this fact), but some of them survived. Philosophical activities after the World War II were continued by another philosopher famous from the period between the World War I and II, professor V. Sezemanas, whose philosophical convictions were very different from the Marxist philosophy. Hopefully more philosophical texts from this period will be discovered and eventually published in Lithuania.

Professor Fabijonas Kemesis was one of those intellectuals who bravely outlived the Soviet occupation, and started writing during the war the book, *Towards a Christian Economy*. This was continued during the period of the second Bolshevik occupation and is considered the main work of his life. The work, preserved for 50 years of occupation by Fabijonas Kemesis's friends, when the author was repressed in 1947 and killed in the Siberian camps in 1954, is now being prepared for publication. The conceptions and main ideas presented in the book are an undoubted continuation of the earlier works of Kemesis, so that they constitute a generalization, systematization and more precise definition of his earlier theoretical convictions. The largest part of the book is devoted to the history of social conceptions and the criticism of capitalist social theories. It is a pity that the work was not finished and its most positive part where the author's vision of society should have been presented was not written or disappeared. What remained was the author's methodology, historical evaluation, social insight and sensitive reaction to the contemporary upheavals of the social life and evolution of Lithuanian social philosophy all the pressing problems of today.

Kemesis was an economist educated at the University of Loyola in Chicago and Catholic University of Washington. In 1924 he graduated from the Department of Economics and

Pedagogy, University of Chicago, defending his Ph.D. dissertation on cooperative development among Lithuanian immigrants in the USA. The author's pedagogical activities in the Lithuanian Academy of Agriculture in Dotnuva were also devoted to economics: mostly he lectured on cooperation in agriculture and political economy and at the same time was the head of Department of Economy of Agriculture. However, the main field of interest of Kemesis was not analysis of the structure of economics, but theoretical economics, to which his most important publications of the period between the World War I and II were devoted (*Looking For The Way Out*, K., 1932; *Introduction to Social and Political Economy*, K., 1938; numerous articles in *Zidinys* and *Naujoji Romuva*). These writings indicate the author's professional knowledge of the development of political economy and awareness of the social conceptions popular during that time, all of which were the basis for searching for a future model of economics for Lithuania as well as for the best prototype for society in general.

Interest in theoretical economics guided Kemesis into a more general sphere of thought about the nature of a man, his place and role in the world and social structures, inquiries into the basic principles and development of society, and thus into the field of social philosophy. Kemesis was one of the few Lithuanian economists to understand the role of universal principles in social theories and their methodological importance for theories of economy. Hence all his writings in economics clearly include the dimension of social philosophy. This is mostly evident in the last work of Kemesis where he stressed that the wanderings of economics as a science were connected to the "oblivion of the human essence". "Today it is already clear that it is impossible to separate human economy from its spiritual life, that there is a saturated human being who has his moral and material ideas of economics as well as of science, art and religion" (p. 2-3). Kemesis retained the same attitude through all his writings in order to avoid the groundless separation of the social and personal life of the individual, exaggerated atomization and absolutization of the different cultural spheres. That leads to abandoning the unity of the society and individual, which is so characteristic of the positivistic social theories of the 20th century.

The background of the theoretical work of Kemesis and the source of the methodological principles of his inquiry was the tradition of social Catholic philosophy oriented to the ideals of the Christian society, which, according to Kemesis, endured through time, namely, social justice and social love. The ideal was most perfectly realized in the Middle Ages and revived in the Papal Encyclical of the Pope Leo XIII. This was the reason why Kemesis and many other Lithuanian Catholic sociologists founded their description of society on the ideas expressed by St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas and Pope Leo XIII. These were presented in the context of the mediaeval and the modern social doctrines, but were applied to the evaluation of social phenomena of the 20th century. Kemesis differed from other Lithuanian social theorists (K. Paltarokas, K. Saulys, A. Maliauskis, etc.) in his familiarity with many secular theories of the 20th century, especially the conception of Max Weber who greatly influenced his writings. His competence and experience as an economist enabled Kemesis sensibly to evaluate existing social theories and construct models of future society.

On the ground of the Christian tradition Kemesis formulated these universal (sometimes called eternal) principles which based his analysis of the problems of social life: social justice, labor and social love.

The principle of social justice regulates the sphere of private property as characteristic of human nature and a necessary condition of free will. Social injustice and inequality emerges because of a bad distribution of private property among individuals which disagrees with human

nature. The principle of social justice requires abolishment of this disproportion in the private property: limitation of the rent of land, income and material benefit.

Labor is also considered to be a property of human nature. It is a source of the private property, because it depends on the input or work of the various actors. Kemesis advocated the principle of universal labor and suggested doing away with income received without labor input.

The principle of universal love is based on the conception of the human being as a creation of God: love must be the unitive base of all human relations. The principle of social love should lead people towards obliteration of inequality, contradictions and conflicts. It also has to be the basis for the creation of Christian social solidarity.

Kemesis suggested that the basic principles of human social life discussed above were revealed to people by Jesus Christ, but unfortunately were misunderstood from the very beginning. He blamed early Christians and the Middle Ages for overlooking the economic problems and difficulties of their times, and thus not applying the doctrine of Jesus Christ to economics. The author considered this to be the reason why the ideal of social justice was dampened down in the Christian consciousness, and unjust economic environments affected not only the political but the entire spiritual life of society. Kemesis supported the principles described by Thomas Moore in "Utopia", but disagreed with utopian idealization of the human nature which made social decisions unreal.

The aim of Kemesis was not to look for guilty persons behind Christian society, but neutrally to discuss all the arguments that substantiate different social conceptions. According to him, if Utopists overestimated human nature, then communists underestimated it, because they rejected the divine nature of the human being, leading thereby to the degradation of human values. According to the author, that is why it was necessary to look for another way for the development of society.

Here the question is: who is a man, what kind of social formation does his nature require, what principles will provide the basis of a new social order. "The Importance and meaning of these questions is inestimable. Their successful solution can develop a base for the life and fate of the whole of humankind" (3, 4). The author devoted his last work to answering this problem. He added that, "if this work brings a single ray of light to the solution of these questions the author would feel he had completed the greatest task of his life" (3, 4). Such a modest claim expressed by the writer emphasizes a deep insight into the importance of methodological problems in social inquiry, an insight characteristic of quite a few sociologists. This comment also says a lot about the methodological competence of Kemesis.

## **Human Nature**

The basic principle in the analysis of society by Kemesis is human nature. The main unit in the query is neither the social universe nor the state, nor the social class or nation, but the human being as a person because from the person and his nature all social structures and social relations emerge and evolve. At first sight it seems that the position of Kemesis is very close to liberalism, but this is not the case, because for the writer the human is more than a simple element of society, he is a person. The conception of the person was seen not as a naturalistic phenomenon, but as a creation of God, thus interpreting human nature as consistent and unchangeable. The unchangeable principles of human nature allow one to deduce the universal and eternal principles of social life. Social sciences, including economics, are considered by Kemesis to be sciences of human nature. This kind of theory may be less common at the end of the 20th century, but earlier it was dominant.

Although considered to be divine, human nature was not idealized by Kemesis; this separated him from Utopists. He stressed the two-sidedness of human nature which was born after original sin, whence two contrary elements arose "Elements of good and noble inclinations are always fighting with elements of evil and egoistic passions. In the world one or another element always wins" (3, 70). Against the Christian Utopists (T. Moore and others) Kemesis argued that the elements of individualism and egoism in a human being cannot be eliminated. He said that "Trying to suppress the element of evil is devastating, thus making it even more active and stronger. It is better to reconcile it with the noble one" (3, 45). This view, close to the theory of Max Weber, was a new position for Lithuanian social philosophy.

He saw the two-sidedness of human nature, called material and spiritual. "The contents of the entire human history is a permanent struggle between the two principles — material and spiritual. The spiritual one has to prevail in the divine project; harmony between them can be materialized only if spiritual principle dominates. People misused their free will and let the element of evil rule over society. As often as it dominated, so often did it have harmful consequences" (3, 71). The principle of the two-sidedness of human nature substantiates the evolution of society and its parts in the philosophy of Kemesis.

In his last work the author consistently advocated the conception of social progress and presented his own interpretation of the topic. This idea was not very strongly emphasized in his pre-war writings as progress was not characteristic of Catholic philosophy. However, its reflection can be noticed in the historiosophy of St. Augustine and some other social Catholic doctrines of the 20th century. There is no doubt that the idea of development in the philosophy of Kemesis was inspired by the sociology of Max Weber.

At the end of the 20th century the idea of progress is seen as sound but questionable, and progressivism is considered to be a remnant of the past, but it was common among sociologists in the middle of the century. Kemesis tried to interpret this topic in the Christian framework because the ideas of evolution, progress and revolution were being discussed in Lithuanian Catholic philosophy from the beginning of the century by Adomas Jakstas, Simonas Sulte and others. Despite reflection on the problem in the writings of other authors, this was the first time that the idea of progressive social development was so consistently applied to the social Catholic philosophy, of course with an original explanation.

Kemesis thought that the inspiration for the social progress of people was given by Jesus Christ in proclaiming equality and brotherhood among the people. Thus he gave purpose and direction for the human beings — to try to embody the ideal of Divine Kingdom on the earth. This point of view recalls St. Augustan's historiosophic conception. The evolution of human history has been extremely slow, even the 20th century is too far from the ideal for many reasons: the two-sidedness of the human nature, immature faith, the influence of the rich, etc. Kemesis blamed Christianity, especially in the Middle Ages, for ignoring earthly troubles, seeing life as a "valley of tears" and leaving all earthly things to the work of evil. This was a big mistake because the ideal of the Divine Kingdom on the earth had to be connected with the ideals of social justice, welfare, peace and happiness. The Renaissance seemed to bring some happiness into society, but its energy was directed not towards the future, but towards the past, despite the emerging idea of progress. Thomas Moore supplied the idea of Christianity with vividness and optimism, but French encyclopaedians brought some dissonance. They made a great contribution to education, but at the same time ignored the role of religion and progress in personal life, "turning away from evolution and following the path of social and political revolution" (3, 145).



## **Evolution vs. Revolution**

The relation of evolution to revolution in the development of society was a very important methodological point of Kemesis's conception. He was a strict opponent of the revolutionary way of reorganizing society, because it was the way of rejection and destruction, based on compulsion contrary to the point of view of Christianity. The way of Christ and the Church is evolution. More than that, Kemesis introduced dimensions of optimism and pessimism which were not so meaningful in political economy, but of great importance for social philosophy. The way of evolutionary progress was related to optimism, and trust in a person who believes in God; pessimism was associated with the loss of hope and desperation leading to the revolutionary compulsion. The controversy between optimism and pessimism was considered to be a universal characteristic peculiar to all human history. "A controversial phenomena is noted in the course of human history: the eternal combat between optimism and pessimism which is a serious hindrance for progress" (3, 7). The main obstacle, according to Kemesis, was the Renaissance and the humanism of the modern age. These were positive phenomena in general, based on the ideas of Christianity, but at the same time they directed the ideals of the Gospel against Christ and the Church by absolutizing free will in economics and using the gains of science for the assassination and destruction of civilisation. According to Kemesis:

Pessimism has also been advocated in the economic theories of Thomas Malthus, David Ricardo and Karl Marx. Real life shows that the profession of pessimistic ideas is destructive. The idea of progress is becoming more and more universal, and optimism and progress are related to the spirit of Christianity. A true Christian cannot be a pessimist; the idea of progress is not hostile to him (3, 10).

In other words, Kemesis rejected the revolutionary path of transformation because he believed it to be pessimistic and to induce violence; instead he argued for a reformist and smooth progressive mode of change in society, offering a somewhat unusual version of change:

What we need to do is to find a way out that conforms to the nature of the average person and does not exceed limited human abilities. We need a framework of reforms which should be able to convince the majority of powerful people who would like to accomplish changes according to their free will. In this case the minority will have to accept the majority's decision and reforms could be implemented without bloodshed (3, 62).

It is obvious that such a position directly corresponds to the strengthening of the democratic principles of society.

The above principles were the basis on which Kemesis in his main work analyzed the entire human social development from ancient times until the middle of the 20th century. These principles were also the criteria for his evaluation of existing economic and social philosophical conceptions.

## **Critique of Socialism and Capitalism**

Kemesis also studied and evaluated social utopias, the first time in the history of Lithuanian philosophy that such a detailed analysis of utopias was presented. He supported philosophers'

efforts to create perfect models of society, but his attitude towards them was critical. He treated positively the works of Utopists and their contribution to the understanding of society: they proved to be the most gifted critics of their times, with deep insight and awareness of progress; they understood the nature of the social institutions and the possibility of changing them; they appreciated the material as well as spiritual values of human life and supported education, social experiments and religious tolerance; etc. The basic thing that made their theories unreal was an overestimation of human nature, accepting it in an exclusively positive way. Utopists did not find efficient means to bring their ideas into reality; the ways suggested were compulsive. Moreover as some utopian ideas were really fantastic it is no wonder that endeavors to realize them were not successful.

### *Capitalism*

Most of Kemesis's writings were devoted to the analysis of the economic structure of capitalism and arguments for it, as well as socialist and Marxist conceptions and their realization. In these works he scrutinised many practical and theoretical problems, demonstrating deep insight that appears to be important for Lithuania now on moving beyond the totalitarian remnants and creating a new society.

Kemesis critically surveyed the entire human economical and social history, placing particular emphasis on capitalism and socialism. Referring to the widely known *History of Economy*<sup>4</sup> written by Max Weber, he thoroughly described and evaluated the stages of economic development with their positive and negative aspects. He looks positively to primitive society where he saw harmony between material and spiritual elements — which in the course of the development of society have been gradually vanishing — together with monogamy, monotheism and private property. His idealization of primitive society may have been inspired by insufficient knowledge of the new conceptions suggested by historians, ethnologists and linguists, though this idealization does not diminish the importance of the analysis of the economic history of the later period.

In the analysis of social development Kemesis used Max Weber's principle of progressivism: economic and social progress is based on the development of rationality in the organization of the economy, technique, mode of life and culture. Scrutinising the growth of rationality in different spheres of life he departed from the spirit and Protestant orientation of Max Weber. Being convinced that all spheres of life are saturated by the person with all his spiritual properties, Kemesis kept on emphasizing the "connection between economic, social and spiritual matters as well as the ethical states of affairs," at the same time seeing that "the latter determines one or another kind of social structure" (3, 91). Therefore, economic structures are characterized not only by efficiency, but also by spirituality.

Even the period of the Middle Ages which had been idealized by many authors drew some criticism from Kemesis. He thought that "Christian leaders made unforgivable and fatal compromises, leaving the doctrine of Christ, with faith, prayer and future life, to the theorists, thus leaving to everyday life the pagan, egoistic customs grounded by inequality and abuse" (3, 139). Although, according to Kemesis, mediaeval Catholicism had an advantage for some time in the struggle against the spirit of exploitation and profit, Protestantism tried to reconcile Christianity with it, as was accepted later by the Christian society. Since then the pagan spirit of materialism has dominated.

Kemesis had no doubts that the genesis of capitalism was the result of the development not only of the economy, but also of a spiritual life turned away from the basic principles of

Christianity. He agreed with Max Weber that capitalism was created by a manifold rationalization and was successful only because it "silenced, appeased and extinguished human spiritual power, will, feelings and conscience. It turned out that the human mind alone if not controlled by a higher superhuman power, can lead life towards absurdity" (3, 112). For any kind of rationalism to be positive, it has to be accompanied by a Christian ethic.

The analysis of capitalism in Kemesis's work was based also on the ideas of Max Weber's friend and colleague, Werner Sombart, the German sociologist of the 20th century, presented in his work *Modern Capitalism*. The ideas of Sombart left a significant trace in the writings of other Lithuanian social philosophers including Antanas Maceina. While following the ideas of Sombart, as in many other cases Kemesis remained an independent and critical writer, presenting original interpretations of the topics analyzed. Accepting Sombart's conception of the spirit of capitalism, Kemesis stated it to be composed of three ideas: profit, competition and rationality. Profit was considered the goal of economic activities.

Pre-capitalist economics was thought to be related to the person whose behaviour was determined by customs. However, the situation changed with capitalism: profit became the most important thing, it also influenced cultural life and personal attitudes. People became labor power, nature became a means of production, heaven and earth were converted into a huge factory, in other words, what before used to be means, afterwards became the objectives, and competition was unrestricted, subject to no moral imperatives. Rationalization usurped all spheres of culture thus making utilitarianism the only dimension of society.

Kemesis formulated the paradox of capitalism: the system which emerged as the result of the growth of rationalism, remained irrational itself, because regulation of the social process was left to the plurality of individual agents. This way economic life was separated from the person and work became depersonalized. Capitalist economic formation could not last very long and in the beginning of the 20th century its crisis of irrationality became obvious. The most brutal characteristics of capitalism such as nationalism, imperialism and military armaments rose to the surface because the state became a factor of social inequality, with no principles of justice and fraternity. Looking through Kemesis's eyes, this was the reason why so many social theories were created and socialism was tried as a substitute for capitalism. "Tired masses lost their patience and started bloody revolutions. It was the most obvious result of the universal materialism" (3, 73). Thus "capitalistic welfare was closely connected to the moral decadence of people with a perverted and faded world outlook" (3, 91).

### *Marxism*

Marxist socialism was criticized by Kemesis no less than capitalism itself. From the beginning of the 20th century Lithuanian Catholic sociology paid much attention to the analysis and critique of socialist theories, especially that of Marx. The writings of K. Saulys, K. Paltarokas, A. Maliauskis and other sociologists were based on the ideas expressed in the Papal Encyclical *Rerum Novum*. Between World War I and II Marxist socialism was analyzed in the broad context of Western philosophy and sociology by I. Tamosaitis, A. Maceina and others, but Kemesis's analysis was the deepest. It can also be said that his inquiry into socialism was the most original and best part of his work *Towards a Christian Economy*, with absolutely fundamental insights into social conceptions which remain actual today.

The work began with an overview of the history of social ideas from ancient times showing the methodologically differentiated conceptions and indicating the specific historical aspects of

socialism among other social forms. According to Kemesis, Plato was the first to offer a kind of aristocratic communism. This had nothing in common with communism of the 20th century because the former was applied only exceptionally to the sphere of consumption: it did try to reach for equality, nor was it hedonistic; on the contrary it was ascetic, militaristic and limited by the single state. Kemesis investigated almost all socialist movements and doctrines showing them to be very different in comparison to the Marxist socialism. Even regarding the theories of the social utopists of the 19th century, which are considered to be the source of Marxism, Kemesis separated them from the Marxist socialism because they sought compassion and understanding among classes; they did not declare war among them, but sought cooperation based on traditional religious and moral values; they tried also to become neither universal nor scientific, although they really were far more scientific than their followers (3, 166). It is not at all honest to disparage them as utopian socialisms because Marxist socialism proved to be even more utopian.

Some social Catholic philosophers could not give up their preconceived negative attitudes towards the social conception of Marx, and thus were inadequate in disputing it. In contrast, Kemesis was able to retain an objective stance towards the topic of discussion. Having recognized the actuality of the problems formulated in Marxism, the author tried to be scientifically objective, emphasizing positive solutions to the questions and finding as many arguments as possible for their critics. Kemesis's position had the advantages of both knowledge of the social and philosophical theory of Marx and the competence of an economist. The person of Marx as well as his conceptions were presented in Kemesis's works as a very important phenomenon of the 19th century which greatly influenced the social development of Europe. He regretted that Christian society in the 19th century did not have such personalities who could have been able to direct the history of Europe and the world along another path (3, 166).

Kemesis scrutinised not only the economic but also the philosophical texts of Marx. In his last work he quoted the "Philosophical-Economic Manuscripts" which were familiar to quite a few people who considered themselves to be Marxists. The most important part of Marxism according to Kemesis was his philosophy and dialectical method. Marx's theory does not seem to be original, because most of his ideas were taken from other theorists, but his importance was in his ability to synthesize familiar conceptions: "The author formulated not only economic, social and political doctrines, but also presented an entire world view" (3, 180). Although philosophical materialism was not acceptable to Kemesis, he objectively investigated the history and methodological principles of materialism and presented a substantial critique of the dialectical method.

Much of Kemesis's attention was devoted to the analysis and criticism of social and economic conceptions. In his writings Marx was acknowledged as a famous economist who recognized and properly investigated the problem of social crises, anticipated the elimination of financial capital and financial imperialism, and worried about the solution of social problems. However, the economic conception of Marx was uncritically biased against the classical political economic theory formulated by A. Smith and D. Ricardo, and involved some questionable principles, especially the conception of the value of labor. For these reasons Kemesis considered Marx's economic theory precarious.

The economic theory of Marx consists of conceptions of value, payment and surplus value (Kemesis called it "value of multitude"). To illustrate this: the conception of value can be compared to the basement of a building, payment to the walls and surplus value to the roof. If the foundation is poor there is danger of the building collapsing. The author criticized the theory of surplus value too, but saw some positive aspects in it. A section of the capitalist surplus value comes not from labor, but from private property (interest and land). He saw there a serious unsolved problem which

would influence the future society (3, 252). This kind of surplus should not be a privilege, but a serious obligation towards society.

Numerous the premises of Marx's theory were not sufficiently founded and the prognosis grounded on them did not seem realistic. "In general, Marx presented a substantial criticism of capitalist society giving some adequate characteristics of the system. But his forecasts were not based on scientific investigations, but built on his own social theory following the way of mere conjecture" (3, 261-262). Hence, his forecasts appeared to be too courageous, one-sided, exaggerated and unconvincing. Especially biased in Kemesis eyes were conceptions of discarding private property, the war of classes and revolutions, the dictatorship of the proletariat, abrogation of the state, the planned socialist economy and others, which were criticized by the author. The author quoted and criticized Marx's thesis that the development of capitalism inevitably leads to revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is improvable, because human integrity can direct the process of social formation so that it can result in solidarity or restricted forms of private property. A planned economy without a free market, supply and demand, was incomprehensible. Here the author saw restriction of the free will and freedom of choice, as well as an emerging danger of totalitarianism.

Kemesis disclosed inconsistencies and shortcomings of the Marxist social theory, but the main argument against it was the experience of socialism as realized in Russia. Fifty years ago he forecast its downfall.

If Kemesis rejected socialism and communism as systems entirely hostile to social justice, the question arises: what is the future of social development? What kind of social structures have to be created in order to conform to human nature and to realize social justice? It is a pity that this part of Kemesis's work where he could have exposed his own model of society remained unfinished. The author's competence in economics and social philosophy would undoubtedly have enabled him to create the most consistent and balanced theory of Lithuanian Catholic social philosophy. Many hints of his social vision are found in his writings from the period between the wars, where he clearly formulated his point of view.

As has already been said, Kemesis held a substantialist position, grounding human behaviour and social structures on human nature, while at the same time not idealizing this nature. Considering private property to be one of the characteristics of human nature it is dangerous to eliminate it; on the contrary, private property has to be retained, but should be regulated according to the principles of Christian justice and love. The spiritual principles of Christianity would allow for the self-expression of the complete personality and the creation of structures of social life based on solidarity.<sup>1</sup> This midway position is called Christian solidarity.

Kemesis understood that this kind of social reorganization requires a lot of time and effort. First of all, a diffusion of property must be realized, which means limitation of the right of inheritance, ground rent, surplus income and other kinds of material benefit. Profit coming from other sources than labor has to be gradually diminished and finally given up by realizing the principle of the universality of labor.<sup>2</sup> In the course of this kind of change unavoidably the role of the state grows in future society. Kemesis thought such social changes were realistic and already existed in the world, because cooperative development in economics was obvious.

Along with many other social Catholic philosophers Kemesis contributed to the popularization of cooperation during the period between World War I and II. Together with other Lithuanian philosophers he actively tried to bring this into reality for through cooperation they foresaw the realization of a Christian solidarity. Kemesis saw the future political structure of the state in a coordination of democracy and corporativism and so made his future vision one of

cooperation in economics and corporative politics. Political corporativism was advocated by many young Lithuanian social philosophers (P. Dielininkaitis, P. Mantvydas, A. Maceina and others). According to Kemesis corporativism was a counterbalance to economic liberalism as well as to the Marxist socialism. Corporativism in his writings is not opposed to democracy, but combines with it. A combination of corporativism and democracy could help to select the best representatives of their professions to take positions in the official institutions, thus improving the political system of the state.

## Conclusion

These are the profiles of Kemesis's vision of the state which can be reconstructed mostly from his early writings. To what extent they would have been changed had the author finished his last book will never be known.<sup>3</sup>

Kemesis's vision of the future of society can help us to understand but not justify some ideas expressed in the book *Looking For The True Way*, issued after the Second World War. It strangely appreciated the social politics of the Fascist states, where he saw the efforts for the improvement of society taking the middle way. It seems that "Mussolini and Hitler approached social justice in their countries more than Smith, Ricardo, Marx and Lenin" (3, 339-340), for in a way they tried to create regulated and controlled capitalism, leaving private property to the state. More than that, they appreciated corporativism integrating all social classes into "harmonic and unified cooperation" (3, 365), with moral inducements prevalent over material ones. These efforts at social regulation were accompanied by irrational philosophy "emphasizing human will and feelings over mind and intellect. Power in these systems served argumentation, military means stood for peaceful compromises and propaganda served the impartiality of science" (3, 361). Of course, this evaluation of Fascistic social politics is doubtful and clearly one-sided, but it shows the author's efforts to find an acceptable model of society in real life.

Kemesis's ideas of social philosophy, most of which were discussed in his unpublished work *Towards A Christian Economy*, and other writings from the period between the wars, are unique phenomena in Lithuanian Catholic Philosophy. Of course, after 50 years some of them have only historical value, although some methodological principles which grounded his theoretical social models, his analyses of abundant material from experience, his competent evaluation of economic and social conceptions, especially his fundamental criticism of the social philosophies of liberalism and Marxism, are undoubtedly important even today.

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## Notes

1. F. Kemesis. *Looking for the True Way* (Kelio beieskant), (Kaunas, 1932).
2. F. Kemesis. *Introduction to Social and Political Economy* (Socialines bei politines ekonomijos ivadas). (Kaunas, 1938).
3. F. Kemesis. *Towards a Christian Economy* (Krikscioniskosios ekonomijos linkme). Manuscript, 1940-1946, Archive of the Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Sciences.

## Chapter X

# **Between Ideology and the Criticism of Culture: The Case of Julijonas Linde-Dobilas**

*Almantas Samalavicius*

The history of intellectual ideas in Lithuania as a new field of interdisciplinary research provides possibilities for mapping out and revisiting areas that were abandoned by the indoctrinated and strictly departmentalized humanities of the last few decades. During the years of dependence intellectual ideas and authors of the first half of the 20th century were judged according to how closely they related to the Marxist tradition. Consequently, many writers who dissociated themselves from Marxist doctrines were dismissed as second-rate. The writings and opinions of Julijonas Linde-Dobilas constituted a difficult case for the humanities in the Soviet period, and not only because of his critical distance from Marxism or service in Roman Catholic Church. Researchers into the history of Lithuanian philosophy, with a few exceptions,<sup>1</sup> never sufficiently focused on his philosophical and critical papers, while literary critics as interested in him as an important novelist and a somewhat less successful playwright never discussed his non-fictional writings. Revival of interest in his person and writings, represented by the recent publication of his biography and a volume of collected theoretical writings, give further impetus to revisit the ideas of a dissenting writer from a period when modern Lithuanian ideology of culture was taking shape. I feel, however, obliged to note that Linde-Dobilas's contribution to the Lithuanian history of intellectual ideas demands a more elaborate discussion than this essay can offer.

### **Visions of a National Culture**

Towards the end of the 19th century Lithuania's intellectual life was activated by the growth of a national resurgence movement. Lithuania was nurturing its first generation of national intellectuals gathered around pioneer papers in the Lithuanian language, *Ausra* (1883) and *Varpas* (1889). Both publications were launched outside the country as the ban on the Lithuanian press introduced by the colonial authorities in 1864 was destined to last into the following century. Editors and associates of these publications represented an intellectual type common to society under colonial rule: that of a self-educated humanist with the professional background of a medical doctor, engineer or priest. Vilnius University — the largest and most important educational center of the country, established as early as 16th century — was closed by colonial authorities in 1832, producing serious consequences for the development of intellectual life. Lithuanian nationals who were seeking educational opportunities during the period of these assaults on national institutions had to face a dilemma: either to obtain education from imperial universities and being obliged to practice their profession in other regions of the Russian Empire or to choose studies at local seminaries for Catholic clergy. To many young Lithuanians the latter choice meant an option of staying in their home-country and disseminating ideas about the national spirit using the legal possibilities that church service provided.

Consequently, many young Lithuanian men joined the ranks of the Catholic Church without any special vocation to the priesthood, dividing themselves between their service in the Church

and public or literary activities. The figure of the first national poet par excellence, Maironis, represents the paradigm of a cultural hero of the colonial epoch. Under limits set to secular education under colonial rule clergymen constituted a significant part of what might be referred to as a national cultural elite throughout most of the 19th century. Their contribution to public cultural life was made mainly through writing, poetry in particular. However, the first Lithuanian periodicals were established by secular intellectuals: Dr. Jonas Basanavicius, or even radical atheists captured by the spell of Western positivism, like Dr. Juozas Kudirka.

Most of the writers who began their activities in these pioneer periodicals were public intellectuals who, inspired by Herder's ideas about the spirit of a nation, poured their energies into discussions on Lithuania's political and social life focusing on its history. Historical subjects (e.g. the origins of the Lithuanian nation, its language and the like) were as a rule treated according to the old patterns of Romanticism. The past was used to legitimize claims towards national independence and to construct self-perpetuating myths that could be used to educate the vanishing nation and to restore its national feelings and dignity. Myths about Lithuania's past as well as its language (Dr. Basanavicius, one of the founding fathers of modern Lithuanian state, himself produced a theory of Thracian and Phrygian origins of the Lithuanian nation) perfectly matched the goals of the national resurgence movement. Writings on issues of national culture produced at the turn of the century, usually discussing the spirit of the nation in simplified forms of the visions of Herder, Schiller and the German Romanticists, can hardly be qualified as philosophical inquiries into the essence of culture as their authors aimed at something other than shaping systematic philosophical discourse.

Most of the writers who discussed culture-related issues saw their responsibility mainly in working out either secular or religious national ideologies and resolving problems resulting from cultural practice under conditions of dependence. Authors like Adomas Jakstas-Dambrauskas, Pranas Dovydaitis and Stasys Salkauskis, despite some minor disagreements in their opinions, "attempted to ground the ideal of Catholic culture".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless writings on culture that appeared before the establishment of independence were hardly anything more than ideologically indoctrinated opinions formed as responses to rival secular images of culture fostered by adherents of Western positivism, who constituted the mainstream of the Left-wing movement. There were, however, a few exceptions. In 1912 the first professional, university-educated Lithuanian philosopher, Ramunas Bytautas (1886-1915), published several articles in which he discussed some aspects of national consciousness and culture. Bytautas argued that language provides foundations upon which the organization of society and its culture are built. Therefore the loss of language means a loss of the foundations of independent cultural and national being. His emphasis on the language as a condition of the very existence of culture was linked to history, implying that language was an historical construct and, consequently, contained the nation's historical memory. Development of a Lithuanian philosophical language was suggested as one of the most important tasks of the national resurgence movement in attempting to adopt the material and spiritual legacy of Western culture. In Bytautas's concept, the creation of a discursive philosophical language was necessary to open a new spiritual realm, above all it was essential to the larger project of building up a modern national culture which he found non-existent in his own time.

### **The Concept of Cultural Synthesis and Its Critics**

Some origins of culture of philosophy can be traced in the writings of Lithuanian authors of the period. However, it was Stasys Salkauskis (1886-1941) who produced the first theoretically



elaborated academic inquiry into the essence of culture. A law student of Moscow University, Salkauskis completed philosophical studies at Freiburg University and after obtaining a doctorate returned to Lithuania to pursue an academic career, becoming professor of Kaunas University and an important public figure. Salkauskis published his first treatise, *Church and Culture*, as early as 1913-1914, strongly influenced by ideas of Vladimir Soloviov who had been the subject of his doctoral studies at Freiburg. Salkauskis reputation as a philosopher was firmly and permanently established when his seminal study, *Sur les confins de deux mondes*, was published in 1919, becoming a subject of controversial intellectual discussions throughout almost two decades.

Though some of his later views developed beyond the original ideas presented in his early writings he never abandoned his basic concept of the synthetic character of Lithuanian culture, which he insisted could be traced back in the country's history. From a review of movements in Lithuanian history he drew the conclusion that a small-sized country like the Lithuania of his time, located between two large and powerful civilizations was destined to select and adopt their best elements uniting them into an organic whole. What elements of those neighboring cultures were to be used for the proposed synthesis was never explicitly discussed, except references to German activity, Russian universal humanness and Polish subtlety.

Salkauskis's theory of cultural synthesis classified Lithuania's historical developments into three large periods: the first of Eastern influences presented as "thesis"; the second, Western influences as "antithesis"; and third, national resurgence described as "synthesis". The "thesis" was based on a vague but nevertheless popular idea suggesting that the Lithuanian nation originated in the depth of Asia and moved to Europe long before other nations. The oriental origins of Lithuania, as was claimed, could still be found in archaic folk traditions, comprising the fragments of a pagan worldview and religious ceremonies, and last but not least in the language. The very idea of Lithuania's oriental nature was hardly new. It was adopted through the earlier writings of Basanavicius, whose theory of Lithuanian origins aimed at a practical goal: to form a modern Lithuanian nation embracing two layers of society that he considered important to the project of its future peasants, who maintained the disintegrating national language and the denationalized nobility.<sup>3</sup> Even when the theory of Lithuania's oriental origin was subjected to well-founded criticisms, (coming from Lithuanian orientalists, Vincas Kreve-Mickevicius and other scholars and philosophers) he did not give up the essential idea of synthesis.

Wherever the origins of the Lithuanian nation were to be located, it did not change the fact that the country historically was, and continued to be, situated on the frontiers of East and West. Because of strong Eastern (i.e. Slavic) influences Lithuania experienced changes in its past that were described as passivity, lack of mobilizing energy and captivity to external powers that led towards disintegration of its once powerful and widespread state.

A different direction in development was traced in the shift towards the West since the Act of Lublin (1569) which, on one hand, Westernized the country and accelerated the diffusion of a Christian philosophy of life, and, on the other, brought about a split of its social classes. Lithuanian nobility failed to make use of folk culture, i.e., to transform it into higher forms of spiritual culture. Consequently, by turning away from folk culture the elite class lost its national identity.

The movement of national resurgence, which he dated from 1883, meant consolidation of the Lithuanian nation and a new symbiosis between the individual and society. The further way of progress Salkauskis prophesied was one of creative synthesis. He also acknowledged the fact that Lithuanian culture was shaping itself in the global context of modern developments:

The path which our national resurgence has taken leads us from vividly expressed folk culture to universal European culture. This evolution does not mean that folk culture is abandoned and another, that has nothing to with it, is adopted. Nevertheless it must be noted that in it the folk loses many of its typically national features while joining a common European civilization which everywhere alike expresses itself through a broadly circulated press, more intense industrialization and communications, radio and other factors of universalization.<sup>4</sup>

Salkauskis's contribution to Lithuanian philosophy went far beyond his concept of its East-West cultural synthesis. He continued to develop a system named "philosophy of life", comprised of three parts: inquiry into human nature, culture and religion. Salkauskis was the first Lithuanian author to introduce a systematic cultural philosophy that "produced perhaps the greatest impact on Lithuania's intellectual life",<sup>5</sup> however, it was his concept of synthetic culture that stretched the realms of Lithuanian academic philosophy and received a large popular response that was, however, often more critical than favorable. His concept did not satisfy those public intellectuals who claimed that Lithuania's culture should be built on national foundations exclusively, i.e. elements of folk culture. Public dissatisfaction with his ideas might be represented by a remark of one of his opponents: "It is clear that we Lithuanians, being a small nation must reject the ideal of cosmopolitanism, since all it can do is to paralyze our psychic energy . . . therefore, our culture must be purely national, and as far as synthetic culture is concerned as prophesied by our honorable Professor Salkauskis . . . its use for our culture is highly questionable".<sup>6</sup>

The concept of cultural synthesis was backed by some academic and political thinkers. Professor Kazys Pakstas, who built up his geopolitical concept of Baltoscandia, might be referred to as one of its most ardent supporters and interpreters. Nevertheless, the majority of Lithuanian intellectuals, including Salkauskis's own disciples tended to dissociate themselves from the theoretical model of culture he proposed. Even his most devoted disciple, Antanas Maceina, who succeeded Salkauskis in the chair of pedagogy of Kaunas University, eventually elaborated his own culture philosophy in which he spoke of synthesis, but in completely different terms. Maceina treated synthesis as a permanent process that any culture undergoes in any stage of its development and interpreted the problem of synthesis as an aspiration of the Lithuanian nation. He excluded applicability of synthesis to objective elements of culture, acknowledging its operability only in the subjective sphere. The tendency to develop variations of the cultural model based on the traditions of folk culture continued to grow during the last decade of independence. Some more radical theorists of the national culture concept made further attempts to purify "national" (folk) elements of culture from their "cosmopolitan" coating. As late as 1935 Ignas Slapelis, an eminent Lithuanian art historian, refused to admit cultural production of Gothic, Baroque and other historical styles as the national heritage of Lithuanian art, referring to the fact that "it served the universal stress of the Catholic Church".<sup>7</sup> The battle of ideas over what was to be considered national and foreign to Lithuanian culture continued until the fall of the independent Lithuanian state.

## **The Literary Critic**

Julijonas Linde-Dobilas (1872-1934) was one of those distinguished public intellectuals whose way of thinking matured under the pressure of conflicting Catholic and secular (positivist) ideologies aimed at establishing norms of national culture. Remaining outside the academy and dissenting from theories that were constructed by institutionalized thinkers, he shaped his own

vision of culture, drawing inspiration from classical writers of the West and modern philosophers — Hipolyte Taine, Wilhelm Dilthey, Henri Bergson and, last but not least, Benedetto Croce. Like many other Lithuanian thinkers of the epoch he was a universal author, writing fiction, essays in aesthetics, literary and cultural criticism and taking an active part in debates on national culture and art. Establishing his reputation as the author of the first Lithuanian psychological novel, *Bludas* (Raving, 1912), and somewhat less renowned plays, he became a literary authority and a public intellectual, whose opinions went beyond any dominating ideology and contributed to a liberalization of space around public cultural discourses. To a certain extent he always remained outside the mainstream of public opinion, never joining the Right or the Left, maintaining an autonomous attitude to any developments in culture, society and its legitimizing discourses. Remaining in the service of the Catholic Church he nevertheless expressed views on art and culture that often departed from the official doctrines as interpreted by Lithuanian intellectuals.

Julijonas Linde (he chose Dobilas as his literary pseudonym) was educated as a Catholic priest, graduating from Kaunas Seminary, and eventually worked in various parishes in Lithuanian and Latvia. During World War I he spent several years in Russia teaching in schools for Lithuanian war exiles and performing his priestly duties. He moved back to Lithuania in 1918 and four years later joined the faculty of Panevezys city gymnasium as a teacher of literature. As supervisor of the art unit he established a unique school of aesthetics and creative writing, educating a large number of would-be writers, poets, philologists and cultural activists.

Linde-Dobilas was a true disciple of the classical culture of Western Europe, remaining rather indifferent to modern movements in art and literature, though, surprisingly enough, his aesthetics was shaped more in accord with the philosophy of his time. Homer and Dante were the two authors he most often referred to and treated as emblematic figures of two of the greatest historical cultures: Pagan and Christian. Unlike Salkauskis, he claimed that the origins of culture were to be traced to religion: "Religion is the mother of culture. As there is no man who was not given birth by a woman, likewise there is no culture that would not be given birth by religion".<sup>8</sup> He considered religion the initial form of expression of human consciousness, and treated each of the three "forms of spirit," religion, art, and philosophy as both consciousness and cognition. Science were described as autonomous. Interaction between the three was to constitute a complete unity. This was violated when one of the forms was subjugated to another, which he considered as causing cultural disasters. "Religion gives birth to a new type of culture and nurtures it until it becomes mature, capable of deciding its highest goals".<sup>9</sup> Originating from religion, culture enters a sphere of freedom, pursuing its own goals. His division of consciousness into interactive and yet sufficiently independent forms was largely influenced by Croce's ideas.

His concept of art as an autonomous part of human consciousness differed in some aspects from the theory of Professor Salkauskis who considered art to be the most essential element of culture, though subordinated to religion. To Salkauskis art could not be fully autonomous because the imperfection of the cultural ideal had to be compensated for by the perfect ideal of religion; thus culture was to be subordinated to religion.<sup>10</sup> Dissenting from the type of thinking represented by Salkauskis, his disciples and followers, Linde-Dobilas gave art greater autonomy. Though he agreed that the goals of religion were more profound than those of the art, he, nevertheless disagreed that this idea should lead to art being subordinated to religion. "Creation is a synthesis *a priori* and *a posteriori*. That it is synthesis *a priori* means that an artist can only develop what he was given by his nature; it is also synthesis *a posteriori* for it synthesizes human nature where religion does not allow it to express itself".<sup>11</sup>

His *Essay on Hippolyte Taine*, published in book form (1927), reflects some ideas that Linde-Dobilas continued to develop in his later writings. Rejecting Taine's naturalism and determinism and the insignificant role ascribed to the individuality of the artist, Linde-Dobilas, nevertheless praised his system as a complex inquiry into the essence, form, tasks and genesis of art. His revision of Taine's positivism as well as the phenomenology of Dilthey, briefly discussed in the same essay, led him to emphasize the human being, whom he described as the foundation of art, while feelings and experiences were considered the sources of art.

Summing up his analysis of Taine's philosophy he drew several conclusions regarding the requirements for the free and normal development of culture: 1) comprehension of nature and the social system, 2) freedom and spontaneity of the individual.<sup>12</sup>

The response to his critique of Taine from J. Eretas, literature professor of Kaunas University, was offensive: the writer was accused of lacking "cold sense", method and propagating authors who were listed in the "Index librium prohibitorum". However, Eretas's main target was Linde-Dobilas's criticism of Lithuania's intellectual life and its culture. In fact, Linde-Dobilas's essay, like most of his writings, contained numerous digressions into the local cultural domain which he found neither satisfying nor praiseworthy. His constant appeals to the need of a national Renaissance expressed his dissatisfaction with the development of Lithuanian culture and the public sphere, including politics.

The notion of the Middle Ages was another keyword which was not used in its usual implied denotative sense. He argued that Lithuania never went through the Middle Ages either culturally or psychologically, thus the field in which the notion operated extended to the culture of modern Lithuania. Replying to Eretas he insisted that there was no true, high art in Lithuania, because: "there is no man, no search for ideals; we are guiding ourselves by the scholastic mind of the Middle Ages that classified us into innumerable parties and produced such cruel fanaticism that led our intelligentsia to move neither backwards nor forwards in culture. This kind of spiritual condition is not good for creation and it . . . does not allow us to develop politically".<sup>13</sup>

Polemics with a critic whose comments hinted at disrespect towards the institution he was serving, the Catholic Church, did not affect his tolerance for concepts of culture. Rising in defense of Taine or Lithuanian writers misinterpreted as faithful adepts of Comte's positivism (such as Dr. Kudirka) he differentiated between humanist and positivist ideologies. He argued that Kudirka's ideology could be interpreted in terms of positivism on the condition that the writer would have developed Comte's ideas as a philosopher, which was not the case.

*Literaturos metodika* (Methods of Literature), a lengthy essay containing some of Linde-Dobilas's basic aesthetic ideas, also represents his attitude towards Marxism and socialism. Marx, he argued, attempted to create a new universal religion, thus poetry under socialism could be only of a religious kind, "as hymns to its gods, saviors, apostles and heroes".<sup>14</sup>

In his later essay "Cognoscente Ars" (1931) written as a reply to the extensive article, "Ars Sacrificans," by Jurgis Baltrusaitis he elaborated even more explicitly his attitude towards art as an autonomous part of consciousness and a form of cognition. Disagreeing with Baltrusaitis, who claimed that art can be comprehended in three manifestations: as play, cognition and sacrifice — the latter being a "universal element" — he argued that the true essence of art is cognitive intuition.

Developing his aesthetics, Linde-Dobilas shifted towards Bergson's and Croce's philosophy of intuition and to a certain extent performed the role of a mediator, introducing basic ideas of intuitivism into the Lithuanian intellectual context. Viewed from this angle his role might seem rather modest. His impact on Lithuanian intellectual life, however, goes beyond his contribution to the dissemination of aesthetic ideas.

## Modern Art

The writer's relation to movements in modern art deserves special mention. As was already noted, Linde-Dobilas rarely discussed modern literature and arts. As a literary critic he wrote more extensively on Lithuanian authors of the national resurgence period, digressing to realms of Western Classical literature and making cross-cultural comparisons. Occasionally, however he expressed his attitude towards modern authors, of whom he was surprisingly tolerant. Disputing with A. Jakstas-Dambrauskas, who attacked modern literary movements from the standpoint of Classicist aesthetics, he argued that no authority can impose rules on art from above "except by inquisition, the results of which are always short-termed".<sup>15</sup>

As a writer Linde-Dobilas produced nothing to rival his first and only novel of 1912, nevertheless his nationwide reputation as a novelist and eventually as outstanding educator made him an important public authority. His shift from fiction towards philosophy of art and cultural criticism can be traced from the first years of independence, however, the period of 1927-1934 was the most productive. The concept of cultural synthesis, introduced by Salkauskis in 1919 and ever since a widely debatable subject in Lithuanian intellectual life, seems to have left its traces on the writings of Linde-Dobilas, though he never directly reconsidered or referred to it in his essays. Some of his shorter and longer essays discuss the character of Lithuanian culture and contain insights into Lithuania's history.

Like Salkauskis he emphasized three stages of Lithuania's development of culture: the golden age, the period of the domination of Polish culture, and the period of national resurgence. According to Linde-Dobilas, though language is part of a national spirit, a nation can express its character in other ways when deprived of its native tongue. Even denationalized Lithuanians who chose Polish as their language of communication still retained elements of their original national character. This argument implied that a nation continues to exist even after losing its native language, which contradicted presuppositions of the dominant ideology of culture: the reconstruction of a modern Lithuanian nation on the basis of language. In an essay, *Vytauto asmenybe* (1930) he argued that it was idealism that brought the Lithuanian nation to life during the years of awakening and that this was later affected by materialism which led to cultural crisis. He claimed that the outcome of the national resurgence movement produced a potential for a "national spirit" that had still to be filled with cultural content.

Writing on the issue of the psychology of nations (two essays were published: one in 1922 and another in 1934), Linde-Dobilas compared two closely related, yet different cultures: Latvian and Lithuanian. Idealism and materialism were his keywords to elaborate on differences of Catholic and Protestant ethos, though he never referred to religious differences. Providing a concise outline of the historical development of both cultures, he employed the symbolic figures of Faust's Mephistofeles. The Lithuanian character and, implicitly, its culture was dominated by "feelings and fantasy"; this was contrasted to the Latvian character, dominated by the practical mind (Mephistophelian). He insisted that the possibilities of further developments of Lithuanian culture depended on its ability to adopt Mephistofeles, i.e. incorporate elements of the practical mind.<sup>16</sup>

He advocated closer cultural and political association between the two Baltic nations, speaking out against the ideology of assimilation expressed by some radical nationalists. His insights into the need of adopting elements that made up Latvian culture was another version of cultural synthesis different from that modeled by Salkauskis. Linde-Dobilas's ideas in their own

way reflected certain dissatisfaction with forms and contents of Lithuanian culture and could be interpreted as an intellectual attempt to introduce discourse aimed at a universalistic cultural model. The fact that he returned to the subject once again in the 40s and used the same rhetoric suggests that Linde-Dobilas's ideas were ahead of his time. Only before the fall of independence both Baltic nation-states managed to establish rudimentary forms of political association. The lack of political and cultural association between the countries, noted by the writer in the 30s and 40s continues to this day, despite external rituals of political unity.

Julijonas Linde-Dobilas is an unusual case in the Lithuanian history of intellectual ideas. A writer who never represented himself as a social or cultural critic, nevertheless he contributed to the field by many fresh insights and sound criticism. Distancing himself from political parties he never became intoxicated with the ruling ideologies and extended his opinions on culture, society and its institutions to the public sphere. Unlike many of his contemporary Lithuanian intellectuals, Linde-Dobilas did not insist on modeling national culture as a preserve based exclusively on traditional elements of folk culture. It was perhaps his love of the classical heritage of Western culture that kept him from preaching a purified model based exclusively on Lithuanian folk tradition and guided him towards a more universal view of culture.

Linde-Dobilas's ideas and writings on culture mark a trajectory from an ideology of culture to its criticism, contributing to the rise of self-reflection in the Lithuanian society of his time. His contribution to Lithuania's intellectual life viewed from a certain distance might be considered greater than his contemporaries ever managed to accept, while many problems of Lithuanian culture continue to burden Lithuanian society at the turn of the century.

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## Notes

1. Alfonsas Andriuskevicius. *Menas ir grozis lietuviu estetikoje 1918-1940* (Vilnius, 1989), pp. 96-108.

2. Arunas Sverdiolas, *Kulturos filosofija Lietuvoje* (Vilnius, 1983) p. 14.

3. Ceslovas Laurinavicius, "Jonas Basanavicius as the Symbol of Modern Lithuanianism", *Vilnius*, 1 (1996), 33.

4. Stasys Salkauskis, *Rinktiniai rastai. Pedagogines studijos*, t. 1 (Vilnius, 1992), pp. 427-428

5. B. Genzelis "Burzuazines filosofijos susiformavimas ir raida Lietuvoje", *Lietuviu filosofijos istorijos bruožai*, parengė R. Ozolas (Vilnius, 1978), p. 146

6. Juozas Gobis, *Psichine energija ir gyvenimas* (Siauliai, 1924), p. 39.

7. Ignas Slapelis, *Apie Lietuvos mena: Paskaita I-jam pasaulio lietuviø kongresui* (Kaunas, 1935), p. 1-15.

8. Julijonas Linde-Dobilas, *I slepiningaji dvasios pasauli* (Vilnius, 1996), p. 172.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

10. Stasys Salkauskis, *Rastai*, t.1 parengė A. Sverdiolas (Vilnius, 1990), p. 428.

11. Linde-Dobilas, p. 183.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 310.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 324.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

15. Julijonas Linde-Dobilas "Ne Menas ir kurybiskumas, bet gyvas nesusipratimas," *Jaunoji Lietuva*, 3/4 (1929), 20-23.

16. Linde-Dobilas, p. 460.





## Chapter XI Oscar Milosz, Theoretician Of Love

*Andrius Konickis*

At the end of his life, Oscar Milosz confessed to his younger friend, A. Godoy, that in the realm of the senses he had been living like a prisoner enclosed between four blank walls. Therefore the poet concluded: "I probably am a theoretician of love". It is obvious that by saying "theoretician", Milosz wanted to stress that he did not practice it. Yet Milosz's creative work as a whole, including his early poems, plays, novels, metaphysical poems and even interpretations of the Apocalypses, reveals his theory of love, which is indeed impressive, being both perfectly harmonious and contradictory. As we know from the poet's life story, the so-called "mystical vision", experienced by him on December 14, 1914, divided his life and creative work into two essentially different parts, sometimes even called "before" and "after" the vision. Therefore we should accordingly distinguish two parts in Milosz's theory of love, two stages of its formation. Leaving out the first part of his theory, we are going to discuss the basic features of the second part after the vision.

Though Milosz's work is inseparable from the theme or problems of love, he does not give a precise or concrete definition of love. We cannot even rely on the sentence in *Epitre a Storge*, where the author explains: "To me (the word "love" — A. K.) always means . . ., among other things, the eternal femininity-divinity described by Alighieri and Goethe, angelic sensibility and eroticism, innocent motherliness . . . perfect harmony among people . . . all music by Richard Wagner little understood so far . . . and, finally, in the universal sense, the Orphic intuition."<sup>1</sup> Naturally, we cannot expect a classical definition of the concept of love (*per genus et differentia specifica*). We can try to analyze the poet's separate statements, to bring out and understand the main characteristics and functions of love, and in this way form a so-called contextual definition of this particular concept.

### **A Contextual Definition**

In his novel, *L'Amoureuse Initiation*, "unselfconsciously ascending" to the divine abode of love together with Earl Pinamonte, Milosz nearly forgets that on earth the concept of love is usually used to describe the relationship between man and woman. In his metaphysical poems (i.e. written after the vision), the thinker turns to this "perfect harmony among people, which consists of the husband's charming wisdom and the attraction of the wife's love, the real spiritual situation of the first with regard to the second".<sup>2</sup> As we can see from this phrase, concord or harmony is based on the essential difference of its components. We are not going to look for the sources of this motif in ancient times, though in fact it is very old; its variants in classical antiquity certainly were known to Milosz (such as, for example, Aristophanes's fable from "The Feast" by Plato, or "the most beautiful harmony emerges out of differences" by Heraclitus).

There is reason to think that Milosz's reasoning was influenced by the doctrine of the divine order by Emmanuel Swedenborg, which in its turn was derived from the earlier tradition of European thought. In the words of the clairvoyant Swede, "a heavenly marriage is the spiritual conjunction of two persons into one"; and since "the denizens of heaven descend from the family of humans", there is a certain, though not absolute, analogy between heavenly and earthly

marriages. The symbolic equivalent of man is reason, and that of the woman — will; in this way they have been conceived and created, and their common aim is to connect into one. When this spiritual conjunction of reason and will "descends into the body", it is "perceived and felt as love", which is the true "conjugal love" (*amor conjugalis*) (*De coelo et inferno*, 366-368).

Swedenborg probably was not greatly influenced by the ideas of equality of man and woman which emerged in the age of "enlightenment", or perhaps they were not yet distinct and strong enough for the thinker to react. Yet already in the 19th century, the age of "progress", ideas of equality were further developed, even overdeveloped; the striving for equal rights for both sexes levelled them, and their essential differences and features were denied. At the end of the century F. Nietzsche could not keep from joining the discussion: "In my opinion, natural opposition (though Nietzsche speaks about nature, he has in mind the same psychological differences between man and woman, called "spiritual" by Swedenborg — A.K.) will not be eliminated by any social agreements or the best aspirations to justice . . ." (*La gaya scienza*, 363). The philosopher's arguments could not stop the powerful movement of "emancipation", which gained momentum at the beginning of our century and acquired some unpleasant features. Nikolaj Berdyaev expressed his indignation: "By mechanically imitating male qualities out of envy and anger, the woman becomes a spiritual and physical hermaphrodite, a caricature and a pseudo-being." Is the woman's freedom achieved by imitating? Hardly. In the philosopher's opinion, at best she can become "a second-rate man".

Like Berdyaev, Milosz condemns this kind of "emancipation": "woman's, as well as man's freedom, is knowledge of the Law and faithfulness to it".<sup>3</sup> "The Law" here is the primeval principle, God's intention and "spiritual vision", in which man and woman were given a certain place appropriate to their nature. In this respect Milosz would agree with Nietzsche that it cannot be replaced by any "social agreements". "It is enough for woman to be free if man realizes her spiritual place relating nature with God. Any other freedom leads to the fabrication of the conjugal principle".<sup>4</sup>

### **The Conjugal Principle And Mystery**

Milosz most probably borrowed this concept of the "conjugal principle", both as a theoretical construct and semantic component of his doctrine, from Swedenborg. Yet, though agreeing with him in principle, the poet somewhat changes the symbolic equivalents of the sexes: "Man is wisdom, woman is love of that wisdom".<sup>5</sup> A certain substantiation of these symbols can be found in Milosz's note written while reading Swedenborg: "Woman rescues man, since loving his wisdom, she saves man from the dangerous necessity to love his own wisdom" (we can compare the woman's new role as a "saviour" with her function as "initiatrice" (*initiatrice*) from the earlier period of the poet's work).

The conjugal principle, or the phenomenon of marriage in general, certainly was not invented by Swedenborg. We know that it is the basic principle of the existence and survival of humanity, which ensures the emergence of the new; thus it is the principle of recreation based on the interaction of two different origins or sexes. Though it seems so simple and ordinary, note that there are two rather than one or three origins. According to somebody's witty remark: humanity consists not of the black and white, the rich and the poor, the wise and fools, and finally, not of the rulers and the ruled, but primarily of women and men. K. Horney generalizes this principle well in a laconic manner: "All of us are subjected to the great law of heterosexual tension": the great law or great mystery of humanity.

In addition to the concept of the "conjugal principle", Milosz uses the even more impressive concept of "conjugal mystery" (*arcane conjugal*). In the time of mythological, i.e. purely symbolic, thinking, cosmogonic secrets were regarded in the light of this principle (mystery): not only gods who most often were anthropomorphic creatures, but also planets, objects and phenomena were born of the interaction of masculine and feminine origins, to be married to one another later; "husbands" and "wives" usually loved each other, but there were family conflicts, cases of infidelity, illegitimate children — everything in the life of humans.

In Milosz's cosmogony and metaphysics the conjugal principle plays the fundamental role, the role of the "cornerstone". Yet the poet's concept of wedlock differs quite markedly from the traditional one. "The divinity, secret, non-corporal fire is the husband of "The Song of Songs", and he radiates his spiritual light . . . in the form of the cosmic wife, who is the Femininity of Manifestation (*Manifestation*)".<sup>6</sup> Often referring to "The Song of Songs" as a peculiar paradigmatic, though encoded, expression of the mystery of wedlock, Milosz reveals its secret contents in the following way: it is "a dialogue between the Father and the Beauty of the Universe, between the Son and His beloved Catholicism, the future universal Humanity, and, finally, between the mortal husband and wife."<sup>7</sup> Note not only the pairs of the dialogue, but also the two opposite orders, are parallels of masculinity and femininity: Father-Son-husband; the Beauty of the Creation-Humanity (Christians also say: The Church)-wife. The poet concludes those two orders in the following way: "The mystical situation of man with regard to woman is the same as that of God with regard to His Creation".<sup>8</sup>

The thinker seems to get something wrong: we can agree that the Beauty of the Universe or Humanity is the child of God-Father; but to say that the wife is the husband's creation is a rather incongruous view of marriage. Yet, these or other incongruities still allow us to see a system, quite consistent with regard to its structure rather than its functioning. It is a system of reflections and correspondences with its own inner logic and certain roots in the ancient and modern tradition. It contains elements of three styles of thinking: Judaism, Christianity and the Cabala.

### **A System with Styles: Judaism, Christianity and Cabala**

As we know from Milosz's cosmogony, with the radiation of the physical light there appears the visible physical world, space-time-matter; the poet explains that this "physical creature" is the wife of "The Song of Songs", "the Femininity of Manifestation", and "It is born of God, as Eve is born of Adam".<sup>9</sup> As Eve (woman) is secondary with regard to Adam (man), Femininity in general is secondary with regard to God; it is the logic of traditional Judaism and the Old Testament. Yet, Light (the World) meets Fire (God), like Love meets the Law — the poet further expounds in a mathematical way. It follows that Love is also secondary (derivable, as we could say mathematically), and thus can be compared with the woman, who according to the known formula is love of man's wisdom. Man-wisdom can be compared with God-Wisdom, which again is a typical image of the Old Testament. "Man is the rigorous Law . . . and He turns into Love in the beauty and compassion of the woman",<sup>10</sup> writes Milosz. But if this transfiguration of the Law is a somewhat "later" event, does it mean that love does not "yet" exist in God Himself? No. "God is identical to His law and His necessity . . . and to be one's own law and one's own necessity is to be Love".<sup>11</sup>

In this way the main thesis of Christianity, "God is love", is convincingly grounded in an attempt to harmonize the Old and the New Testaments (which hardly yield to harmonization), and this is done largely and quite successfully by the basically Cabalistic style of Milosz's thinking.

Creation (Love, the Woman) emerges "later" not with regard to time; it is merely farther removed from God-Fire, the source of everything. This again is not spatial, but according to certain rules of the logic of symbols. God is separated from his creatures not by segments of time or space, but by degrees-mirrors, in which the entire Absolute is reflected momentarily and eternally in the Beauty of the Universe. Milosz calls it "the spiritual vision of the Sole Seer". Yet the extent of preciseness with which the most perfect essence of the Divinity is reflected in any creature depends on the mysterious laws of refraction of light on the mirror. Thus (let us further interpret this doctrine), Love, existing in God in the form of the Law-in-itself, is manifested in our world as a sexual drive, which also seems to be a law in itself.

There is one more essential addition: "The law became love . . . through the splitting of the primitive man into husband and wife".<sup>12</sup> Thus we can suppose the existence of two varieties of love: 1) love as a law-in-itself, both in God and in the solid primitive man; and 2) love between man and woman, which we can see in our imperfect world, "farther" removed from God. Created by God in the form of His image, the perfect primordial man consisted of both man and woman and thus was androgynous. The "fallen" man of our world must finally return to this state conceived by God, — it is an antique and archetypal idea, common to many mythologies, the biblical variant of which (*Gen 1, 27*) has given way to "another" way of the creation of man (*Gen 2, 21-22*) found in popular Christianity.

This idea had crucial influence on the philosophical works of both Milosz and his predecessors-teachers (Bohme, Swedenborg) and like-minded contemporaries (Berdyaeu). The ways of returning to the primeval state proposed by these thinkers differ; for some time Milosz thought that it could be achieved by "properly loving an earthly being", but later started to talk about "the placement of oneself in Nothingness", that is, finding one's proper place with regard to God, which can be treated as something similar to the Evangelical *metanoia*, "the transfiguration of mind", turned into "repentance" in translation from the Greek.

The placement of Father and Son in one (male, creator) order seems to be of interest to us merely as a feature of Christian thinking, as an emphasis on the identity of these two members of the Holy Trinity. But it is not what matters most. The first miracle of the Son, the turning of water into wine, is "a mundane equivalent of the divine mystery of marriage".<sup>13</sup> a husband creates a wife. This "equivalent" is rather vague, but one detail is intriguing: the miracle takes place during the wedding. In the variant of the New Testament which has reached us, the description of this wedding (*II John, 1-12*) allows us to think that the earlier version of the text contained something more and rather different, and even leads us to think that it was the wedding of Jesus Himself.

Milosz, certainly, explains it in a different way: "The Son becomes one with the Father . . . and stops being the son", and "Mary is no longer His mother". Let us interpret: a woman is a mother, a creatrix, while her son has not matured and become a father himself. This limits the woman's creative power, which seems to have been taken away from her by placing her into the second (female, creatures') order. Yet Mary is a special woman and mother: her birth is "spiritual", like that of "the first nature": both were born "without semen". Meanwhile, Jesus was born of Mary, "impregnated by non-corporal light", and this is "an equivalent of the first Adam, produced from bright cosmic matter".<sup>14</sup>

Milosz again tries to bring the Jewish epic into accord with the dogmas of Christianity using the tools of Cabalistic terminology, but he is not very successful: for example, he completely ignores Mary's biography, which is widely known though it has not become canonical. Yet the poet needs Mary's birth to be purely "spiritual". Having taken away from "The Son of Man" his wife from Kan (or perhaps from neighboring Magdala?), "The Son of God" is being proposed

another bride — the Church, the future Humanity and Catholicism; Milosz defines their relationship as that of the husband and wife from "The Song of Songs".

Why was Milosz so much concerned with these different systems of thought, Judaism and Christianity? Let us try to find out. At the time of writing *Les Arcanes*, Milosz was approaching his conversion to Catholicism, "the return to the religion of my forefathers (to be more exact, from his father's side — A.K.)". He had not forgotten the religion of his Jewish mother as well. Let us recall his "fascination with Biblical poetry", which led the young man to Oriental studies. It is impossible to ignore these "fixations" (as a psychoanalyst would say) on the past: his parents, his family roots and his "home"; their impact was stronger than the poet himself thought, and they emerged from the depths of the subconsciousness, uncontrolled and unchecked, though Milosz himself confirmed that it was his "mixture of blood" which influenced his *Ars Magna*.

Soon after *Les Arcanes* (and his conversion), he started to look for his roots even more persistently: let us recall the biased research of the Lithuanian and Jewish origins and commentaries on the Apocalypses. Milosz's views on this issue were quite clear-cut: to him the Judaic-Christian conjugal principle expressed the "power and glory" of this system, while other doctrines which "lack love" (*pauvres d'amour*), in his opinion, "converge in social amorality".<sup>15</sup> Yet, though Judaism and Christianity can be considered "systems of thinking", they are first of all religions, or at best systems of religious thinking, whereas Milosz is first of all a thinker, religious though he may be. The Cabala, and in particular its modern ("French", according to Czeslaw Milosz) interpretation, which is by itself a peculiar synthesis of Judaism and Christianity, was the particular intellectual milieu in which Milosz was strongest as a thinker.

### **The Sentimentalist and the Metaphysician**

At the beginning of this essay we stated that nowhere does Milosz give a concrete and final definition of love. Certainly, we would be right asserting that other philosophers given to the reflection of love also refused immodest claims to produce a concise definition of love. Yet in their speculations they always formulate certain quasi-definitions allowing one to establish their general conceptual views. In this respect we could distinguish two main groups of thinkers. Let us call them "sentimentalists" and "metaphysicians". The first talk about love as a human feeling; the second treat love as a universal phenomenon, element or principle. Certainly, pure "metaphysicians" or pure "sentimentalists" hardly exist; these are merely more or less distinct tendencies, and they are important to us as two ways of talking about love. Calling love "nature" Nietzsche, for example, establishes himself rather as a metaphysician; the same can be said about N. Stankevicz, to whom love is equal to "life". In V. Frankle's conception love, "enabling perception of the personality of the other person" and "helping the lover to become the way his/her beloved wants him/her to be", shows the thinker's "sentimentalist" attitude; while J. Ortega-y-Gasset regards love as "self-sufficient emotional activity". We have already noticed that Milosz speaks about love in these two respects: "metaphysical" and "sentimentalist". A closer reading of his metaphysical poems enables us to see a distinct tendency to "metaphysics"; perhaps we shall understand why the poet regretted so much the fact that even "great thinkers seem to express with the word love nothing else than passion, pleasure or curiosity".<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, when the human being was divided into man and woman, the Law turned (and is ever turning) into love — love in our human sense, since "there", in God Himself, it had (and has) the different shape of law-in-itself. Yet the Law in our world does not disappear, but exists in the different shape of love. We are able to realize or learn this original Law, God's intention or, as we

often say, the meaning of the world and life, only through love, by loving. The poet's confession is instructive: "In the depths of this indefinite universe I know only one real place where the mind does not get stuck, and this place is my love".<sup>17</sup> Milosz's ever recurring image of the *Place* is both an intimate personal concern and a universal metaphysical problem. All his life the poet was looking for love "everywhere where he had the faintest hope of finding it"; all his life he was looking for a place: home, fatherland and roots. It turns out that love is this special place. It is "right here": everybody finds it in his/her own way. It is Goethe's *Elysium*, Dante's *Empyrean*, Swedenborg's *Adramandoni*, Holderlin's *Hesperides*. Milosz did not create his own special fabulous land of love, but his symbol of love looks even more impressive. The poet calls the addressee of his "Letter", Storge, his "bride", which means that he has married Love: family love, parents' love for their children, according the classical Greek tradition, or "love of the poet himself for people", as Czeslaw Milosz explains. It is really an extraordinary and mysterious marriage.

The poet's bride is "movement and place" to him; all the rest "is vanity, haze and shadow", and the poet solemnly declares: "I am the one who loves". It is an obvious allusion to "I am the one who is" (*Ex 3, 14*); but not only. Formulating his views on space-time-movement, Milosz transformed the *cogito ergo sum* by Descartes into a peculiar variant *moveo ergo sum*; here we also have another, even more significant variant of this formula: *amo ergo sum*.

Milosz declares: "A person longs for only one thing: to live and love forever".<sup>18</sup> Probably we would agree that without life and love there are very few things worth longing for. Yet what does "forever" mean? We could guess it from Milosz's cosmogonic conception; but he gives a kind of special "definition": eternity is "the first infinite moment of the first love".<sup>19</sup> So, everything that exists, that by appearance, i.e. from the point of view of the "fallen" (in Christian terms) person, or a person having an incorrect attitude towards God (in Cabalistic or Milosz's terms), seems to be situated in time and space, is in fact a mere vision of omniscient love, or "divine momentariness". In order to realize it clearly, one must place oneself appropriately, in other words — love properly. Yet, "true love is possible only in it (momentariness — A.K.), and only then does love allow us to perceive the moment".<sup>20</sup> It is worth noting that only "metaphysicians" (together with Milosz, Nietzsche and Berdyaev) speak about the eternity of love or a moment equalling eternity; "sentimentalists" are more concerned with how to prolong love.

Milosz expounds: "Man and woman were conceived for the purely spiritual mode of existence"; they themselves "were the Spirit having the appearance of body".<sup>21</sup> This arouses some doubts, not only because it is simply not understandable why "the pure spirit" needs this, to put it mildly, strange appearance; the past tense used in this construction somehow does not match the doctrine of the divine vision and momentariness. Yet if one can interpret this statement with the help of the conception of a proper attitude towards God, it becomes clear that "spiritual beings find (i.e. here and now as well — A. K.) their ideal place in this attraction which we call love. The latter is our sole reality".<sup>22</sup> This is true, since love "was" the essence of the primeval law-in-itself, and "then" . . . — here we should have to repeat the above reasoning.

As we can see, while speaking about love in the "sentimentalist" way, Milosz always has in mind the "metaphysical" view, but not always vice versa. To the poet, love is first of all a universal and original cosmic principle; while the human feeling is as if secondary, and its "being" is ensured by "participation" in this highest principle (like things participating in the ideas in Plato's system). Yet this secondariness is not identical to second-rate; on the contrary, the superior origin ennobles and elevates this human feeling. It is impossible to overlook the fact that Milosz's "metaphysical" or "sentimentalist" view of love is too symbolic. Yet due to many conditions and circumstances in

the interpretation of symbols there always remains something that does not yield to interpretation without contradiction. Therefore we can never be totally sure that we understood the poet properly.

The first part of Milosz's theory of love, formed in his early poetry and particularly in his novel *L'Amoureuse Initiation* and the play *Miguel Manara*, analyzed the earthly relations between man and woman, and thus was more "practical" in this respect. The second part of this theory discussed here seems to be rather remote from earthly matters and seems "purely theoretical". Yet the whole work by Milosz almost directly reflects the poet's life. In the first part of his creative work we can often see the poet's concrete life with the naked eye; while in the second part one has to see through a dense veil of symbols.

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## Notes

1. O. Milosz, *Ars Magna*, in: *Istorija ir butis* (Vilnius, 1988), p. 221.
2. *Ibid.*
3. O. Milosz, *Les Arcanes*, in: O. Milosz, *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 8 (Freiburg, 1948), p. 152
4. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 73-74.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 125-126.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
16. O. Milosz, *Ars Magna*, p. 221.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
18. O. Milosz, *Les Arcanes*, p. 50.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 143.





## Chapter XII

# Two Existentialists: Antanas Maceina and Juozas Girnius

*Ruta Tumenaite*

The epigraph of this essay could be the words of a present day Lithuanian philosopher, Tomas Sodeika, who has described Lithuanian philosophy as follows: "Someone has said that Lithuania is not a nation of philosophers. Perhaps that is true. We do not have or would hardly have thinkers whose works would be translated into other languages; who would become the subjects of dissertations, studies and monographs for the investigators of other nations; or who would be quoted from one book to another." This could provide a grist for understanding of the whole situation of the Lithuanian philosophy — of earlier years, as well as of present times.

Historical destiny has placed Lithuania in an area which had always been immensely sensible to almost all the changes and revolutions which took place all around it. This sensibility was of a particular character, however, for it lies in the marginal situation of Lithuanian culture from the perspective of the Western world. All the major political, historical and cultural events of the world touch Lithuania but only after some period of time. The phenomena do take place in Lithuania, but after a lengthy period of time and with characteristic modifications.

Here historical developments have strongly affected the nature of Lithuanian culture and its spheres. As we are interested in the intellectual atmosphere in our country by the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th, some knowledge of the historical circumstances of this period might be helpful. The end of the 19th century marked the beginning of the active national movement which embraced liberation from the Russian Empire as well as cultural autonomy. A search for cultural authenticity and the traits of the national character of Lithuanians and their nature were much discussed. The question of the relationship between religious identity and national identity was considered urgent. The Catholic Church, though non-Lithuanian at that time because most of the clergy spoke Polish, helped to highlight the national identity in contrast to the Russian Orthodox faith which always had an association with the Czarist regime. Thus the question: must every Lithuania automatically be a Catholic became important at the dawn of the Lithuanian political and cultural rebirth; it was discussed in the works of virtually all the intellectuals of that time.

What was the situation in education in those days? From 1864 until 1905 the Lithuanian language was suppressed by the Czarist rule; it was practically removed from public life and was spoken mostly among the rural inhabitants. There were no Lithuanian academics. Those who sought higher education could choose either Russia with its universities in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev or Charkov, or to go to Western Europe. But there was the problem of means for education. Without a state, there were no official institutions which could provide financial assistance. The only institution which could offer help was the Catholic Church. It granted scholarships, but only for members of the Church, and for the major Catholic centers of Western Europe — the universities of Freiburg (Switzerland) and Louvain (Belgium). The end of the 19th century marked a rapid renaissance and the prosperity of neo-Thomism after the encyclical of the Pope Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*. These were the academic surroundings in which the majority of the Lithuania intellectuals matured.

After World War I and the fall of the Russian Empire, many small states, Lithuania among them, proclaimed their independence. In 1918 Lithuania became a sovereign state, which posed

new questions and tasks for its people. Virtually everything had to be created from ruins. The intellectuals of the young state became preoccupied with ideas on the shape of the future Lithuania. The philosophers were in the front lines offering ideas gained during their studies abroad.

As most Lithuanians got their philosophical degrees in the above mentioned Catholic universities, the dominating influence in their philosophical education was neo-scholasticism, namely, neo-Thomism, and they built their own systems in a similar tradition. One of the most prominent proponents of neo-Thomism in Lithuania was the philosopher, Stasys Salkauskis who is also famous for his idea of Lithuania as the embodiment of two cultures — Western and Eastern (e.g., Slavic) due to the particular historical circumstances which placed Lithuania between the two major regions. Therefore, Lithuania should see its unique historical mission in the synthesis of these two cultures. It would be helpful to remember that Salkauskis was greatly involved in the philosophy of a Russian thinker Vladimir Solovyov. Echoes of his vision of the two worlds can be traced in the writings of Salkauskis and many of his followers. The idea of this synthesis did not fascinate all of them, however; some students joined other trends in philosophy.

In spite of the fact that the period of Lithuania independence between the two World Wars was relatively short it managed to form two totally different generations of intellectuals. As the first began to mature before independence, it had to face the Slavic element in the form of language, literature, art, state or nation. The studies in the Russian universities opened the way to Lithuania for the philosophical ideas to such Russian thinkers as Solovyov and Berdyaev, which openly were greeted by some Lithuanian intellectuals, thus shaping their philosophical thought in a peculiar way. An example is Salkauskis and his idea of a synthesis of the two cultures.

Those who did not accept this point of view mainly belonged to the second generation of intellectuals. It is interesting to note that though this generation is only some years younger than the first, it enjoyed different conditions for its own formation and maturing. There had developed some contrast to the elements of the Slavic culture, and the values of Western culture were being avidly absorbed in opposition to Slavic values. This generation was much more original and self-dependent — as much as the historical and cultural conditions could afford.

This juxtaposition of the two generations of Lithuanian intellectuals could serve us as a way of comparing two of the most prominent thinkers of the first half of this century, who belong to the respective generations. The names of these two philosophers are usually associated with the academic and professional Lithuanian philosophy. They are Antanas Maceina (1908-1987) and Juozas Girnius (1915-1994). In spite of fact that Maceina is only seven years Girnius's senior, he explicitly belongs to the first generation. Though Maceina had a chance of studying in the Western universities, nevertheless the ideas of Russian philosophy, namely, Berdyaev, marked the whole direction of his thought. As a matter of fact, Russian philosophy had always been very much a part of Maceina's thought, and he taught it at German universities, being in a post-war forced exile.

Girnius managed to escape this Slavic influence. The years of his studies at the universities of Freiburg (Germany), Louvain and Sorbonne shaped the original and modern style for his philosophy. One can easily discover Girnius's dialogue with the philosophical trends of the Western Europe of those days, which thought had been interpreted by Maceina in a totally different way. Girnius was the first to introduce existential philosophy to Lithuania and thus directed its entire philosophy in a modern way. Maceina himself had once referred to Girnius as "having the most philosophical mind of all the intellectuals who matured in independent Lithuania."

The factor common to these two seemingly different thinkers is the existential way of philosophizing, though the ways in which they explicated existential problems varied. Maceina adopted this trend of philosophy in the form of Jaspers's existential metaphysics, whose basic

postulates he interprets in "Job's Drama". Through this study by Maceina, Jasper's ideas entered Lithuanian philosophy. But the way Maceina interprets the ideas of the German existentialist is different from Jaspers himself. Maceina employs Jaspers's theory of "extreme situations," but his intentions are far from those of Jaspers. He is not content with the conclusions of Jaspers, for whom the extreme situations were the circumstances where an individual experiences the fragility of his own existence and opens himself to the transcendent. Jaspers named four such situations: suffering, struggle, guilt and death. Maceina chooses suffering which he studied in the situation of Job in the Bible. The choice of a concrete person for a philosophical investigation reveals a characteristic trait of Maceina — to philosophize not in abstract terms, but in images. The main tool of his thinking is imagination.

The choice of a biblical theme suggests that this philosopher is in a peculiar relationship with theology, which reveals a curious and ambiguous character of his thought. Maceina, though having expressed his opposition to any kind of authority in philosophy, and having stated that philosophy is nothing but a constant raising of questions without a final answer, balances on a thin and indefinite border between the philosophical and theological spheres. The two are closely intertwined in Maceina's works. He quite unexpectedly gives a name to the transcendence which has opened in front of Job — this is the God of religion. But Maceina prefers not to explain the reasons for this conclusion. He just states that extreme situations are the nearest ways to God, far more effective than any logical proofs. This again echoes Jaspers, who stated the inability of logical reasoning to reach the Transcendent. Jaspers stops after having discovered the Absolute Transcendent. Maceina quotes various Russian thinkers and even purely theological works in order to prove his own truth — the Transcendent as God of faith.

Maceina tries to prove that man and God are linked ontologically, e.g., that man is religious even when he rejects and denies God. In his last work, which is sometimes called his *opus magnum*, Maceina tries to reach this proof using contemporary philosophical theories, namely, hermeneutics. He adopts the view of philosophy as interpretation and, employing the construct of author and his production, he grants the same relationship to God and man, meaning the God of theology or faith. Why such a choice again? The only suggestion could be the intertwining of his own world outlook which did not consequently fit into his philosophical system. It is an attempt to prove God not scientifically or logically, but ontologically "willy-nilly", says Lithuanian philosopher, Algis Mickunas. We can see that the whole system of Maceina's philosophy is based on the attempt to prove what is already taken for granted at the very beginning, suggesting some lack of intellectual honesty in its author.

Girnius shows a different attitude. He is a Christian believer, and does not somehow hide his own world outlook. On the contrary, he explicitly states it in all his works. Though he is preoccupied mainly with the problems of existential philosophy (his works include investigations of the philosophy of M. Heidegger and K. Jaspers), Girnius states that following his own beliefs he is alien to existential philosophy. He thinks of himself as an existentialist only insofar as his interest or focus is not upon the essence of man, but upon his uniqueness in time. From the position of a Christian believer Girnius worked out the main postulates of his major work, *Man without God*, which bears as subtitle, *Philosophical Analysis of Atheism*. Girnius is concerned with the spread of atheism in the contemporary world, which concern moves him to philosophize — not for the sake of theory, but rather for life itself. Girnius has no intention of condemning non-believers; he treats them with tolerance and tries to understand them. God is at the beginning of Girnius's philosophy. The author states, that "man bears a peculiar witness to God, even when he denies Him." All creation is a witness of God, especially man, who strives towards infinity due to his

spiritual and creative nature. Having rejected God, witness to him is born by the emptiness of an atheistic life. We can see similarities with the ideas of Maceina here. But the difference is that Girnius states this at the very beginning of his reflections.

This is the central string of the whole of Girnius's work on atheism. His philosophy distinguishes itself by its active character. It tends not to remain a pure reflection, but rather to change the world. Again, the philosophical and theological spheres are intertwined, thus revealing the strong element of world outlook which dominates in the whole philosophy of Girnius. The work had considerable influence in Lithuania during the communist period. *Man without God* opened the way to religious faith for many former non-believers, by affirming its world outlook along with its philosophical reasoning. Girnius seems more intellectually honest than his senior colleague, for he never tried to prove what was already determined at the beginning. He just reflects on the basis of his own beliefs, and does not give his reflections an obligatory character.

It should also be noted that the philosophy of Lithuania in the first part of the 20th century has also an educational, pedagogical character. That is not so surprising if we note the circumstances. From the times of the national movement and especially after the forming of the Lithuanian state its intellectuals were obsessed with the ideas of educating, enlightening and building up the future Lithuania. The vision of the future state was in some way discussed in the works of almost all the intellectuals of that time. Therefore, philosophy had become a suitable tool for shaping various pedagogic ideas. Salkauskis and Maceina were almost as productive in the field of pedagogy as in philosophy and their philosophy is concerned with upbringing, fostering, etc. The relationship between state and nation, the problem of Lithuanian identity, and the historical mission of Lithuania were the spheres of particular interest. Hence they were continued by the post-war Lithuanian emigrants, for whom these problems acquired the character of national survival.

50 years of communist regime severely suppressed the development of a living intellectual thought. Thus, authors like Maceina and Girnius were the only examples of a true Lithuanian philosophy for a long time. Works from the exiles could reach Lithuania only clandestinely, but the academic life in Lithuania continued. Today we have a new generation of philosophers who tend to think that, as before, Lithuania still has no authentic philosophy. But this reflects the fact that things reach Lithuania always after some period of time.

## Chapter XIII

# The Life of Vosylius Sezemanas and His Critical Realism

*Loreta Anilionyte & Albinas Lozuraitis*

The philosophical and pedagogical activity of Vosylius Sezemanas is closely connected with the dramatic cultural and spiritual changes in the life of Lithuania which he significantly influenced. Time does not devalue the significance of his work: on the contrary, it reveals its importance and demands its analysis and creative assimilation.

Philosophy, more than any other branch of knowledge, depends on the personal life and experience of its author. For the real object of philosophy, the end to which it strives, is human life itself together with all its phenomena. Human reality, its historical currents and social conflicts have their own order and specific truth which can be seen only by those whose outlook is not confined to the limits of their personal life and reduced to the consideration of accidental phenomena, those who are sensitive to the essential values of human existence. Philosophy is the awareness of these values and also the inevitable companion of their historical development. Although it never reaches its final end, the work of its great authors reveals the relations and legacy which permit progress towards that end.

Vosylius Sezemanas is a philosopher in a classical, or perhaps even in an ancient sense of the word. The wide scope of his interests, together with the lack of professional and provincial narrow-mindedness, opened Sezemanas to dynamic and contradictory social and cultural influences and encouraged him to incorporate them organically into his own philosophical contemplation. Perhaps the most attractive trait of his creative work is the lucidity and simplicity of his thinking, which strictly, methodically and systematically tries to embrace the whole universe of philosophical problems.

### **Life**

Vosylius Sezemanas was born on May 30, 1884 in Vyborg, Finland, into the family of a physician. His father was a Swede and his mother a German. Soon after his birth the family moved to St. Petersburg. There he spent his childhood and a part of his youth. In 1902 he graduated with a gold medal from the Catherine the Great German secondary school and entered The Military Academy of Medicine, but after a year he left to study philosophy and classic philology in St. Petersburg University. After graduation in 1909 he started his work in the department of classic philology at the university, but soon received a fellowship for studies abroad and left for Germany. During the following two years he studied philosophy, psychology, aesthetics and pedagogy under the guidance of the leading professors of those times, H. Cohen, P. Natorp, F. Cassirer, H. Diels, H. Wofflin, in the universities of Marburg and Berlin. In 1911 he returned to Russia and taught philosophy, pedagogy, psychology and logic in several St. Petersburg schools.

At the same time he continued his philosophical studies and in 1913 received his master's degree and was elected a privatdocent of the Department of Philosophy at St. Petersburg University. Soon the First World began and he volunteered to go to the front as a medical orderly. Returning to St. Petersburg he continued teaching. After the February Revolution he worked in the press bureau of the interim Government and from time to time in the Archives of the Revolution. In 1918 Sezemanas moved to Viatka where he taught pedagogy and psychology in the Pedagogical

Institute. In 1919 The University of Saratov elected him associate professor of philosophy, and later professor. In 1921 he started teaching in the Leningrad Institute of Art. Soon, as a citizen of Finland, together with his family he reemigrated to Helsinki. In a search for a means of subsistence his family moved to Berlin where Sezemanas earned his living by private lessons, translations and collaboration with Grzebin publishing house.

In 1923 Sezemanas was invited to be a visiting professor at Kaunas University in Lithuania and six years later he became a full professor. The end of his peregrinations and satisfactory living conditions beneficially influenced his philosophical studies, and therefore it is in Kaunas University that he completed building his philosophical outlook and wrote his most profound treatises on epistemology, logic, aesthetics, and the history of philosophy.

As a European thinker, he published works in different European publications. At the same time he integrated into the philosophical and cultural life of Lithuania. He was consistent and profound in every field of his activity and hence learned the Lithuanian language well and did much to elaborate and perfect the philosophical terminology of that language. When Lithuania regained Vilnius he became a professor at Vilnius University and worked there until the Nazis closed the university in 1943. Then he taught German in a Russian secondary school in Vilnius. He returned to the university after the war. But in 1950 he was arrested by Soviet authorities and sentenced to 15 years in a labor camp. After six years he was released and, several years later was allowed to teach logic in the Department of History and Philology at Vilnius University. Combining an intensive teaching load with studies in logic and the history of philosophy, he worked until his death in 1963.

The external events of his life, the frequent changes of places and jobs would not seem to favor contemplative life. However, his works do not reflect these unfavorable conditions: they radiate the peace of wisdom. His external life was a shell which sometimes pressed heavily upon the kernel of his internal life, but never deformed it. As his works suggest for the most part he lived beyond the turmoils of this world. Deep thinking assisted him much to get through the cataclysms of his time, to come back from the Siberian labour camp as composed as before and to be immune to rancor and hatred in accepting life as it is rather than spending it in skeptical slumber.

Even if one lives mostly in one's own thoughts Siberia does not vanish, but instead of being merciless it becomes merely a rigorous place for spending one's tragically limited time. Therefore it must be not only spent, but also fulfilled. "Time is Chronos, devouring his own children, a cruel fate, casting people into Hades." Facing its power, man feels helpless; it makes man afraid, "It destroys the value of life and its goods."<sup>1</sup> Trying to resist the destructive power of time people create culture as fruit of their struggle against time. Only in creating "objective values" can they surpass the limits of their own historical time. These theoretical conclusions became the practical attitudes of Sezemanas and enabled him to continue his philosophical research within the most unfavorable circumstances and to preserve his philosophical orientation up to the end of his life.

Philosophical work and devotion to thinking was a way of life for Sezemanas. It assisted his survival during times of misfortune. It is difficult to imagine more unfavorable conditions for philosophical studies than those to which he was exposed in the labour camps of Siberia. Nevertheless, even there Sezemanas continued his writing. He wrote on pieces of wrapping paper using a tiny piece of pencil. These things were very scarce and it took a lot of effort to get them. Once the English philosopher F.Bacon mocked dogmatic thinkers, saying that they resemble spiders who make cobwebs out of their own substance. Sezemanas was not a dogmatist, but in Siberia he was in the spider's situation. He had no books, no intellectual sources except his own mind, memory and the irresistible urge to work on his projects, which could not be postponed. The

Manuscript Department of Vilnius University keeps some factual evidence of this work. It is difficult to escape sorrow when looking at these musty pages in some places barely readable, in others not readable at all. They remain the voiceless witnesses of a man's faithfulness to his own vocation.

It is difficult and meaningless to try to guess what shape Sezemanas's philosophy would have taken if his life had been less turbulent and more peaceful. Anyway, it is quite clear that Sezemanas was one of the bright Lithuanian philosophers of his time. In 1928 the well known Russian philosopher and psychologist S. Frank wrote in a letter to the rector of Kaunas University that Sezemanas is one of the most talented and educated philosophers of our time and adds: "There are no doubts that if V. Sezemanas's academic activity happened in Germany, he would have become very famous long ago and would have a sinecure in some prestigious university. His great modesty and extreme intellectual conscience make him postpone publication of his works for a long time which prevents many thinkers from realizing all his scientific significance."<sup>2</sup> This characteristic is confirmed by other famous contemporaries of Sezemanas: N. Hartmann, N. Lossky and V. Uirumsky.

Sezemanas was destined to spend the greatest part of his life in Lithuania and quickly became close to Lithuanian culture and took a keen interest in its development. His wife Vilma narrates that "being a native of Kaunas, I realized the beauty of nature that surrounds the city, the splendor of its Gothic building and the mystery of M.K. Ciurlionis's paintings thanks to the influence of my husband alone. I learned to look at many things through his eyes. And he came here as a foreigner."<sup>3</sup>

## **His Philosophy**

For some time at the beginning the problems raised, elaborated and solved by Sezemanas were on the periphery of the philosophical culture of Lithuania. Fighting for its survival, the Lithuanian state could not have a mature original philosophy which would correspond to the contemporary level of European philosophy. The Catholic tradition, on which existing Lithuanian philosophy was established, was antiquated and conservative. Sezemanas had no equal partner for philosophical dialogue in Lithuania. The majority of his colleagues and friends lived abroad and he conducted an intensive correspondence with them.

Everyone, who knew Sezemanas, remembers that he never complained of his fate. Connecting his own life with Lithuania, he excluded himself for the time being from the content of modern Western European philosophy, whereas his works belonged organically to that tradition. But true philosophy overcomes time. It was in Lithuania that Sezemanas as a personality and a thinker was discovered and became an authority to those who looked for spiritual support in philosophy. Many older Lithuanian intellectuals were proud of the fact that Sezemanas was their teacher, while the young philosophers of Soviet times frequently started to study Western Philosophy, a subject deliberately neglected by the communist authorities because of ideological considerations, under the influence of his work. The rediscovery of Sezemanas's philosophy proceeded gradually, along with the rescue from oblivion of his works one by one. Many Lithuanians interested in philosophy participated in the process, which resulted in what the author of Sezemanas's biography, J. Tumelis, called "Sezemaniana". The translation and publication of the greater part of his work is not only a tribute to the great philosopher who lived in Lithuania, but also a sign of respect for our own tradition of philosophy, with which Sezemanas intentionally connected his life and creative work.

Sezemanas based his philosophy upon classical German philosophy. At the beginning of the century Germans still held the title of the most philosophically minded nation, but this was not so much because of the merits of the time, but because of the glory of the past. The attempts of the Marburg Kantians to purge Kant's epistemology of ontological residue came to nothing. During his years of study in Germany Sezemanas accepted the ideas of the neo-Kantians in some measure, but soon realized and demonstrated in his research that they seemed new only when, as a sequel to the old epistemology, they were not free from its principal defects.

At that time the emerging phenomenology influenced Sezemanas much more. He appreciated its attempts to reach the limit of the ultimate identity of knowledge and being, to reveal the material content of apriorism and so to overcome formalism. He accepted it as a reliable method for formulating philosophical problems. But even at this point he was reserved: in his view, phenomenology is not sufficiently consistent, so that the idealism which it criticizes, remains in it. The understanding and explanation of the subject more than its phenomenological description, was characteristic of Sezemanas's mentality.

The philosophy which looks for new ways of inquiry is alive and the philosopher who participates in this process is creative. But new ideas deserve to be called philosophical only when they touch upon the essential orientations of philosophy. Better than anyone else, Sezemanas knew how to think by means of philosophical principles and how to discern new philosophical ideas. Seeing traditionalism and the stagnation of modern currents of philosophy, he looked for principles which could open new horizons for the whole of philosophy. These principles must be found in the critique of modern epistemology, the "*philosophia prima*" of our times. Sezemanas begins with inquiry into epistemological problems.

## **Epistemology**

The focus of his critique was that traditional epistemology, while consistently developing its own principles, turned idealistic. Sezemanas called his own epistemological attitude a critical realism. The critical aspect of realism consists in its dissatisfaction with the knowledge of the reality of the world given by common sense and experience, and attempts to reflect upon this knowledge in order to substantiate it. This means exposing the errors of traditional epistemology.

Sezemanas's voluminous inquiries into epistemological problems were oriented in two different directions, which presupposed two different aspects of critique. First of all, epistemology was mistaken in isolating cognition from other relations between man and reality. As part of the world, one not only knows the surrounding world, but also lives within and by the world. In treating the problem of cognition as totally independent, idealism presupposes that the object of cognition is immanent to the human consciousness and in this way eliminates the problem itself. Thus idealistic epistemology robs cognition of its meaning and arrives at self contradiction.

Nevertheless, in this critique Sezemanas himself is not secure. For this critique is valid only within the limits of the practical, biological relations between subject and object, where the phantasms of consciousness are dependent on and subordinated to the needs of the organism. So the critique can work in explanation of only the early phases of the genesis of cognition. This direct dependence on the practical needs of life becomes weaker and weaker and finally ceases to exist on the highest level of cognition, that is, on the level of scientific theory. Scientific thinking not only does not depend upon the biological activity of an organism, but also achieves independent interest. Theoretical cognition, as well as aesthetic awareness, is fully realized and reaches its end



with the mind's ascension to the summit of contemplation, the essential sign of which is disinterestedness.

To protect himself from unintended results Sezemanas changes the direction of his inquiry. If cognition is able to pursue ends which are practically insignificant, epistemology is obliged to pay attention to the sources of cognition. Traditional epistemology was blinded by its fascination with the victories of the natural science. That is why philosophical rationalism sometimes secretly, sometimes openly, befriended its own enemy, naturalism. As a result, epistemology takes for granted that everything which is given for cognition must be given to the subject exclusively as an object, that is, as an independent being foreign to the subject, which exists before cognition starts. This is correct of the natural sciences: natural phenomena exist beyond the subject and in studying them the subject diminishes the distance between them and himself. Accepting the natural sciences as a paradigm, epistemology assumes that all the differences in cognition spring from the differences in the cognition of the object and that the structure of knowledge corresponds to the classification of sciences, which rests upon a single principle. In this case the subject itself becomes exclusively receptive and void, that is, it does not have its own structure.

Sezemanas thinks that this kind of presentation to the consciousness of the cognitive object is to be regarded neither as the most important, nor the only possible one. The structure of cognition is more complicated and multidimensional. The presence of knowledge about the objects, which are not the external things, indicates this. The subject-object opposition does not exist in this knowledge. The starting point of this cognition is the participation of the subject in the object, a sort of identity of the subject and the object. The cognitional process is oriented in a diametrically different direction, compared to that which it follows during the cognition of external things. Here the subject produces the object by means of alienation of some internal content of his own, as if he splits in two parts and regards one of them as the object. This kind of cognition was discovered for the first time in psychology, which rebelled against the one-sidedness of the thinking characteristic to the natural sciences. Cognition of psychic life has to be based not upon psychic phenomena, but upon a different and sometimes even contrary thing — psychic experience. The latter is not given to the observer as an external thing, otherwise the nature of psychic phenomena would be unknowable, which is the cause of the failure of naturalistic psychology. Only structuralistic psychology is able to discern the essence of psychic phenomena, for it can explain how understanding as a specific method of cognition of psychic reality arises from psychic experience.

This kind of cognition — the objectless cognition — and its method of understanding is characteristic of the whole realm of social sciences, history and culture that is called human spirituality, ideal essences and values. Here everything depends on the subject and does not exist independently of the subject. On the other hand, objectless knowledge has no sense. Therefore this kind of knowledge lacks not an object, but an external object, for there is no subject-object opposition here: cognition is directed to the subject itself, in fact it is a self-cognition. The assumption that a naturalistic kind of cognition is universal brought traditional epistemology to the wrong conclusion, that in cognition the subject remains passive. It is possible to restore the legitimate status of the subject's activity — his will, intentions and desires in epistemology — only by means of the rejection of the above mentioned assumption.

The term objectless cognition seems illogical, for it is easy to discern the *contradictio in adjecto* in it. Nevertheless, it has its own meaning and significance within the limits of Sezemanas's philosophical theory, and some important methodological conclusions follow. Probably the most important of them is this: the subject is the most important thing for the analysis

of the problem of cognition. Moreover, the subject itself becomes internally problematic, it loses its own identity, acquires extension, dimensions, layers with relations and tension between them; that is, the subject acquires an intricate internal structure. Otherwise, if the subject were absolutely identical with itself, did not have its own structure, cognition would be impossible. Again, the presence of this structure alone enables us to move within it in order to analyze cognition.

The inherent structure of the subject (self, person) serves as a basis for the variety of cognitional attitudes, the issues of the intentionality and the active nature of consciousness. The multi-dimensionality of these attitudes correlates with that of being present in the object. That is why they embrace not only material things, but also historical and cultural phenomena.

Because of this personal socio-historical horizon the structure is complex and has many different aspects. Therefore it cannot be dogmatically fixed, but rather is a general regulative principle of the cognition of human existence, the application of which, in the specific fields of practice, is a separate question. The general content of this principle is that the source of cognition of human existence, that is, the source of objectless cognition, is the central kernel of the subject (person), where existence coincides with consciousness. But for this reason consciousness is indistinct and unclear; it has to be pushed from the centre of the person into the peripheral layers and become relatively independent. That is, it must become an object in order that the primeval apprehension of its being be developed into theoretical knowledge. In the cognition of nature the process is diametrically different: first, the object of cognition appears on the periphery of the self, then through the logical process it approaches the centre. Since in both cases cognition reaches its own completed form, that is, becomes a scientific theory within the same layer of the person, it causes an illusion that the nature of cognition is simple and hides from the eyes of inquirers the essential differences in the sources and ways of cognition.

The idea of personal structure would not be very fruitful if its field was of the same quality and changed only quantitatively in degrees of clarity and brightness. That human centre, which consists of common day-to-day concerns and interests, is neither a pinnacle of brightness and clearness of consciousness, nor the highest value of the person. The I or centre consists of man's psycho-physiological individuality together with its inseparable environment. This is the actual sphere of human life, in which his practical concerns are concentrated and where the principle of practical expediency holds sway. Here the consciousness is not free but serves as a mere instrument for the satisfaction of various practical needs. This sphere of actuality is surrounded by another sphere, the sphere of neutrality. The latter forms a kind of background for the first. Here practical interests are less significant, consciousness is independent of practical ends, and comes closer to itself. At this point Sezemanas meets the great paradox of theory and practice: placing the first stimulus for the activity of human consciousness in practical life, at the same time he has to acknowledge that this genetic relation hinders and limits consciousness, that only by getting rid of it can thinking obtain its freedom as an indispensable condition and the essence of its spontaneous activity. Only in the neutral personal sphere, where the attitude of disinterestedness appears and ascends to the heights of contemplation, can thinking find such a condition.

Because personal profundity first of all is based upon spontaneous activity, the importance of the neutral sphere becomes clear. However flexible and mobile is the border between the actual and the neutral sphere, they are nevertheless different and even opposed to each other. Therefore the person has not only to develop himself into the neutral sphere of his existence, but also to overcome the danger of splitting his personality in the process. The ability to do this is another criterion for evaluating personality. The realm of man's speculative contemplation will not lose its relations with practical life only if the first will manage to subordinate the latter at least by some

measure, that is, to suppress the sphere of actuality and extend itself into it. For the higher forms of human activity, real humanism and specific human nature spring mainly from this.

### **Other Dimensions and the Nature of Philosophy**

It seems that Sezemanas begins his philosophical theory from epistemology. But the study of cognitional problems gradually leads his thought beyond the limits of epistemology. He comes to the conclusion that the main drawback of traditional epistemology rests in its self-isolation. It will be able to answer its own questions only when it asks them correctly, but this will be possible only if it gets rid of its self-isolation and extends its own limits. Sezemanas's theory and methodology of cognition without subject, and his teaching on the structure of personality indicate the main direction for philosophy. Sezemanas thinks that epistemology is not the proper basis of philosophy, for the success of the former depends on the results of philosophical anthropology. It is possible to say that the human person is in the centre of Sezemanas's philosophy. He understands man as a complex structure consisting of various spiritual aspects of history and culture, but not as some abstract essence. Hence he is very interested in verification of the methods of cultural studies in general as well as of its various branches.

With this end in mind Sezemanas inquires into the different realms of culture. The scope of his interests is very wide. But he made the most noticeable contribution in aesthetics. His work *Aesthetics*,<sup>4</sup> written in Lithuanian, is the application of the general principles of his philosophy to a unique analysis of aesthetic phenomena. There are no doubts that this work meets the highest demands of a work of such a kind.

It is important to notice that his standards of teaching were as high as the standards of his writings. He used to prepare his lectures so carefully and scrupulously that they frequently resulted in solid philosophical studies. In this way his works on freedom, suffering and the bourgeoisie came into being. His work on the history of philosophy deserves to be mentioned separately. He saw every philosophical problem against the background of the history of philosophy. He never regarded the philosophy of the past as an ossified fact or looked at the problems of modernity as if they are new. His wide cultural outlook and profound philosophical education enabled him to discern various surprising aspects of any problem. Seeing the multi-dimensionality of a problem, he never closed the perspectives on future inquiry.

Sezemanas was familiar with the historical development of philosophy and its nature so that its methods of cognition were no secret to him. Although he applied the general principles of his philosophy in the analysis of the problems of the historical development of philosophy, his historical works are not a mere illustration of these principles. He devoted most of his attention to two subjects, namely, to ancient Greek and Roman philosophy and to modern German philosophy. In addition to being a philosopher, Sezemanas was a philologist. Knowledge of ancient Greek enabled him to undertake profound studies and an assessment of ancient Greek philosophy. His works about Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus are full of original ideas and shed new light on their philosophy. As a rule Sezemanas discusses even the problems of modern philosophy in connection with antiquity and this enables him to discover the meaning of the changes in philosophy. His knowledge of modern philosophy was no less profound. He was especially well acquainted with the schools of modern German philosophy, the controversial development of which he eagerly observed and critically studied.

Sezemanas sees the meaning of historical studies not so much in the delivery of the facts of philosophy or in the retelling of the ideas of the great philosophers as in the insight into the self-

consciousness of culture. That is why the history of philosophy has to reveal the relations of the past, present and future in the development of culture. Philosophy is not the history of cognition alone, but of profound changes in human life.

Philosophy has continually to interpret the meaning of various historical facts, This is not hidden in the facts themselves; the process of discerning it is dramatic and takes great effort. As a rule, only the great thinkers manage to achieve theoretical forms of expression. This is not to say that they create these meanings, in fact they only reveal and express them. These meanings and values are present either in the consciousness of a concrete person, or of a separate social group, or of a whole nation. The method of their cognition is called an understanding.

Facts are always various, different and separated; there is no spontaneous unity among them. They are unfixed in meanings and values, but historical changes in meanings and value are by no means gradual. The history of humanity consists of qualitatively different periods of spiritual culture. Therefore a new period cannot be explained by the previous one in spite of the fact that the first was born and grew up within the latter. As a rule new meanings come into being quite unexpectedly. Their appearance makes historical facts speak with additional and more profound significance in comparison with the previous one.

Such an interpretation of the history of philosophy breaks off relations with evolutionism. The speculative development of the present from the past, as well as of the future from the present, is impossible. Real history never corresponds with the intellectual logical forms by which its cognition is shaped. Real history never fits into the wisest prognosis, but always puts every prognosis to shame.

Sezemanas, therefore, thinks that communication between the present and the past could more easily be established in the contrary direction: the re-examination and re-evaluation of the present not only gives a new meaning to contemporary events but also sheds a stronger light on the past and reveals things which earlier were unseen. In this way the different cultural periods of the past receive a better explanation. From this it appears that their contents have some teleological meaning.

This understanding of history enables Sezemanas to examine crisis as a periodic phenomenon of culture. Culture comes to a crisis when the old scale of values falls short in its explanation and estimation of new events and facts, people lose the orientation and meaning of life, and the world becomes a strange, frightening and dangerous place to live. This situation of disorientation and despair can be overcome only by means of the discovery of new meaning, for in this way the dependence of historical events upon the activity of people can be restored.

In this understanding of the history of philosophy the future is open: it cannot be anticipated or defined. The main thing rests not in the impossibility to know clearly about the period to come, but in the fact that the values of the present enable men to act, while at the same time their actions are building the future. It does not matter that the future will appear differently than desired as long as the historical process is not hindered. When it is, crisis begins, which finally results in the discovery of methods to get over it.

Sezemanas sums up his conception of past, present, and future connections when in speaking about the crisis of modern European culture he also sees its vital forces:

It has to find a new explanation of the present, which not only explains it from the point of view of the past, but also would justify it in the sight of the future. Through the vortex of events it must discern new values and meanings which were not seen before. However, such an explanation as an act of cultural creativity cannot limit itself to the present alone, it casts its own light upon the

past and reveals its new dimensions which bring it closer to the forces of the present. It is impossible to explain the present without an explanation of the past. In this way cultural creativity preserves the living connection between the past and future and through the present — the connection with the future.<sup>5</sup>

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## **Notes**

1. See the book, pp. 567-568.
2. The Manuscript Department of Vilnius University Library.
3. "Laiskai is toli", *Moteris*, 1986. Nr. 6. p. 15.
4. V. Sezemanas. *Estetika* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1970), 463 p.
5. See the book, p. 141.



## Chapter XIV

# Lithuanian Philosophical Thought between East and West

*Arvydas Sliogeris*

The subject and the heading of the present report are obviously too solemn and rather mythologized. They bring the idea of the supposed cultural mission of Lithuania advanced by Stasys Salkauskis, to achieve a synthesis of Eastern (Oriental) and Western (Occidental) cultures. This idea which emerges, in one way or another, in bold or modest fashion, is a peculiar manifestation of a non-aggressive cultural Messianism. Of course, in trying to render concrete this Messianic idea of Salkauskis and apply it exclusively to philosophy, there are no great pretensions. As far as I know, no Lithuanian philosopher has sought to achieve or even set forth such an ambitious goal as a synthesis of Eastern and Western philosophy. Even the originator of this idea, Stasys Salkauskis, when it comes to his philosophy, was a quite moderate and fairly orthodox Westerner. Some unpretentious improvisations within the limits imposed by neo-Thomist thought was quite enough for him.

### **Existential Roots of Lithuanian Culture**

Yet this "between" of Stasys Salkauskis discloses one simple, but fateful feature of the Lithuanian philosophical thought: its lack of self-sufficiency and its dependence upon either Western or Eastern (Oriental) philosophy, and rather frequently its dependence upon both of them. Indeed, Lithuanian philosophy has never been either authentic or self-dependent. It has never become an organic, intrinsic part and parcel of high Lithuanian culture. It has not grown from its own roots concealed in the specific experience of the Lithuanian mentality. It simply failed to unfold from the "local" need to reflect upon everyday insights into the world and first-hand experience, or to communicate such insights and experience in other language than that of philosophy or metaphysics. We failed even to create a universal intellectual space for philosophical reflection wherein a dialogue among thinking people might take place. Space of this kind was non-existent before and does not exist now.

It is absolutely evident also that we do not possess a tradition of Lithuanian philosophy as an integral development of one essential and predominant thought, though the development of such thought might bring some freshness to the present day from the past and build new bridges linking us with the future. The history of Lithuanian philosophy cannot be viewed as a reflection upon the unfolding of a certain tradition of philosophical thought. Rather, it is a mixture of scattered and usually absolutely unrelated facts of intellectual life. Philosophy in Lithuanian culture has always been a foreign body brought in from abroad, either by ourselves or by foreigners. At best it unfolded in the form of academic disciplines.

Philosophy has always been only our culture and never our nature. From this fact stem its inherent decorativeness, rootlessness and dispensability. Our Lithuanian experience of the earth and the sky has been articulated most authentically through religion, poetry and — to a somewhat lesser extent — other forms of art, e.g. painting. Our nation's cultural search for its inner self and self-expression was first and foremost poetic, and in its most brilliant aspects this was lyrical poetry. Emotions and imagery were definitely predominant — not philosophical abstraction.

It was characteristic of Lithuanians to observe the earth more frequently than the sky. The glance at the earth was poetic and mystical, while the glance at the sky was indicative of the Christian outlook. Lithuanians were never able to look at the sky like Plato and see pure ideas, mathematical relations, forms or metaphysical entities instead of clouds. The sky was empty and silent for us, sometimes evolving a poetic inspiration or a feeling of an aesthetic order — but nothing more. Earthly things were always more real than heavenly entities, and sensible reality always dwarfed the intellectual order. Consequently, Lithuanian figures arrived at conclusions based on an authentic experience that the supreme being should be or might be invisible. We were children of the earth. Even our God, Rupintojelis (a crucifix carved in the fashion of Lithuanian folk art), was obviously thinking not about heavenly but about earthly matters.

It is self-evident that such experience oriented towards the earth and sensible things did not possess a capacity to stimulate real metaphysical flight. Therefore when a fellow Lithuanian would dare to fly into the Platonic sky or the Kantian realms of pure reason, he instantly would lose contact with his own genuine experience and begin to speak in the foreign language of Western metaphysics or Oriental philosophy. Transcendence (in the sense of transcending all sensible) which is the kernel of Western metaphysics and Oriental philosophy has been brought into Lithuania from abroad, for the Lithuanian did not possess such an experience. As far as I know, no serious Lithuanian philosopher considered this world of sensible things either as the veil of Maya or the Platonic cave of shadows.

For Lithuanians the visible world was the sole, true and supreme being — within the limits of authentic experience, I would stress — whereas the traditional philosophy in the West and the East alike would always begin with transcendence and the negation of the real existence of the sensible world. Having annihilated the sensible nature or things with the help of the guillotine of thought or mystical intuition, traditional philosophy would always force its way into the realms of metaphysical things and mathematical relations (in the West) or into the Great Nothingness or Non-Being (in the East). For the Oriental and the Western philosophy the sky was of importance, while the Lithuanian, on the contrary, was catering for the earth and building on this native soil all the monuments of his spirit. That is why he has never been a philosopher either in the Western or in the Eastern (Oriental) sense of the word.

## **Philosophy in Lithuania**

For this reason a strange, though quite understandable, thing has happened: our first genuine philosophy, related to the nation's revival at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, grew not of our own inherent experience, but from the alien world. Its true source, to put it in the words of Edmund Husserl, was not "the things themselves", but books and texts. This sole circumstance has destined it to a lack of self-dependence and to inauthenticity. That is why such a philosophy was inescapably marked with the seal of ideology.

Our first Lithuanian thinkers, Adomas Jakstas-Dambrauskas and Stasys Salkauskis, were essentially not philosophers in an authentic (Greek or German) sense of the word, but ideologues. The true object of their reflections was not the aspects of existential experience, but ready-made ideas adopted from the West or from the East. They were not the seekers after the truth (*aletheia*) that is thought of as not yet known or after the mysterious being (*Sein*). By no means were they the lovers of wisdom in a Socratic sense. They accepted the truth as a thing already discovered and took it for granted. At best they thought of such a truth as needing certain commentaries and some



sort of more reliable substantiation. This truth was concealed in Catholicism, namely, in the Catholic philosophy which by the very reason of being Catholic served an ideological purpose.

A similar thing happened to Vydunas, a thinker of somewhat greater spontaneity: his philosophy is a mixture of foreign ideas — in this case not of Western, but of Oriental origin. One would not dare to call such a mixture even a decent eclecticism. That is why there is no essential difference between Jakstas and Salkauskis, on the one hand, and Vydunas, on the other. All these thinkers were ideologues — propagandists and proponents of ready-made systems, ready-made foreign ideas that had long ago lost their former vitality and failed to become a part of the existential experience of the aforementioned men.

The ideological orientation of their philosophy manifested itself in several essential features that are characteristic of ideological life: 1) philosophy fails to separate from the institutionalized religion and from the corpus of codified religious truths; 2) the truth is not thought of as a path to the unknown, but is meant as a thing known beforehand, in advance, that requires only some sort of substantiation or indoctrination; 3) the atmosphere of an answer instead of a question is predominant, wherefrom arises a pretension to gnosis, i.e. to omniscience; 4) a universalist effort to explain everything on the basis of a single (understood as the "only truthful") system of thought is predominant; 5) the practical and the instrumentalist orientations considerably outweigh the theoretical standpoint. Such a situation causes habitual relapses into moralization and references such as to "what a person should be like", "what he ought to do", how he must live in order to meet the standards of "righteousness", and so on. This orientation is utterly foreign to philosophy of the first magnitude and grand style, which emerges from intuitions about the real capacities and possibilities of a human being as well as those of the world. Therefore, there is nothing extraordinary in the fact that our first philosophers were the ideologues not only in a figurative, but also in a literal sense: Jakstas was an ardent Catholic figure and a censor of public morality; Salkauskis was the ideologue of *ofateitininkai* (the organization of the Catholic youth); and Vydunas was a "public figure" and a mahatma-therapist in an Oriental fashion.

The second generation of Lithuanian philosophers (whose most distinguished representatives were, without doubt, Antanas Maceina and Juozas Girnius) resolutely focused its attention on Western thought, thinking skeptically of the idea of synthesis put forward by Salkauskis, as well as of the theosophy and Oriental mysticism favored by Vydunas. Yet this turning point did not change essentially or radically the very character of the philosophy of Maceina and Girnius. In its basic features this philosophy still remained ideological, though its ideological character was somewhat mitigated by the preoccupation of Maceina and Girnius with so-called existentialism, first of all, in its German version in the ideas of Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger.

But these ideas were also subordinated to the "only truthful" Christian philosophy, though the latter received a much broader and freer interpretation in comparison with that of Jakstas and Salkauskis. Maceina as well as Girnius had never been orthodox neo-Thomist, yet at the same time they never overcame (nor did they make an effort to do so) the philosophical and ideological rhythms of Catholicism. Catholicism with its "eternal" truth managed to remain the alpha and omega of their philosophies. We shall not find in their philosophy a free search for truth, an atmosphere of risk and endless questions, an effort to begin from *arche*, nor a real passion for thought. The ideological motives to defend and propagate "the Catholic truth", that are rooted in their philosophy, always paralyse the resoluteness and courage to look at the abyss of the mysterious transcendence, where faceless truth emerges only as a dim hope and anxiety of ignorance.

They are not philosophers in a Greek sense of this word, for they knew the truth and were not searching for it. This is a sign, mentioned above, of dependence on anonymous and alien philosophy, be it presented in a written or a spoken form. That is why the main works of Maceina and Girnius could be ascribed to the genre of "the philosophy of culture". A spontaneous, "primordial" impulse to think is absent in those works, as well as an effort to reflect upon those things that are subject to direct revelation and not to that expressed through any medium of "cultured" form. In general, Maceina and Girnius think of philosophy only as of a certain theoretical discipline, an instrument of "investigation", and by no means as essentially a specific mode of thought aimed at sharing the existence with, casting a pensive glance (devoid of any practical motives) at, and reflecting deeply upon, the *arche* of the world that reveals itself directly and in a spontaneous and primordial manner.

This is the reason for the complete dependence of these thinkers not on things themselves, but on the thought expressed in words (in this case, I mean dependence on the West). The philosophy of Maceina and Girnius is not a testimony of transcendence itself; rather, it is only a commentary on foreign experiences of the transcendence. These philosophers are still soaring in a space of ideology, between the Eastern (Oriental) and the Western philosophical texts, and by no means between the Eastern and the Western modes of experience. They are still floating in the alien ocean of mythical and logical utterances, but not in the idiomatic and authentic outpouring of being that might be revealed directly. The moves of lively and spirited thought were not made; instead, they were only imitated. An independent step in the direction of evident experience of either being or non-being was still absent.

## **Liberation**

### *Ideologies*

It would have been difficult to foresee the future unfolding of Lithuanian philosophy if the fatal turning point of the year 1940 had not taken place. It not only disrupted the natural development of our nation's intellectual life, but also annihilated the very basic conditions of normal spiritual self-expression. The Bolshevik occupation threw Lithuania back to the zero point. With certain stipulations being taken into account, we may call this a point of new beginning. But speaking about the new beginning of Lithuanian philosophy we should most emphatically state something which at first sight seems paradoxical: this second beginning was in its very essence (but not its details or models of expression) similar to the first beginning connected with the aforementioned names of Jakstas, Salkauskis, Vydunas, Maceina and Girnius. And again, for the second time, Lithuanian philosophy emerged as an ideology. But this time it was subdued not to the Catholic, but to the Bolshevik (or — as it used to be called — Marxist) ideology. As a result of ideological, political and economic terror for the next 50 years in Lithuania there was established a Bolshevik (and consequently, to some extent Oriental) version of Marxist philosophy. All professional philosophers willy-nilly became (or, rather, were forced to pretend to be) Marxists.

Yet there is also an important difference, though not connected with the very essence of philosophy, between the first and the second beginning. Virtually all philosophers of the early 20th century and the first period of Lithuania's independence voluntarily accepted the Catholic ideology and philosophy, and even considered it as a natural and idiomatic form of expression. They freely and sincerely accepted and preached the truth of Catholic philosophy, whereas the major part of philosophers in Soviet Lithuania accepted the Marxist ideology and philosophy under the strain of

dire, inescapable necessity forced upon them by the ruling regime. Of course, some philosophers were loyal to the Soviet rule and of sincere Marxist persuasion. Yet they presented an exception rather than the rule. The brightest minds accepted Marxism with reluctance and with numerous perceived, or more frequently unperceived, reservations. In general, the cases of natural, i.e. sincere, ideological fanaticism among the philosophers in Lithuania of that time were virtually absent. There were some exceptional cases, but their motivation had nothing to do with philosophy as such. In either event, we should state that Lithuanian philosophy for the second time was forming within an ideological framework. Unrestricted philosophizing that develops from authentic experience and efforts to reflect on this experience again became impossible, at least in the public field of philosophical discourse.

Yet, in my opinion, in no other period of the Lithuanian philosophy but that of the Soviet times does there seem to emerge a slow, difficult, but crucial breakthrough. I would call it a gradual liberation from the ideological way of thinking. It may be viewed as yet another paradox on the path of Lithuanian philosophy. Since the Bolshevik ideology (which was directly identified with the Marxist philosophy) was forced in a compulsory fashion, it gave rise to a silent yet persistent opposition to ideology as such, to ideology of any sort, not only that of the Bolshevik style, but to the ideological way of thinking amongst all Lithuanian intellectuals, philosophers included. The ideological terror and the enforcement of the dogmas of the Marxist philosophy quite naturally stimulated the brightest minds of Lithuania to think skeptically of any kind of ideology, irrespective of its content. A secret yet intensive liberation from the ideological mentality was under way during those years.

Certainly, this process was uneven, difficult and painful. One should acknowledge that a certain part of Lithuanian intellectuals for some time was bewitched by the socialist (or, rather, Communist) ideology and the Marxist philosophy. But I must repeat once again that such a pattern was much more an exception than the rule.

Even within the limits of the official Marxist philosophy an anti-ideological skepticism and even some kind of insubordination (certainly, without any visible forms) were undergoing development and maturation. I would even dare to assert that during the Soviet era liberation from the ideological way of thinking was much more intensive in the milieu of Lithuanian philosophers than in the environment of, say, Lithuanian writers and artists. There is nothing extraordinary in such a phenomenon, since the professional philosophers having a first-hand acquaintance with, and experience of, dialectical and historical materialism were in position best to notice from within the deficiencies, inconsistencies and weak points of Marxism. Lithuanian philosophers had an opportunity to get acquainted, though cursorily, with modern Western philosophy. Such an opportunity had never ceased to exist, but later was gaining momentum. As classical philosophy "before Marx" was acknowledged and officially permitted, the "only true" Marxist doctrine had its rival points of comparison. In most cases such a comparison spoke against Marxist philosophy, thus liberation from ideology was under way even within the framework of the official Marxist philosophy lectured at Lithuanian universities.

*Eugenijus Meskauskas*

Speaking about this liberation I would like, in the first place, to mention the name of Professor Eugenijus Meskauskas and to review briefly his work done in the process of the Lithuanian transformation of Marxist philosophy. In my opinion, the role of this person in destroying the ideological way of thinking was unique, though I know that most of my colleagues, in particular

the younger ones, would not subscribe to such an opinion. Therefore, I shall make an attempt to substantiate my argument. The corpus of written works by Eugenijus Meskauskas is not great, since, in general, he preferred direct dialogue with living people to writing which, as I know, was a real torment for him. Such an unfavorable attitude towards the written word experienced by the Professor may well be viewed as a Socratic trait of his character which, of course, does not diminish the magnitude of this philosopher. The true vocation of Eugenijus Meskauskas was his lectures delivered to undergraduate and postgraduate students. During the Soviet period, the postgraduate lectures were an extraordinary intellectual event in the years 1968 through 1974. They were attended not only by the philosophers, but also by a great number of intellectuals from other fields and backgrounds.

A favorite method was employed by Eugenijus Meskauskas during his course (certainly, inescapably ideologized) on dialectical and historical materialism aimed at undermining and demolishing the ideological thinking as such. His basic proposition was very simple: in its true nature Marxist philosophy is scientific, though not in the Western, technological sense, for the term "science" in those times was employed to denote any sort of knowledge that was firm and coherent. Therefore, one should find and emphasize all the scientific capacities then thought of as inherent in Marxist philosophy, and at the same time combat the ideological dogmatism which was also thought to be firmly rooted therein.

The main thesis of Eugenijus Meskauskas that expresses his attitude reads as follows: Marxist philosophy is the general methodology of science and therefore should manifest the specific features of scientific thinking as such. Hence, it must teach one to think in an objective, unbiased, undogmatic and anti-ideological way. This contention in a very peculiar yet consistent fashion underwent reiteration and dissemination in the course of the dialectical materialism.

Eugenijus Meskauskas transformed the so-called materialistic dialectic into extreme skepticism and relativism. His lectures used to be a remarkable school of Socratic irony. All the basic, strictly defined and firmly fixed categories of traditional metaphysics which were enshrined by Hegel and left intact by his Soviet disciples and adherents in the canon of dialectical materialism (such as "being", "consciousness", "essence", "phenomenon", "form", "content", "quality", "quantity", and so on) in the horizon of Eugenijus Meskauskas's interpretations would lose their metaphysical definiteness, substantial meaning and, turning one into the other in the course of dialectical interplay, would be deprived of any dogmatic stability and vanish like a puff of smoke. Matter would turn into consciousness, and vice versa; necessity would appear only as a mode of expression of chance; essence would merge with the phenomenon; phenomena would become essential; the truth in its dialectical unfolding would turn head over heels and become falsehood, all things would lose their intrinsic form and melt away into the universal interrelation of the world of phenomena, thus turning into process. Becoming would appear as a highest manifestation of being, while being would sink into the non-being of procedural transformations, thus leaving only a dim shadow of temporary stability.

All that dialectical interplay, similar to a conjurer's tricks, led into nothing — quite in the fashion of Socratic dialogues. In the end all those entities — things and categories alike — that once had been thought of as stable and reliable, would become non-existent or, rather, would begin to be viewed as sheer phantoms of the world of words. The skepticism and relativism sometimes approached the threshold of philosophical or even sophistical nihilism. The shadow of Pyrrho was soaring above those lectures.

Yet a somewhat more substantial part of ideological phantoms and dogmatism was left intact in the course of the historical materialism. The key dogmas of the Marxist social philosophy were

not allowed to be disposed of or removed so easily, since such a step would have meant an open revolt against the sanctities of the Bolshevik ideology. In no way and by no means could one slaughter the sacred cows of historical materialism, i.e. the ideas of class struggle, the progressive development of history towards socialism, the superiority of socialism over capitalism, and other dogmas.

But Eugenijus Meskauskas, perhaps even being unaware of it, managed to drive a wedge of skepticism and nihilism into the monolith of historical materialism. Such an attitude and behaviour were expressive of his standpoint of radical historicism and historical relativism. The essence of that standpoint is simple: there are no eternal or eternally truthful situations or conditions in the world of the human being, since man's history, like the Heraclitean stream, drags everything and everybody into nothingness, into non-being. Everything is temporary, everything is doomed to extermination, including the socialist paradise. The final conclusion arrived at not by Eugenijus Meskauskas himself, but by his listeners (for example, by the author of this report) is such: there is no being, but non-being is. Or, construed even in a more radical way: nothing (inclusive of non-being and nothing itself) exists, and we are subject to a sheer illusion of appearance that anything at all may exist. And all ideologies and iron chains of speculative systems must be rejected.

The extreme relativism of Eugenijus Meškauskas was sometimes bewildering. It provoked an opposite, dogmatic, reaction (though not the Marxist one) and aroused the revolt of a spirit yearning for stability and certainty. Yet this relativism accomplished its work of destruction, since the brightest minds of our generation ceased to believe in any ideology — be it the socialist, the liberal, the Catholic, or any ideology at all. Any attempt to link philosophy to ideological dogmatism was rejected.

At the beginning of the 1970s some philosophers emerged in Lithuania who at that time might have been the freest from any kind of ideology not only in the Soviet Union, but in a broader context as well. We were freer than our colleagues in the West who, in any case, subscribed to certain political views and, consequently, were bound to some sort of ideology. We did not possess political views, for in our country such a thing as politics at that time was simply non-existent. I would also add that the philosophical works of the Lithuanian philosophers of the first period of our nation independence exerted no influence at all upon the formation of our views and anti-ideological attitudes. Even in those years the ideas of Maceina and Girnius seemed too bookish, inanimate and dogmatic. On the other hand, at that time we were simply not acquainted with the works and style of thinking of Algis Mickunas, Alfonsas Lingys or Vincas Vycinas, which, as I may discern now, was much more expressive of our own philosophical mood during that period.

### *Existential Re commencement*

In any case, specifically at that time — at the beginning of the 1970s — we energetically focused our minds on the West and turned away not only from the Bolshevik East, but also from the more distant Orient, since the East for us had a persistent association with despotism, oppression, brutal force, ideological and political terror. We returned to Europe quite easily and even naturally, for we found this free continent in ourselves, in Lithuania, here and now.

The art of Eugenijus Meskauskas helped us to find the West in our souls, yet it also taught us the capacity of resistance to the bewitchment of those ideologies and words that even Europe may one day try to force upon us. In the field of philosophy this turning point and awakening most clearly takes place in my generation, though the premises for such a change were prepared not only by Eugenijus Mekauskas, but also by his first pupils, still half-Marxist, i.e. Jonas Repsys,

Vinciunas and Albinas Lozuraitis. This inner liberation was stimulated not only by the downfall of the Marxist ideology, but also by the collapse of so-called socialism, the first signs of which also appeared in the 1970s. All illusions vanished, and a cynical society emerged that was later called "the period of stagnation".

Yet for the youngest generation of Lithuanian philosophers (the most distinguished figures of which were Evaldas Nekrasas, Rolandas Pavilionis and a few others) that time was not one of stagnation, but of the most intensive thought. It was indeed a third beginning of Lithuanian philosophy. Despite external constraints and the need to pretend in public to be Marxists — albeit unorthodox, very liberal ones and by no means hardliners — during occasions of private sharing of opinions as well as in our souls we enjoyed complete freedom. We were free to such a degree that this freedom sometimes aroused in our minds some sort of worry and even fear. Specifically this freedom that sometimes is not very pleasant urged me to write my main book, *Butis ir pasaulis* (The Being and the World), wherein I made an effort to impose certain limits and guidelines on my thought as well as to find more clear-cut contours of my existential situation. In principle such notions as God, socialism, the East and the West, had lost their substantial meaning and importance in my eyes by that time.

In the public field of philosophical expression this freedom manifested itself in two forms — in an exceptional interest in, and attraction to, the history of Western philosophy, and the so-called "critique of bourgeois philosophy". The second form was more important, for the term "critique of bourgeois philosophy" concealed the apology and propaganda of modern Western philosophy. Yet this philosophy by no means became a new sacred cow or idol. The ideological loyalty to any idol, even to a very attractive one, was not acceptable to us. We were aware of the fact that we did not possess the truth and, therefore, we were simply destined to search for it by ourselves, with the help of our own brains and, what is most important, with the help of our own specific language. The acquired inner freedom initiated and gave momentum to our efforts to think in an original and, one may say, primordial manner, *ex arches*, without authorities or superstitions, without dogmas and ready-made systems of thought that might be forced upon us from outside or simply accepted by us voluntarily yet uncritically.

It appears to me that we finally and perhaps for the first time in Lithuania defeated our inferiority complex and the ideological way of thinking in the broadest sense of this word. A strong need to reflect upon our experience, to make sense of it and give it a philosophical meaning had awakened — I mean specifically that experience which emerges here and now, in the existential habitat of our place and our time in which we are destined to live. There was an urge to think by ourselves, to think from the beginning and to reflect upon the beginning itself. Yet revolutionary nihilism as well as idle running after originality were utterly foreign to us.

We had a perfect understanding of the fact that the beginning was not an absolute thing; that the beginning was neither the creation from nothingness, *ex nihilo*, nor was it a reflection on empty place. We managed to save in our hearts a deep respect for philosophical tradition and adopted, so far as we were in a position to do so, the experience and all the main problems of modern Western philosophy. Yet the tradition and the great contemporary Western thinkers were nothing more than a staircase leading us to things themselves. The stairs proved to be very long and gradually turned into mistaken paths and *cul-de-sacs*, wherein, unfortunately, we find ourselves now. We do not know where these paths are going to lead us. Yet we know that nobody else can think for us — neither the East nor the West, neither the socialists nor the Catholics. No such ideology or method, be it the most sophisticated and updated, is in position to substitute for our own painstaking

reflections, for it is the same to be in the beginning and to think by yourself. Thus the existential variant of the well-known thesis of Parmenides seems to emerge as our main guideline.

At the end I would like to return to the beginning of this report, to its heading. In my opinion, Lithuanian philosophers most of all lacked trust in their own experience. This is the reason why the dilemma of what path to choose — that of the East or that of the West — could emerge in their heads. Too often and too timidly our philosophers were accustomed to look either to the East or to the West, forgetting the fact that essential and most meaningful things thrive nearby, here and now, before our eyes and beneath our feet. Lithuanian philosophy was always too fearful, it was always eager to check and compare itself against the standards and measures imposed by others. It was still wandering in the distance, *in der Ferne*, in the mythical and ideological realm of the foreign word which uttered an alien experience. The East and the West are those great phantoms that bewitched not only Vydunas and Salkauskis, but even now seem to cast a spell over a large number of our contemporary philosophers.

We should hope that in this magic formula, "between the East and the West", neither the East nor the West, but this "between" will become the main link and part of this chain. We shall find in this "between", wherein we are positioned, a place for the East as well as for the West, discarding all mythological syntheses and simply entering into contact and dialogue with the greatest thinkers of other nations. We are nobody and nothing without them, but turning them into idols and refusing to think by ourselves we also fail to become somebody or something, and yet again plunge into the emptiness of non-existent nothingness, *nichtet-ing Nichts*, to put it in the Words of Martin Heidegger. Thus the only possible conclusion is such: *Hic Rhodus, hic salta!*

*Lithuanian Institute of Philosophy and Sociology*





## Chapter XV

# Arvydas Sliogeris: The Philosopher as Knight of Being

*Regimantas Tamosaitis*

Arvydas Sliogeris, professor of Vilnius University, is one of the most productive philosophers in Lithuania. In the period of the Soviet regime his intellectual activities proceeded as if under cover and were known mostly in restricted academic circles, where traditionally there circulated free thought and where opposition convictions prevailed. Therefore, when Lithuania regained independence, the accumulated intellectual energy of philosophers, directed against totalitarian ideologies and their philosophical sources, erupted in full force. However the feeling of the restriction and the sense of the imaginary opponent remained, and revealed itself in the frenzied style of his works, — the frenzy, which is intensified by the incomparable rhetorical virtuosity of the professor. The books of Sliogeris emerged one after another, ascending in eloquence and expressiveness. No wonder that the specific philosophical subjects in these essays acquired political, cultural and social significance.

### Writings

In his first works Sliogeris investigates and interprets the classics of Western philosophical tradition, particular attention being given to the founders of modern thought, to the hermeneutic trend in philosophy: S. Kierkegaard, F. Nietzsche, E. Husserl, M. Heidegger, K. Jaspers, etc. In the course of time he takes over their subjects, begins to interpret them in his own way, and manifests his own more or less original outlook. Having spent much of his life in translating and interpreting eminent Western philosophers Sliogeris remained himself in the orbit of their thought and continued the same problematic. On the other hand, having formed his own standpoint, he frequently opposed these philosophers, now and then criticizing the same points, which he traced out in his own works. Thus his way of thought and relation with the classics sometimes seems paradoxical.

In his first work — *zmogaus pasaulis ir egzistencinis mistymas* (The Human World and the Existential Thought, Vilnius: Mintis, 1985) — Sliogeris introduced significant new perspectives on today's Lithuanian philosophy, which predominated over the ideological attitude to philosophy and the hegemony of Marxist methodology. This critical monograph was followed by other works in which Sliogeris laid out his own original considerations on the ontological and existential subjects: *Daiktas ir menas: Du meno kurinio ontologijos etiudai* (Thing and Art: Two Sketches on the Ontology of Art Work, Vilnius: Mintis, 1988); *Butis ir pasaulis: Tyliojo gyvenimo fragmentai* (Being and World: Fragments of the Silent Life, Vilnius: Mintis, 1990); *Post scriptum: Is filosofiniu rankrascio* ("Post Script: From Philosophical Diaries, Vilnius: Regnum fondas, 1992); *Sietuvos: Eseistikos rinktine* (The Pools: Selection of Essays, Vilnius: Mintis, 1992); *Konservatoriaus ispazintys: 1988-1994 mety tekstai* (Confessions of a Conservative: The Texts of 1988-1994, Vilnius: Pradai, 1995); *Transcendencijos tyla: pamatiniai filosofijos klausimai* (The Silence of Transcendence: Fundamental Philosophical Questions, Vilnius: Pradai, 1996).

Undoubtedly significant influence was exerted upon him by his voluminous translations into Lithuanian of the philosophical classics: G.W.F. Hegel's *Vorlesungen uber die Philosophie der*

*Geschichte, Phanomenologie des Geistes*, A. Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille and Vorstellung*, F. Nietzsche's *Goetzen-Damerung*, K. Marx's and M. Heidegger's selected works, etc.

The texts of Sliogeris are distinguished by their impressive stylistic expressiveness, flowing language and intensive emotional charge. The emotional charge of Sliogeris's texts virulently involves the mind of the reader in its problematic, and force one to experience the enigmatic question of being.

The specific feature of his works is a concentric movement of thought which revolves around the same subject, that most significant and perhaps traditional philosophic question of being. The abstract ontological concept of *being*, especially in recent works of Sliogeris, gains features of an independent self-existing and self-substantiated *thing*. His philosophy, because of its attraction to the concrete manifestations of being and because of the emotional and ethical attitudes toward it, can be called a theology of the thing.

The predominant emotion in the text of Sliogeris is that of anxiety — the great anxiety because of the destiny of the *human being* and of the *being of the thing*, which stands behind human life and together with it. This emotion — like the Heideggerian *Sorge* — covers all the subjects which the philosopher reflects upon in terms of the fundamental question of being, and marks these subjects with an especially temperamental "existential" style and dramatic coloring. Questioning being is the most serious questioning — the postmodern play on meanings does not fit there. This seriousness demonstrates the principal modernistic standpoint of Sliogeris, i.e. his faithfulness to the tradition of philosophy and to the inherited humanistic values of Western civilization; at times in debates the philosopher revealed himself to be a decided Europocentrist. This faithfulness to the classics and the efforts of philosopher to reconstruct the values of human life stands in strong reaction against the postmodern trends of thought, which now gains strength in Lithuanian philosophical and cultural discourses. The non-authentic "rewriting" of texts, epistemological and ethical relativism, the concept of simulacrum, etc., are characterized by Sliogeris as signs of a parasitic mind, and but a simulation of life.

The essential subjects of Sliogeris include the ontology of being, the existential situation of the human in the world, its relation with the natural and cultural-social surroundings and reflections on the value systems of Western civilization.

## **The Being of Things**

Being generally disposed against metaphysical speculations, Sliogeris nevertheless uses metaphysical concepts. The concept "transcendental" in Sliogeris is one of the most enigmatic. Difficulties in its comprehension arise because of contradictions between its traditional idealistic and theological connotations and the new meaning which it gains in the works of Sliogeris.

By this concept one usually means the realm beyond our experiences and understanding, the realm beyond the world of phenomena. But for the Sliogeris such a concept as the being beyond the world is senseless, because there is no reality beyond reality. "The Sky is empty" proclaims this philosopher in a somewhat in Nietzschean way. The world of Sliogeris is non-paradigmatic, it is pure immanence, *the being of things*. Nevertheless he supplements this monistic concept of being by dichotomic perspectives and divides it into the realm of thought and the realm of thing, deriving the first from the second. The idealistic ontological dualism gains reverse meaning: the being of the thing is real, and the idea or thought by itself is empty. The realm of culture as a media of human speculative activities is not self-contained, but is potentially deceptive and for the philosopher is always under suspicion.

Separation of the rational self and the self-contained thing can be traced back to the Kantian epistemological dualism of intellectually apprehensible phenomenon and *Ding an sich*. In a more general way such a standpoint is a characteristic feature of romantic hermeneutics. However Sliogeris emphasizes the subjective or human causes of this dichotomy: the splitting of the monistic being comes not from the objective ontological grounds, but from the human mind as a result of the abstract linguistic description of the world (compare Kantian reasoning on the constructive activities of the intellect, which works out the intelligible world-view by its apparatus of categories). Abstract thought and the veil of words hides reality and leaves aside the true nature of the world.

The Romantic hermeneutic dichotomy in the works of Sliogeris gains new conceptual traits and linguistic emphasis: language, especially that consisting of abstract concepts, separates us from reality, deceives us and depicts all the world in anthropomorphic meanings so that the ontological problematic shifts to the epistemological. Further, as a coherent consequence, it becomes similar to the traditional Romantic controversy: *nature vs. culture*. This distinction involves a corresponding ethical attitude, which reveals itself as a reasoning on the human obligation to the being/thing, on the authentic human relation with its natural surroundings, etc. The linguistic description of the world, asserts Sliogeris, which distorts and hides reality, creates the specific anthropological realm, consisting of the artificial cultural signs and meanings. This anthropocentric attitude toward human surroundings compels us to forget the being of the thing, to be alienated in the world and to live an inauthentic life (compare the Heideggerian forgetfulness of being). The self-contained activities of the human being, especially intellectual conceptualizations, thus are interpreted as a betrayal of the natural world, and this assertion somehow resembles Nietzschean ethics — the attempts to establish an imperative of faithfulness to Nature and its laws.

Thus the dichotomy of *thinking and the thing* comes not from ontological grounds, but is generated by epistemological structures: the paradigm is the consequence of speculative thought. The linguistic screen that covers the true nature of the thing and hides reality is, in essence, the cause of the human's alienation in the world. So culture, which stands here as an antithesis to the transcendent realm of the thing, reveals itself as the more or less illusionary projection of the human mind. This non-real being in the world is hard to overcome because the reason of illusion and the subject of its overcoming is the same, namely, human subjectivity. (Such a way of thought resembles the Hindu epistemology of *maya*; in the Buddhist and Hindu soteriology the individual is himself responsible for the "correction" of the illusionary world view, which is distorted by its intellectual creative activities). The epistemological structures coherently carry on the practical ethical assumptions, insisting on the human's fidelity to non-conceptual reality, respect for natural surroundings, and the evaluation of the simple forms of life and of life values in general.

## **Humanism vs Hominism**

The ethical contraposition of artificial human cultural symbolism and the realm of reality reveal a notorious concept of Sliogeris: "hominism". By hominism he points out the inauthentic, anonymous and uniform sphere of life, which the human being finds for its existence, and the aggressive, destructive and consuming human attitude toward the world. The hoministic mind is inclined to extol its abstract ideas and anthropocentric meanings over natural life values. The hoministic mind is essentially technological in its abstract speculative activities and in life practice.

The ultimate achievement of hominism is the totalitarian ideologies and, corresponding to these, socio-political systems which destroy humanistic values.

This conception can be easily supplemented by the contrasting term it implies, namely, humanism. The latter term has different meanings in various contexts of Sliogeris, but in general it can be interpreted in an ordinary way as a fidelity to human values. By hominism he indicates human cognitive and existential insufficiency, narrow-mindedness, a conceited position in the world and an attitude of consumerism. It is an essentially anthropocentric position, when the human being imposes his own significance on all the things of the world and looks on them from the point of view of his own interests. Hominism flourishes especially in cultural intellectual fields as an inclination of the human being to rationalize in a systematic way everything in the world, imposing abstract hoministic meanings on reality and thus negating the mysterious nature and transcendental being of the thing. Hominism is an inauthentic mode of existence, where the reality of life is substituted by empty conceptions, abstract ideas and so on. Based on grounds that lack life, hominism generates universal and anonymous forms of life, a cosmopolitan culture as a favorable "nutrient medium" for uniformed, impersonal and inauthentic human individuals. The hoministic disposition uproots the individual from his natural surroundings, leaves him rootless in the world and revokes the sense of responsibility and of other humanistic values.

The tool of hominism is knowledge. Knowledge is an aggressive demonic power which destroys the being of thing, just as technology destroys the natural environment. "The being in the projection of knowledge is only as-if-being, because knowledge is a butcher of being."<sup>1</sup> But knowledge, unfortunately, is the only one way for us to reach being. "To jump into being, into transcendence is possible only by leaning on the knowledge. . . . Therefore when we jump we again fall down into knowledge. The speech of being for us is a silent, dumb and non-speaking passion."<sup>2</sup>

Knowledge founds as its residence the realm of pseudo-transcendence; the life of the mind purified of phenomena is a pseudo-life, because its knowledge feeds on the ruins left from a reduction of the reality of things. Knowledge destroys the thing: a hoministic man puts into the thing his own hoministic meanings, resulting in "the thing as meaningless, and therefore unreal in an ontological and ecological sense."<sup>3</sup> The thing has no need for the mask of meaning, which is imposed on it by the hoministic mind. The sensual form of the thing is quite different from its cognitive form. The hominized thing does not correspond to its sensual being. The Great Anonym (especially science) inserts into the thing too much meaning, which demolishes the concrete sensual form of the thing.

Metaphysical investigation deconstructs the thing and from its pieces constructs something different — Platonic ideas, God, metaphysical Nature, etc. Thus metaphysics, like a meat eater, consumes the thing, declaring it to be illusory appearance. "When the concreteness of the thing disappears, one steps into uniformity where love disappears and thinking becomes cruel, merciless or indifferent. This is because it is impossible to love concepts, silhouettes and abstractions; it is impossible to love a world which you can not see, or a body which you cannot touch and carry. One who loves abstractions hates concreteness."<sup>4</sup>

I. Kant restricted knowledge in order to leave space for faith in the absolute ideas of God, soul, and immortality. Sliogeris does the same thing, but he choose the entirely different content of transcendence — he establishes faith in the thing precisely because the thing transcends man, it is a *Ding an sich*. The thing as it is by itself could not be and must not be knowable. "We must allow for the thing to be as it is, the incomprehensible *an sich*. Let it be!"<sup>5</sup> he says transforming

the conception of Kant in an unexpected and radical way. It is not so difficult to discover in these statements the signs of contemporary ecological ethics.

The being of the thing is defined by what is significant to man. However, when the being of the thing is identified with the human meaning, one usually forgets that the thing exists in itself and for itself on the other, objective side of the being. Knowledge — the Great Anonym — destroys the thing by reducing it to causal relations, human meanings, definitions and functions. The true sense of the thing is its senselessness, proclaims Sliogeris.

"The last stage of knowledge, its culmination and the beginning of decadence is the self-knowledge of the man",<sup>6</sup> the gnostic, hoministic attitude of the human being. The manifestation of self-knowledge is followed by the breakthrough of an all-demolishing chaos.

In the search for the authentic non-hoministic being Sliogeris looks to rural life, the ethics of the simple peasant, which has no inclination to invent something new in this world or to attach importance to his own individual existence: the peasant directly grasps the perfection of being, has a natural sense of responsibility and devotion to his native soil and is faithful to the being of the thing.

So the peasant, the representative of the Chthonic ("pagan") metaculture, is the alternative to the hoministic mode of life. Hominism and humanism, as said above, are opposite attitudes and value systems. Nevertheless by no means can the romantic idealized peasant ethics be identified with the universal ethics of humanism. Therefore the dichotomy of *hominism vs. humanism* lost its symmetry, and signifies the versatile mind of philosophers in their efforts to save and reconcile the universal values of Western culture with the archetype of the "natural man" and its "native soil" ethics.

## Philotophy

The metaphysics of thing and the romantic appreciation of natural/native human surroundings brings to the discourse of the philosopher the original neologism—the conception of "philotophy" (phylotopos). By this concept — which signifies the *love* for the (native) *place* — Sliogeris means the existential situation of the human being, where the axiological-ethical system of values gains ontological meaning. The authenticity of human life can be realized in the philotophical dimension: the human rooting in his native place renders his life ontologically substantiated, his relation with the world harmonious and his ethics full of sense. Thus, looking for the philotophical structures of existence Sliogeris tries to resist the relativism of truth and values which prevails in the late-modern and postmodern culture, and to overcome the human's alienation in the world.

Sliogeris explains the meaning of philotophy, emphasizing the finiteness of existence. "The world is limited, it is the last metaphysical instance, and there is no being beyond the world. We apprehend even more that everything that is there already was, that all is in the past, and our existence is only a boring recurrence, a mummified and stiffened reality. Our life is unreal, but *others* had a true life, because they lived for the *first* time. The philotophical (meaning founding) answer: the ends of the mortal are closed and authorized; the real end and the real meaning is *my* existential end and *my* existential meaning. The purposefulness and meaning needs a horizon which would set the existential limits of my experiences and build my teleological universe".<sup>7</sup> So philotophy makes being concrete and gives meaning to the human, relating him with his closed existential end (aim). Knowledge does quite the reverse: hoministic universal knowledge has no meaning-making limits, it is boundless and anonymous. The precondition of knowledge is the deindividualized, anonymously humanized thing — anonymous pseudo-reality,

the background for the human being, scenery. "Man as a man comes to an end at the point where knowledge begins, for knowledge in the Hegelian sense is the need of man to transcend this world,"<sup>8</sup> i.e., to lose its reality.

The closed, limited world and the rooted life is natural to the peasant, who is open to things and loyal to them. "The view of the peasant — that is the name that can be given to the world outlook of the philotops."<sup>9</sup>

An almost sacred respect for the concept of being was inherited by Sliogeris from the theologically inspired speculations of the Heidegger. Respect for being is after all respect for the thing which exists side by side with the human world of culture. Being always manifests itself in real existence; this epistemological principle received its ethical strength first of all in Nietzsche's works. The founding postulate of Sliogeris is axiomatic: "Being is always thing-ness,"<sup>10</sup> and reveals itself to the human always as a thing. This is the first principle of the conception of philotopy. Philotopy is the effort of man to take the road which leads towards being.

Philotopy sets a positive relation of protection and wardship of the world. The being of thing can reveal itself only to the attentive and sensitive consciousness and only in a quick sudden flash, "as a fish in the depths of a pool". One can know the thing only by intuitive sight which pierces through the veil of the hoministic meanings and linguistic constructions. In this way the cognitive activities of the human gain aesthetic and even mystical sense.

Woman stands closer to the natural world — she is naturally inclined to maintain life and to protect its different manifestations. Her relation with the world is more direct, not complicated by conceptual mediators. "Woman has no soul" paradoxically announces the philosopher, i.e. she is not inclined to raise abstract concepts above the reality of world. Man is inclined to spawn empty ideas as a restless fish, whereas woman on the contrary takes care of real life which she herself delivers. Her attitude to the world is more authentic and real, as in the case of a peasant. A woman's life is somehow similar to the being of a thing, and the duty of the true philosopher is to take care of both of them. In some sense woman transcends the world of man and is distinguished in holiness. Fidelity to being or protection of the thing (e.g., of the natural surroundings) is in essence the knightly obligation of the true philosopher, just as man's duty is to protect woman.

The exaltation of the concrete, unique and proximate being or being-at-hand is shifted into the political and national problematics. Sliogeris in all his works comes out as the consistent and rigorous critic of totalitarian ideologies and political systems. Totalitarian ideology is the practical manifestation of the Great Anonym, knowledge. Unique and distinctive national cultures, rooted in their natural environs, must be protected and defended against the destructive powers of a global civilization, which unifies and melts all the forms of different cultures and traditions into the one homogenous mess of hoministic meanings, where the ruthless power of knowledge predominates. Thus the philosophical thought of Sliogeris, which resembles the romanticism of an Herderian type, becomes involved in the realm of post-modern post-colonial problematics.

## **Knight of Being**

The true philosopher reveals himself as a knight of being, of the thing. Where the philosophic concept of being gains, at last there is the more concrete meaning — the meaning of life. Philosophers are the protectors of a life which is more than futile metaphysical abstractions and the constructs of the gnostic-technological mind.

The hominist or the gnostic investigator is a rapist of being; the philotoper is its faithful and loving protector. The controversy between the hominist and the philotoper signifies two types of

mind — the technological and the mythological. The technological mind demythologizes and dehumanizes the world; the mythological mind tries to save the being of the thing, especially the sacred meaning of life. The insights of philosophers have some Manicheian traits of the internecine struggle between the powers of good and evil; their vision of the destiny of humanistic culture is somehow eschatological. The dominant rhetoric of anxiety can be interpreted also in the context of contemporary ecological problematic.

Laying stress on the transcendence of the natural, discussing the concepts of hominism and philotopy, advertising the ethics of the life, etc., the philosophical thought of Sliogeris takes up significant ecological and ethical subjects, which in his works supplement each other. Putting aside political and public activities Sliogeris nevertheless is an influential and authoritative thinker in Lithuania. His influence is manifest in two ways. On the one hand, Sliogeris presents to the Lithuanian audience the essentials of modern Western philosophy and introduces its prominent authors and problematics, thereby enriching the national tradition of philosophy. On the other hand, he acts as an arbiter and moderator in the cultural events of Lithuania, reflecting upon them from the critical point of view of the philosopher.

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## Notes

1. A. Sliogeris, *Butis ir pasaulis: Tyliojo gyvenimo fragmentai* (Vilnius, 1990), p. 291.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 291.
3. A. Sliogeris, *Daiktas ir menas: Du meno kurinio ontologijos etiudai* (Vilnius, 1988), p. 49.
4. A. Sliogeris, *Konservatoriaus ispazintys: 1988 - 1994 mety tekstai* (Vilnius, 1995), p. 224.
5. A. Sliogeris, *Butis ir pasaulis: Tyliojo gyvenimo fragmentai*, p. 561.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 292.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 441.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 453.
9. *Ibid.*
10. A. Sliogeris, *Sietuvos: Eseistikos rinktine* (Vilnius, 1992), p. 311.

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**Chapter XVI**  
**Rethinking the Philosophy of Culture:**  
**Lithuania and the Western Tradition**

*Marius Povilas Saulauskas*

This chapter is a methodological retrospective on the philosophy of culture as one of the most important modes of Western philosophical discourse. It is also an exposition of a critical attitude towards historicism, as well as of efficiency and its presuppositions. The significance of such problematics (which *prima facie* belong to intellectual historiography and therefore are thoroughly professional) is now evident. Lithuania faces the need to perceive its own culture and its own political and philosophical consciousness. The realization of the need to identify herself in terms of belonging to a Western philosophical tradition, followed by the creative attempts reflectively to remap against that background her own metaphysical tradition, is in direct proportion to the level of the intellectual and cultural maturity to which it ardently aspires.

The guidelines for an authentic political, ethical and philosophical consciousness are rooted in the phenomena of spiritual existence that emerged during the inter-war period. During the first Independent Republica Lithuania's philosophical visage appeared to be determined by the speculative cultural-religious discourse shaped by a desperate search for means of politico-cultural self-identification. Taken as a whole, Lithuanian philosophy, conceived as a vital move toward self-identification, turned out to be a successful reinterpretation of the Western intellectual tradition. By and large it was a productive succession and combination of problems raised by, on the one hand, neo-Thomism and, on the other by the philosophy of culture (*Kulturphilosophie*). The intersection of problems raised by the German (and Russian) tradition of the philosophy of culture and by the Catholic philosophy of religion continued to be the most important and conspicuous characteristic of inter-war Lithuanian philosophy.

Therefore it is not surprising that the realistic methodology that underpinned the traditional philosophy of culture was reanimated and reinterpreted also in the second, post-soviet, republican era. Restored together with national, inter-war independence it offers to play a leading role in both the analysis of social existence and cultural-intellectual self-reflection. However, nowadays the "most powerful historical experience" is the heritage of "dialectical" Marxist attitudes and its received habits of thinking. The overwhelming potential of the latter shows itself in the conscious and strenuous efforts to overcome those vestiges of the recent totalitarian past. With few exceptions, however, the will to be rid of them is based not on authentic self-limiting criticism or defensive liberal tolerance, but rather on the ideological pressures of the political conjuncture. And because both restituted and restituting trends, that is, the inter-war intellectual mainstream geared to neo-Thomism and *Kulturphilosophie*, and the Soviet tradition enthroned in dialectical materialism, are frankly foundationalist, realistic and monologically oriented, at the beginning of the 21st century the predominance of those methodological postures is sure to become even stronger.

That is why I believe the importance of critical reflection on the philosophy of culture and its polemic today exceeds the narrow professional limits of philosophical historiography and invades the vortex of culturological, socio-political and even economic discussions.

I will begin with a few observations that point to the main characteristics, which predetermined not only the stance of the philosophy of culture, but the nature and evolution of

philosophical discourse in the West as well. My point is to disclose the methodological gist of *Kulturphilosophie* as a foundationalist stage and medium that stimulated ultra-radical social myths, induced senseless political projects, and endangered not only the moral, but even, to a definite extent, the conceptual collapse of post-Socratic philosophical discourse itself.

### **Socrates and Plato and Their Legacies**

Greek philosophy, having laid the basis for the Western philosophical tradition, substantially preordained both the problematics and the methodological layers of present-day philosophical controversies. The first act is linked with the name of the Miletian school, the second one with the name of Socrates. Pre-Socratic Greek philosophy gave shape to the vocabulary of philosophical discourse and, most importantly, legitimized the constructive rules for the articulation of a specific philosophical vocabulary, i.e. defined the principle of theoretical abstraction that necessitates the reconstruction of natural language into the first human "artificial" — philosophical — secular language. In addition, it fixed fundamental epistemological and ontological distinctions (*epistémédoksa*, human being-nature, quality-quantity, material-logos, *nomos-physis*) and finalized the term philosophy itself.

Authorship of the first philosophical Copernican revolution should be attributed to Socrates. He installed philosophical reflection, thereby making dialogue and discourse an axis of any philosophical move. The moral dimension of the ever-questioning and arguing individual becomes an indispensable prerequisite and normative standard for doing philosophy dialogically. It is the rational essence of morality that enables the properly philosophical — epistemological, ontological, or socio-political — discursive attitude. Knowledge of the good, according to Socrates, implies conforming to it, i.e. philosophical knowing by the same token already *is* a moral behavior. Truthful knowledge is good and therefore valid knowledge, and truth itself is possible only as a dialogical discovery predetermined by the specifically moral human condition.

Ernst Cassirer, as philosopher of culture, notwithstanding the general predilections of his intellectual milieu, did his best to preserve the spirit of Socratic irony and Socrates's demon as a tactful, but also apodictic censor of moral consciousness. According to Cassirer,<sup>1</sup> Socrates turned philosophy, which previously had been just an intellectual monologue, into dialogue though Heraclitus already distinguished self-reflection as the cradle of truth. Only the human being can ask and answer vis-a-vis a human audience, only the human is able to be moral, i.e. self-accountable.

Contemporary Western philosophy then has taken its start from Socratic discourse or more exactly from the birth of *aperson*, a responsible questioner, whose position is, in the words of Habermas, a performative, communicative interaction from now on. The individual and always the dialogically questioning attitude is in charge of the authentic ability to self-identification and truth. Such an attitude, positing itself in honesty, integrity and openness, demonstrates itself as a public process of self-re-cognition, self-knowledge and self-manifestation. That means: having loaded oneself with theoretico-moral self-accountability the individual finds oneself as an asking and answering center of public philosophical discourse. The dialogization of philosophy means its individualization, personification and performatization. Thus philosophical enterprise was transformed into *res-publica*, — legalized as a public liberal space and filled with multi-voice discussions about questions that matter for mature human beings.

In this sense philosophy that transcends moral reality was disqualified — true knowledge cannot be immoral. Knowledge, considered as theory and truth, lost its pre-Socratic moral

immunity. It became an object of moral evolution and a medium of establishing moral righteousness. An intellectual act of an immoral, or para-moral person was purged out of dialogical public philosophy. An ethical dimension of a person was discovered not only as the source of his ideal public self-articulation, but also as a possibility to act, to have valid ideas and to argue. It is only as an infant or being mentally deranged, i.e. before and after one is able to understand oneself as a self-accountable being, that the person is immoral and has not yet gained or already lost the possibility of leading a moral life. But a person as *zoon politicon* and *Homo Philosophicus* can make one's life sensible only by being a moral or amoral creature — immorality is left with stones, sea, and animals, i.e., with non-persons. It is for this reason, that erudition, which has been conceived in the public spontaneity of Socratic dialogue, is so often (although unfortunately not always) accompanied by tolerance, liberal values and directed against any form of physical or intellectual aggression. As a matter of fact, from then on we have the option of holding onto the post-Socratic tradition of, emancipated, immoral philosophical discourse.

In the subsequent development of Western philosophy the Socratic dialogue, although excluded from the proscenium of philosophical discourse, nevertheless, was not left to oblivion. The motif of individual, unreducibly personal responsibility as "accountability" *ad se ipsum* that was clearly articulated by Marcus Aurelius was reiterated in the works of Immanuel Kant, Soren Kierkegaard and, although differently if not the other way round, in the biographical and political writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau.<sup>2</sup> In the Germanic languages this notion of *Sicherschenschaftungslegung* (accountability) sounds much more natural than its awkward equivalent in Lithuanian. Perhaps to a considerable extent that could account for the impact of Protestantism over German and Anglo-Saxon intellectual cultures. The possibility of such a recurrence followed not only from the historical transition of this Socratic inoculation of Greek philosophy into the conceptual characteristics of modern philosophical discourse. Though stifled by theocentric and collectivist ideas of human existence, the received idea of accountability as a proper moral and conceptual beginning, embedded in the philosophical, artistic and social manifestations of cultural reality, has always been posited in the deepest layers of Judeo-Christian cultural grammar of the West. Re-articulated by Stoicism, implanted into Medieval nominalism and vehemently revitalized by the anthropocentrically orientated Renaissance and concomitant forms of skepticism, the principle of dialogical accountability made its way through the centuries. Eventually, in the modern eras of the Enlightenment and Romanticism, it developed into the livable concepts of liberty, political equity and social justice.

However, the concept of individuality, a Latin equivalent of a Greek *atomon* and an indispensable characteristic of the modern *persona*, became a central philosophical term only in the 18th century. Thus Fichte, interpreting the Leibnizian concept of the individual monad and Kantian individual spontaneity posited as a result of transcendental individual judgement, coined the notion of introspective self-knowledge and self-building as a central productive principle of world structure. Rousseau pointed to accountability as the basic coordinate of theoretical investigation and personal identity, although he cultivated that notion mainly within the boundaries of socio-political and ethical discourse. Kierkegaard linked individual accountability with the imminence of personal choice, i.e. he made individuality the starting point of religion, philosophy, ethics and culture. In the first half of the 20th century existentialism discovered the principle of dialogic and therefore socio-moral individuality as an inevitable and effective temporal existence. Finally, in the second half of the century analytic philosophy gradually came to the conclusion that semantic and syntactic analysis cannot be satisfactory without taking seriously the socio-pragmatic dimension of linguistic social interaction. The predominance of the principles of performance,

social interaction and moral accountability leaves us with no doubts that the Socratic theme of self-accountable dialectics has become the core of the postmodern theoretical controversies.

The earlier dissemination of the principle of accountable individuality had been hampered by other methodological constants, which are especially clearly distinguished in the 19th century tradition of *Kulturphilosophie*. Socrates's claim that *ratio* must be a criterion of truth and morality in the short run already turned into radical questioning of the principle of personal accountability in Platonic thought. The irony (though not out of the blue) is that one, who had deliberately worked on the notions of Socratic philosophy, ended up creating a methodology that in the end thoroughly negated the self-accountable and thereby self-limiting spirit of its tentative prototype. Of course, the irreducibly controversial nature of philosophical discourse always was among its indispensable conditions. However Plato, who considered himself a faithful disciple of Socrates, ended with the annulment of the most precious discovery of his teacher — "I know that I don't know".

According to Popper, Plato's philosophical views are based on what he called methodological essentialism or methodological realism. These terms are used to describe fundamental characteristics of methodology, which served as the basis for modern totalitarianism and dogmatism. Consequently, methodological realism is not supposed to mean the principle of metaphysical analysis of reality, i.e. postulates of the real existence of the equivalents of general notions and abstractions. Rather, it points to the most general principles, which maintain that the purpose of theoretical analysis is to discover and to make an inventory of the "real nature", "essence" or "real meaning" of various theoretical abstractions.<sup>3</sup>

Methodological essentialism could be conveniently interpreted in terms of nihilism and serve as a solid basis for an open apotheosis of anti-humanism. Plato created the first theoretically grounded secular Utopia to legitimize spiritual and political totalitarianism — the social myth founded on the supreme authority of philosophical discourse. Plato's State not only proclaimed the "natural" inevitability of being a slave, the collective "well-being" deduced from such an essentialist statism nipped in the bud the principles of individual responsibility, freedom of choice, self-restricting reflection and doubt. By disallowing the virtue and right to individual understanding, by the same token it outlined those principles of methodological realism, which stand for irrationalism and anti-humanism. This omniscient panegyric to immoral violence in the name of "supreme order" or "ultimate nature" *nolens volens* questions the possibility of philosophical discourse itself, which is simply impossible without individual freedom to speak, to listen and to self-accountable argumentation. The claim to work out the final, i.e. ultimately true, theory or even to postulate the logical possibility and necessity of such a theoretical construction is nothing more than an endeavor to end the history of philosophy and free discourse. This pretentious vision assumed a variety of forms, from Plato's State to contemporary communism and Marxism; in the last few centuries it became a native resident of our philosophical discourse.

## Historicism

Western philosophy of culture rests on methodological realism and its pretentious offspring — historicism. By *historicism* I mean a methodological principle of an analysis of the social world and its evolution, which (a) takes the whole of historical manifestations to be a derivative of some causal, functional or theological trans-historical reason, and which (b) interprets discursive rules of such a derivation in terms of impersonal and therefore immoral laws of development. Taking into account its historicist underpinning, *Kulturphilosophie* could be seen as the most radical negative expression of Socrates's philosophical discourse. It is radical because it proclaims the

end of intrinsically indefinite Socratic discourse due to its pregiven and already revealed "reason" and unmasked structure. To the extent that such claims are doomed to failure, they always enact critical argumentation and thereby adversely serve as an important guarantee of the further development of philosophical discourse. However the need to criticize the philosophy of culture arises not only as a natural development of a free philosophical polylogue: the need of criticism transcends the boundaries of philosophy and is needed as a form of social protection, i.e. as a political or ideological outpost of individual freedom in the dangerous presence or even aggressive siege of totalitarianism.<sup>4</sup>

The oldest form of the methodological antipode of essentialism and *ipso facto* of modern historicism could be traced back to Greek skepticism or nominalism. Having arisen as early as in the fourth century BC and being a nucleus of methodological opposition to Platonic realism, it left its own markings on the future progression of Socratic values. It was Antisthenes, Socrates's disciple and persistent opponent of Plato, who settled nominalism as a rational argumentative bedrock against essentialism. Antisthenes, a man who paced in front of confounded Eleans in order to prove the falsity of their argument of the non-existence of motion, refused the claim of essentialist narrative to be a *vademecum* of everyday life or its essential practical corrective. Historically such a possibility was uncovered thanks to the problematics articulated by the new sophistic movement. The latter emphasized the theoretical potential of the distinction between *nomos* and *physis* (law-nature), which had been envisaged already by pre-Socratic philosophy. This *nomos-physis* antinomy enacted the nominalistic project proclaiming not only the moral, but also the ontological primacy of individuality.

Antisthenes was the first to give a definition of the notion: "Notion is what a thing is or happens to be or what helps to reveal its essence".<sup>5</sup> Thereby he affirmed individuality, questioned the very existence of generality, and rejected the possibility of notions thus defined to be undoubtedly true. He did not think it tenable to admit the apodictic reality of concepts and stood against any methodological claims to disclose essences as the true structure of being. According to Antisthenes, abstract generality is always inclined to turn into a moral, juridical or religious dogma. So the nominalistic attitude could be a powerful instrument that questions the truthfulness and reliability of various theoretical constructs. It builds itself up as a guarantee of the irreducibility of the principle of individual personality and also as an expression of the constitutive freedom of rational theoretical discussion, which does not shy away from the critical scrutiny of socio-political problematics. No wonder that further dissemination of nominalistic principles, mounted on the great philosophical structures of stoicism, was characterized by a spirit of criticism and *scepsis*. Thus, Plato was neither the only, nor the most consistent, disciple of Socrates. It is by no means accidental, that Antisthenes and not Plato, who suddenly fell into paralyzing illness, stayed with Socrates to the last moment of his life and witnessed, in spite of obvious danger of evoking the fury of the zealous Athenian philistines, his epoch-making departure.

From then on the nominalistic attitude, molded by numerous interpretations in the course of the millennia, developed into a significant part of Western philosophical culture. Among the most important contributions in shaping contemporary nominalism, we find the well-known Medieval dispute concerning the ontological status of the universals, as well as the methodological work of Scotus, Hobbes, Occam, Locke, Hume and Berkeley. It is of the utmost importance that nominalistic methodology did not confine itself to epistemological problematics (mainly because the same must be asserted concerning methodological realism and historicism). Namely, those who defended the nominalist approach proved to be most consistent in rejecting the claims of any dictatorship and in grounding individualistic concepts as normative principles for socio-political

criticism. The sequence of such developments can be traced in the philosophical controversies of the 20th century, including ongoing modern-postmodern disputes. In short, the parameters of the Western philosophical discourse continuously cultivated the polemical dichotomy built into the tension between Platonic and Antisthenian methodologies.

Serving as a basis of Western philosophical culture, methodological realism continues the Platonic approach while attempting to return to Socratic concepts (this is evident, for example, in the work of Schweitzer). However, consistently ignoring the Antisthenian attitude, it meanders, though unwillingly, towards nihilism and dehumanization. When deprived of Socratic accountability the basic presuppositions of philosophical discourse itself are threatened. Such a deprivation equals an attempt to limit or even to arrest the spontaneous process of rational philosophical discussion. *Kulturphilosophie* is an implementation of such a self-destructive impetus. It is symptomatic that Schweitzer mistakenly believed that philosophy taken as a whole is a cause of the crisis of culture. Contrary to Schweitzer, it was rather "critical" Western philosophy of culture itself, with its prophecy of the historical predetermination of humankind and its gloomy future as a tragedy necessitated by "eternal human nature" and "the iron laws of history", which is to blame for the much disputed crisis. "Critical" *Kulturphilosophie*, emphasizing, *inter alia*, the spiritual helplessness and intellectual impotence of an individual as well as the innate tragedy of humankind, reduced *homo liberalis* to a feeble spark in an ocean of history predetermined by its fatal laws. Enjoying, and at the same time tormenting itself over such "discoveries", the Western philosophy of culture not only stimulated, but also injured the discursive structures of philosophical discourse, calling the intellectual audience, tired of everyday routines, to even greater desperation and disbelief in the free progress of human individuals.<sup>6</sup>

Though methodological realism and historicism had influenced the problematics of philosophical discourse and the ways of solving them; though their influence on different cultural spheres and most regrettably on politics, is undoubtedly significant; and though some concepts, matured by historicism, already have been transformed even into "self-evident" truths of common sense in a considerable part of Western *oikumene*, which undoubtedly covers Lithuania — the prospects of contemporary philosophy promise to reduce their influence.

Our existence is not aimed at the past. On the contrary, it is focused on the future, i.e. we are future-conscious self-accountable beings. This existential presupposition can and should be taken as an optimistic promise and obligation. Given an individual, who has the possibility of making his own choice and perceiving alternatives, the triumphant march of historicism and essentialism can at least be slowed down. That is the meaning of the famous existentialist's idea: *Werde, was du bist* (be as you are able to be and already are), make yourself a person capable of envisaging and constructing your future existence. Turn your future into reality and reality into your past, strive for the future with all your might and hopes. Only you yourself can perceive your potential; there isn't any recipe or prophetic vision powerful enough to foresee your potential and the mechanism of its realization.

In the next part of this article let me dwell on few questions, which are extensively discussed in the voluminous literature of *Kulturphilosophie* and are bound up with the problem of its origination in philosophical historiography.

## **Kulturphilosophie**

My critical attitude towards methodological realism and historicism should not be taken as an attempt to charge their authors with immorality and other evils. I conceive philosophical discourse

not as a field of battle between concrete individuals, but rather as a polylogic forefront of different notions and theories. The fusion of methodological realism and historicism, leading to the conceptual negation of philosophical discourse, as well as holding on to radical historical relativism, dogmatism, and other conceptions that endanger the value of personal freedom and individual accountability, in most cases is just one among many principles elaborated in the work of a concrete author. Usually other methodological views mitigate or even contradict such a fusion. One can hardly imagine a philosophical system that is thoroughly free of methodological inconsistencies and contradictions. A good example is Collingwood's statement that (methodological) realism, apparently rests on the most trustworthy foundation in philosophy — human stupidity. This is the verdict of a representative of methodological realism, who always insisted, that concrete consciousness and self-consciousness are wholly predetermined by historical reality.<sup>7</sup>

*Kulturphilosophie* as a specific discourse on the specificity and logic of evolutionary developments of different stages of cultural worlds, originated not earlier than the beginning of 19th century. As follows from its basic methodological assumptions, it so relies on the modern philosophy of history that it obviously deserves to be conceived as a cultural variety of the latter. However, numerous studies, including those published in Lithuania, usually mention Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) as the "patriarch of modern historiosophy and cultural criticism" and thus *volens nolens* trace back the methodological beginning of *Kulturphilosophie* as early as the beginning of modern philosophy itself.

It is the latter thesis that I want to question. Such an attempt "to age" critical philosophy of culture is much more a matter of romantic insight than of a thorough analysis. In short, a belief that Vico began German philosophy's historicism and therefore *Kulturphilosophie* is simply wrong. My argumentation is twofold. Firstly, critical philosophy of culture is methodologically impossible without the postulate of the *historical* pre-determination of individual (self-) consciousness, its fundamental historical limitedness. Secondly, there is not, and cannot be, such a point in Vico's conception. While criticizing Cartesian skepticism towards history as a trustworthy science, the author of *New Science* could not hold such a conception of *historical* pre-determination, because he understood transcendently, and not historically, the status of the ultimate historical object as well as the general methodology of its proper investigation.

1. Should *Kulturphilosophie* be understood as a study of cultural evolution, then one is sure to note an etymological dependence of cultural philosophy on the history of philosophy or historiosophy. Historiosophical discourse must not necessarily be based on historicist methodology. It can, as happened, for example, for the analytic tradition in the second half of 20th century, confine itself to a purely methodological study of history as a specific academic discipline. Nevertheless, in the 19th century it was an evolutionist methodology of historicism that turned into the methodological gist of *Kulturphilosophie*.

By and large, the inception of historicism in Western philosophy can be traced back to a Heraclitian vision of the formation of the cosmos. In post-Socratic philosophy the methodological paradigm of modern historicism was further anticipated by Platonism and its varieties. These promoted a kind of cosmocentric historicism, i.e., a reduction of the structures of social and historical existence into the architectonic equivalents of the speculative eternal existence of ideas. Gradually this was changed by the Christian theocentric historicism. The latter attempted to reduce the basics of human existence and co-existence to the translation of trans-human reality, predetermined by the transcendent reality. The successive ages of the Renaissance and the

Enlightenment, having risen against the domination of the theocentric paradigm, gravitated towards a new anthropologically oriented methodology. Nevertheless, historicity as an independent theoretical outlook and as an autonomous discursive field no longer harbored by cosmocentric or theocentric methodology, was not had in the Renaissance or Enlightenment. The Renaissance undoubtedly reanimated the old, practically-oriented conception of history, but such a reanimation was not supported by a substantial, theoretical backing: historical discourse was valued only to the extent of its capacity to advise people lost in the vortex of the contingencies of everyday life (and even this was granted as only a deliberative voice). It is symptomatic that Descartes, though he acknowledged the importance of commendable "scientific" history, considered the latter as ultimately an impossible enterprise because of the lack of available data. In other words, if the Renaissance searched for a methodology which should install historical discourse on the joint basis of anthropocentric applicability and theological transcendence, the Enlightenment added to that an equally *sub specie aeternitatis* corpus of quantitative analysis.

It was Romanticism which cleared the space for anthropocentric historiosophical discourse *sui generis*. Although one can come across the ideas of historical progress as well as the irreplaceable value of alien cultures already in the writings of Rousseau, the rise of modern philosophy of history must be linked with the name of Herder, who disputed the cosmopolitical and theological anthropocentrism of the Renaissance and rejected the Enlightenment's conception of a panchronic, immutable essence of human nature. Declaring the historical evolution of individual consciousness and its immediate dependence on its cultural context constituted of its linguistic, national and "spiritual" socio-cultural milieu, Herder provided historicism with the modern methodology of Romanticism and thus established historiosophical reflection as a candidate for an all-embracing, consistent and self-dependent theoretical vision of human life. That is how modern historicism, nurtured by the Romanticism and classical German philosophy, — first of all by the works of Hegel, Fichte, Marx, Spengler, and (recently) Toynbee — has been turned into a powerful resident of the modern philosophical edifice and achieved its apex in the second half of the 19th century.

From a retrospective vantage point, modern anthropocentric historicism can be seen as one of the first archeological projects of individual moral consciousness, realized, *inter alia*, by the reduction of personal accountability and freedom to the anonymous structures of historical conjunctures understood as manifestations of the absolute spirit; the collective consciousness of class, nation, civilization or epoch; evolutionary tendencies of matter; or monadic structures of culture. In that, romantic historiosophy stands in direct opposition to the critical character of Kantian transcendental rationalism. Whereas Kantian criticism was intended to unveil the scale of rational knowledge and thereby to acknowledge the productivity of moral and scientific cognitive potential, modern historicism takes criticism to be an unmasking of the intrinsic impotence of rational knowledge, foreordained by its social and historical situatedness, and a validation of radical intellectual feebleness. The critical character of anthropocentric historicism reveals itself in the reduction of the individual constitution of meaning and truth to a function of irrational interactions and processes. Thus historicism manifests itself as the historical imprisonment of *homo liberalis*, as the depersonalization of individual rationality, its self-reflection and authenticity. It thereby deprives itself of the imperative of discursive Socratic accountability and eventually of the moral dimension as a whole. Modern historicism can acquire different shapes ranging from systematic Hegelian panlogism and Marxian historical materialism to the arbitrary eschatological prophesies of Oswald Spengler. Translated into the intellectual core of the ideological vocabulary, it already proved to be a constant threat of spiritual and political totalitarianism. Indeed, the history of the 20th century could unfortunately serve as a threatening



display of the practical efficiency of such a translation — in the case of Lithuania its domination covered almost all four generations.

2. The realistic, but at the same time theocentric, orientation of Vico's methodology, is related to modern anthropocentric historicism and follows from the way he uses the key notions of eternal and ideal history and language:

The sameness of ideas shared by the nations not in contact with one another must be supported by the common basis of truth. . . . The Common Sense of Mankind serves as a criterion inspired by Providence. . . . That is the source for the Rational Vocabulary, explaining the origin of all differently articulated languages — it is due to this Vocabulary alone that we can perceive the Eternal Ideal History, which provides us with histories of all the nations and periods (8, XIII axiom).

Such "rational vocabulary" or "rational language", according to Vico, "homogeneously grasps the essence of the objects, which are encountered in the social world. . . . This can be seen in proverbs . . . which are interpreted by all nations basically in the same way" (*ibid.*, XXII). The existence of an eternal language, compounded of invariable concepts, is an ontological, panchronic kernel of individual consciousness. The historical evolution of humankind is not identical with that of individual consciousness. Providence, having determined the direction of humankind's evolution by the single act of the Creation, is not the only transcendent corrective of social reality. The human being is the master of his or her free will and self-consciousness, and is not left alone before historic and cultural contingencies and social co-existence. The essential links of individuality are far from being horizontal — a person is not interpreted merely as a member of society and as a straight product of its interactive evolution. The source of cognitive productivity is localized in the vertical relations between the individual consciousness and transcendence. The warrant of true rational understanding and reliable interpretation rests with the possibility of direct divine help — benediction. The truthfulness of the outcome of historical interpretation, i.e. of the successful reconstruction of a genuine history of mankind, depends, firstly, on a pre-given ability to perceive and to identify the scheme of history that is established by Providence, secondly, true understanding, according to Vico, is directly dependent on divine inspiration, which lifts the veil woven of human vices that impedes human reason, first of all the veil of "national conceit and human haughtiness".

The first — reconstructive or identifying — move of the new historical interpretation is methodologically legitimized by Vico's famous principle of the convergence of truth and creation: *verum et factum convertuntur*.<sup>8</sup> Such a convergence is sustained by a methodological recognition of a kind of Platonic world of ideas. The concepts (ideas) enabling the comprehension of cultural phenomena reside in the reservoir of natural language and give sense to human behavior, human existence and historical development. One is capable of identifying and adequately interpreting any artifact or any action of some other person only because the perceiver and the object perceived are guided by the same bundle of values and notions. Vico does not conclude to the possibility of mutual understanding as a result of un-preconditioned inductive analysis or empirical acquaintance. On the contrary, it is derived from the pre-given system of codification — "Rational Language" (*ibid.*, XXI) — that provides a proper understanding of action (creation) and its explanation (truthful interpretation). The latter would be impossible without the essentialist presupposition of the theocentric origin of a uniform human nature and the apodictic

existence of Providence. Thus a perennial, a-historical "Rational Language" appears to be the principal methodological prerequisite and organon of historical discourse (*ibid.*, XXII). This not only enables historical knowledge, but as a pre-given *conditio sine qua non* is indispensable in order to ensure the adequate results of any discursive activity. As a received hypostasis from the source of understanding, the *Sensus Communis* (*ibid.*, XI, XII, XIII) enables us to dialogue and achieve mutual understanding. When properly recognized in philological, philosophical and, certainly, theological discourses, it authorizes true and reliable knowledge. Consequently, Vico's *New Science*, methodologically backed by the maxim "*verum et factum convertuntur*", does not comply with a discipline of scientific history as established by modern historicism. Rather it turns out to be an effective backup of a theocentric methodology in a proper interpretation of obscure folios, social practices and theoretical discourses. In other words, *verum et factum convertuntur* is intended to signal the maximum expansion of the theocentric paradigm, not to question its value and reliability in favor of anthropological historicism.

The second methodological component of Vico's *New Science* — divine incitement — is a theocentric amendment to Francis Bacon's project. Bacon, the author of the famous theory of "idols" as obstacles impeding understanding, at the same time allowed for the possibility of getting rid of them altogether. After a successful therapeutic wiping clean of the impediments of the mind, a scientist with cognitive ability cleared of pre-judgements, i.e., *tabula abrasa*, could confidently resort to the new inductive-experimental method and thus perceive reality in a proper, non-biased way. Vico, resorting to the Baconian theory of *abrasa*, reiterates the necessity of divine blessing: he insists on the transcendent interference to "transform passions into virtues", which is equivalent to the erasure of the idols of national complacency and scientific "haughtiness". Nevertheless, the purification of soiled consciousness by realizing the widespread and deeply rooted mistakes of reasoning is possible not alone by the help of God. A human being, who enjoys a free will, cannot be reduced to an obedient mouthpiece of public opinion, so irrevocable existential necessity and finitude are not the only reason for the factual imperfection of human spirit. One can at least try to get rid of the veil of vices without any exogenous assistance.

Does this mean that in such a carefully erased mind there remain no *residua* whatsoever. If so, perhaps Vico conceived such a corrected consciousness not only in terms of the Baconian *tabula abrasa*, but also of the Lockean *tabula rasa*? The answer is no, by no means. After the self-cleansing of the mind, it is not transformed into an empty vessel, ready to accumulate empirical material in a Lockean way. It is rather transfigured into a saturated organon of universal understanding. It finds itself filled up with rational structures of the eternal divine language, which contains not only intersubjective meanings but also the productive rules of the proper articulation and application of the latter. It is only because we possess this universal code of language that we are able to find a truthful interpretation of the diverse empirical data of human past, present and future. In practice, the path to true knowledge leads through the proper use of natural language, which in turn means bringing it near to the semantic and syntactic paradigm of the eternal language. The process of true understanding presupposes a gradual approximation, targeted at the ideal homomorphism of the (scientific) natural and (divine) eternal language. Thereby Baconian induction, matured by a careful search and collection of historical data, is subordinated to the Christian theocentric paradigm. Correspondingly, the *Scienza nuova* of Vico communicates not the beginning of de-theologized anthropocentric historicism and a modern philosophy of culture, but a humanistic application of theocentric hermeneutics.

Therefore the widespread statements that Vico's *New Science* should be treated as the "beginning of the paradigm of historicism" (8, p. 196), and that historicism, "as a peculiar type of

historiographical and socio-philosophical reflection and as an independent paradigm of humanitarian reflection . . . appears in Vico's 18th century vision of mankind and history" (*ibid.*, p.197), should be treated only as a romantic expression of a temptation to fortify the historicist approach by way of reference to a presumably ancient and therefore highly honorable origin. Apologists of historiosophy often resort to humanists in support of the righteousness of their pretentious anti-humanist claims.

Referring to the authoritarian intents of Philip of Macedon, who threatened individual freedom and democracy, Demosthenes observed: "There is one safeguard known generally to the wise, which is an advantage and security to all, but especially to democracies as against despots. What is it? Distrust." (Second Philippic, section 24). Philosophical discourse still remains a place where one can, without fearing authority, express any objections and doubts. The more thoroughly a philosophical arena is imbued with received truths and unquestioned pre-judgements, the more important becomes a free exercise of critical thought.

Open and accountable discourse is of the utmost importance for contemporary Lithuania: the destructive nature of the inherited tradition of *Kulturphilosophie* threatens to dominate all spheres of our intellectual existence.<sup>9</sup> The inertia of clinging to historicist patterns of thinking could be slowed down only by the critical paradigms of individualism. Comprehensive communication between Lithuanian philosophical culture and the Western tradition will depend on our ability authentically to re-discover the whole context of world civilization, first of all the long ignored intellectual tradition of Western individualism and Socratic accountability.

However, given the unchallenged prevalence of cultural collectivism and endemic repulsion of rational cosmopolitanism, which has uninterruptedly dominated our culture from the end of 19th century, this is not an easy task. The rediscovered intellectual heritage of Lithuania is part and parcel of the philosophical, cultural and political tendencies that dominated the European continent in the first half of the 20th century. It's romantic anti-individualism was then outspokenly expressed in public discourses and academic Lithuanian philosophy, which to a large extent was a tripartite fusion of historicist *Kulturphilosophie*, neo-Thomism and personalistic Catholic philosophy. That is why the post-communist revival of the intellectual inter-war heritage *eo ipso* happens to strengthen essentialist methodology. From a methodological point of view, the contemporary revitalization of the suppressed national culture does not contradict, but, on the contrary, only consolidates the collectivist values and methodological patterns that were cultivated during the decades of Communist occupation and, *nolens volens*, stimulates their social and political application. If not hampered, the applauded processes of reconstruction could conveniently serve as a basis for the revival of authoritarianism. To counter these tendencies we need a critical (though not in the sense of a "critical" philosophy of culture) retrospective discourse.

This urges the premises of scepticism and rational individualism, though of course such an appeal, proclaimed in the close vicinity of the essentialist philosophy of culture, risks the fate of remaining only a rhetorical incitation to radically rethink our cultural and philosophical heritage on the single ground of the moral imperative: avoid everything that can do harm for yourself and your freedom, your "cogito" and your "dubio".

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## NOTES

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## Chapter XVII

# Algirdas J. Greimas in Lithuania and in the World

*Zilvinas Beliauskas*

It is an enormous responsibility to present a man as a scientist and to try to disclose as objectively as possible his views and ideas: to convey the essential meaning or sense of his own understanding of meaning — the problem he considered to be the central in his numerous and consequent elaborations. Let this be considered a humble attempt, aware of all the threatening dangers of subjectivity and superficiality.

Algirdas J. Greimas was born on March 9, 1917 in Tula (Russia). After Lithuania declared its independence in 1918 his parents returned to their homeland and Greimas graduated from the gymnasium in Marijampole in 1934 and entered the Law Faculty in Kaunas's Vytautas Magnus University. Several years later on a grant from the Lithuanian Ministry of Education he went to France for language and dialectology studies, but became interested in the Middle Ages as well. In 1939 he returned to Lithuania for his military service and found himself, along with the other citizens, in an occupied country, first by the Soviets and then by the Germans.

Greimas published his first article "Cervantes and His Don Quixote" in 1943 in an almanac *Varpai* (Bells) in Lithuanian about the meaning of anti-nazi resistance. More than 40 years later, in an interview with "Le Quotidien de Paris", he would say that his intellectual path can be explained partially by the experiences of his Lithuanian youth, and that for him to be a semiotician means to raise the question of meaning permanently.

In 1944 Greimas returned to France to carry on his language studies and received his doctoral degree at the Sorbonne in 1949, defending his thesis on the 1830 fashion dictionary. Together with the future famous French linguist, George Matore, he published an article, "A Method in Lexicology", which marked the beginning of his scientific career.

There follow nine years of teaching the history of the French language in Alexandria University, Egypt. This period is noted as a time of intensive readings, private reflections, decisive acquaintances and relationships. He carefully studied and discussed with friends and colleagues the works of the founder of structural linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure and his follower, Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev; the initiator of comparative mythology, George Dumézil; the structural anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss; the Russian specialist in fairy tales, Vladimir Propp; researcher the aesthetics of the theater, Etienne Souriau; the philosopher-phenomenologists Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty; the psychoanalyst, Gaston Bachelard; and the novelist and art historian, Andre Malraux. In Alexandria Greimas was a close associate of another future classic of semiotics, Roland Barthes, both of whom profited from their relationship with their friend and teacher, *maitre a penser*, Charles Singevin. Their interests lay in everything: history and humanitarian sciences, poetry and mathematics, philosophy and sex. In this mixture of multicolored ideas the semiotic attitude towards the world, as bearing certain meaning, was able to find its origin.

The very universality of meaning coming through the meaningful totality of surrounding signs invites one to view culture as a monolithic phenomenon, but the focus remains on language itself, which should be associated primarily to the meaningful signs and sign systems. At the same time the need to understand the inner structure of language and how it is capable of transmitting meaning, requires that one analyze language by means of another language, a metalanguage,

describing language as if from inside and understanding it in a much broader sense than the traditional linguistic point of view. Thus they strove to understand the world with the help of basic available linguistic tools in order to overstep the usual boundaries of this discipline and gain wider horizons.

In time Greimas became the head of the French Language and Grammar Department in Ankara (Turkey), taught in Istanbul University, became acquainted with modern logic, and was interested in automatic translation and the application of statistical methods in linguistics. In 1960, together with the other initiators of the application of precise methods to language analysis, he established the *Société d'étude de la langue française*, which actually marked the revival of scientific linguistics in France as opposed to the traditional philological language studies.

In 1962, Greimas was appointed as language science professor to Poitiers University, but the insights brought from Egypt made him tend towards considering language to be worthy of wider investigation, namely, as a system containing in itself, transmitting, and, under special conditions, generating meaning, as well as providing possibilities to perceive it. This required more systematic, or as it used fashionably to be called, structural analysis of language.

Trying to outline briefly the general theoretical intellectual context in which Greimas's elaboration had to find its place, we should mention the two main trends of semiotic investigations in the middle of the 20th century: linguistic structuralist and logical philosophical. The first through L. Hjelmslev had its roots in the ideas of F. de Saussure. Hjelmslev intended to formalize the language theory of the latter and introduced to the existing dichotomy of language/*parole* the dichotomy of system/process and enriched the concept of meaning with the dichotomy of form/substance, thus making it possible to talk about a signifying form (*forme signifiante*).<sup>1</sup>

The logical philosophical trend developed into a sovereign philosophy of language analysis, connecting in one line such thinkers as G. Frege, L. Wittgenstein, R. Carnap, J. Austin, W. Quine, J. Searle, N. Chomsky, D. Davidson, J. Hintikka and many others, with their own peculiarities and inner divisions on the way language, speech acts, communication, etc., is to be understood. Here meaning is being explained with the help of such terms of modern logic as truth, reference, information, as well as with terms defining various modalities — necessity, knowing, believing, possible worlds and others. This kind of investigations is predominant in the USA and England.

The linguistic structuralistic approach is richly varied. There are different semiotic trends in different countries. In France in particular two main semiotic schools are still famous since their beginning in the 60s. The first, known as the Greimasian or Paris school (*Ecole de Paris*), the other no less popular trend is more towards metaphorical, philosophical and aesthetic thinking. It concentrates mainly on the analysis of literary texts, a sort of art of texts about texts. The most prominent names associated with this school are Roland Barthes, Gerard Genet, Julia Kristeva, Michael Foucault and others. The poststructuralists or deconstructionists are closer to the second group in contrast to the Greimasian camp.

In an attempt to put Greimas's structuralistic semiotic conception into an even broader contextual framework, we cannot omit a fundamental philosophical tradition known as phenomenological hermeneutics. It too, in its own way, is in search of meaning, but does it more generally by trying to solve profoundly the very problem of the understanding of texts, i.e., what verbal and non-verbal conditions — historical, cultural, individual — should be taken into account when the genuine meaning of a written or spoken monument is to be disclosed. The attitude towards the concept of intentionality puts that tradition in sharp opposition with the positivist and analytic philosophy of language. This outstanding and magnificent philosophy is rich in the work

of such classics as Wilhelm Dilthey, Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, as well as such more contemporary thinkers as H. Gadamer and Jurgen Habermas.

In such a setting of different theories and schools dealing with the problems of meaning, Greimas's semiotics as a model for the description of textual discourses was created.

Greimas works lie at the crossroads of a triple tradition:

### *The Saussurian School*

This was developed by L. Hjelmslev, who pursued the project of describing language systems in general (langage), and not just language (*langue*) characterized as a system of signs. He gave that project a deductive form and claimed for linguistics the same formal rigor as for natural sciences. Hjelmslev takes more steps in regard to the notion of the sign than does F. Saussure by introducing the form/substance and content/expression dichotomies to the initial signifier/signified. Thus he provides a much stronger conceptual apparatus, better suited for the description of discourses and systems of non-linguistic signs, which is the proper and specific project of semiotics. As Hjelmslev put his vision: "Linguistic theory is led by an inner need to recognize not merely the linguistic system in its schema and usage, its totality and individuality, but also the man and human society behind language, and all human spheres of knowledge through language. At this point linguistic theory has reached its prescribed goal: *humanitas et universitas*."<sup>2</sup>

The Saussurian tradition, as developed by Hjelmslev and others, including Greimas himself, does not consist of a series of strict derivatives by obedient disciples regarding Saussure as an unquestioned teacher. It is rather agreement in the epistemological choice to take natural language as a starting point instead of a sign. Greimas adopts the same solution, arguing that every sign is translatable into a natural language, but that the contrary is not true. The translatability of a system of signs into that particular other system of signs which is spoken language is the main principle underlying the Saussurian tradition in the history of contemporary semiotics. This epistemological orientation in the works of Greimas is connected with a particular methodological model of the theoretical structural phonology developed by R. Jakobson or the Prague linguistic school.

Greimas clearly stated his attachment to this tradition in his article "L'actualité du saussurisme."<sup>3</sup> On the basis of these dichotomies he declares adherence the following principles: A) Language is a formal object — an entity of relationships; as such it is comparable to other formal objects and is subject to scientific analysis. Language can be described by another language, i.e. a metalanguage consisting of defined and univocal terms. B) Language is a semantic object — an architecture of forms containing meaning. C) Language is a social object, a collective institution. In this regard it is not we who speak language, but language itself speaks by means of us — we are submerged in language as in social reality.

Such a broad attitude towards language allows it to be compared to other structures, such as plastic forms, or musical structures which also cover extremely wide regions which are social scope. The same attitude moves one to look for all possible comparable and interrelated structures in natural and humanitarian sciences as well. It is notable that the most noticeable advances have been made in phonology, which is itself a branch of linguistics, opening the opportunity to overstep the limits of linguistics. This was due to focusing on the minimal universal elements at the basis of every language structure, namely, the principle of binary oppositions.

### *The Structural Study of Myth: Comparative Mythology*

The same search for basic general structural elements was characteristic of the comparative Indo-European investigations of mythology by Dumézil,<sup>4</sup> who personally persuaded Greimas to introduce Lithuanian mythology into Indo-European study circles. Dumézil considered myth and language as a system of collective representations, a figurative form of social ideology, and this attitude could not help but generate mutual sympathy between structural linguistics and anthropology. The linguistic principle of binary oppositions and the concept of transformation as transition from one systemic level to another offered an opportunity to work out a more general system capable of describing the broad field of cultural and social symbolism, projected by F. de Saussure as a "general semiology".

Some of the most significant ideas influencing Greimas scientific views were generated by the founder of structural anthropology, C. Lévi-Strauss, namely, the arguments that kinship terms as well as phonemes are elements of signification and that they acquire their signification only when integrated into "elementary kinship systems."<sup>5</sup> The division of the deeper and superficial levels of systems making it possible to unite into one different myths, the determination of various ways of reading the same myth according to these levels: the vertical — paradigmatic and horizontal — syntagmatic levels (compare Hjelmslev's system/process dichotomy) inspired and fitted Greimas's theoretical vision to an outstanding degree.

Lévi-Strauss enlarged the structural description of folktales, initially proposed by V. Propp,<sup>6</sup> and ventured an analysis of the Oedipus myth.<sup>7</sup> It was shown that a syntagmatic reading of the myth is compatible with its paradigmatic reading and contains in itself all the problems of cultural origin because of a clash of contradictory understandings of kinship patterns. The correlation of two binary categories made of elements contradictory to each other (*parenté et non parenté*, and *non-autochtonie et autochtonie*) make up the initial structure of signification, which is able to generate or deduce all possible Oedipus myths or its interpretations, including the Freudian one. Such an analysis, confirming the twofold semantic structure of a system and realizing the Hjelmslevian idea of a significant form, could not be contained in the framework of the traditional science of language. Greimas considered it his task to show precisely that the essence of a narrative discourse or syntagmatic action is nothing other than a projection of deeper paradigmatic categories to a syntagmatic level of text.

### *The French School of Perception*

This tradition is represented most prominently by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who developed the main thesis that we perceive only differences and that, living in the social world we are doomed to meaning (*condamnés au sens*).<sup>8</sup> It is characteristic of this world to which we are related that it reveals itself to a subject through effects of meaning (*effets de sens*) and we perceive those effects through a psychological grasp (*saisie*). Since differences and discontinuities are the premises of our perception, any meaning can be understood as immanent to linguistic form and Greimas considered this a natural extension of Saussurian thinking.

Due to the scope of Greimas's works he is sometimes considered a representative of different humanitarian areas. In one of his letters to a Lithuanian philologist, B. Savukynas, he joked that in a way his name became a common noun in French, because students are saying to each other: "Pass me Greimas" — meaning his *Dictionnaire de l'ancien français*. So for some he seems to be a lexicographer, for others a dialectologist, a theoretician of language, a founder of a semiotic project, or a mythologist as he is mostly known and read in Lithuania. (See Bibliography). But the



problem of meaning or sense, as he himself has repeatedly stressed, was always the central element in his numerous and vast preoccupations:

*Le problème de la signification se situe au centre des préoccupations actuelles. Pour transformer l'inventaire des comportements humaines en anthropologie et les séries des événements en histoire, nous ne pouvons que nous interroger sur le sens des activités humaines et le sens de l'histoire. Le monde humaine nous paraît se définir essentiellement comme le monde de la signification. Le monde ne peut être dit "humain" que dans la mesure où il signifie quelque chose.<sup>9</sup>*

Another basic characteristic of Greimas's approach is that he does not concentrate on the philosophical definition or analysis of meaning as much as on where it is located — in signs, beyond signs or just in our heads — but the focus is rather on what actually the meaning means or what is its concrete content and how it can be deciphered in all possible sign systems. By itself meaning for him is a kind of a givenness (*donnée*), since we happen to live in a society that inevitably is signifying through communication and relationships. Meaning is conveyed, exercised and exchanged by the "class of grown-ups", i.e. sharing something that is believed to be common sense and acquired in the process of communication and education. Meaning is always pregnant with the effect the surrounding world has on us. But because of the complexity and very often because of insufficiency (for instance of mythological data) of sign systems and/or texts-discourses we are in need of special semiotic tools to disclose, restore, understand, interpret and integrate particular knowledge into general knowledge and/or a belief heritage. For Greimas, genuine knowing very often is a realization of faith and trust. Thus, while claiming to avoid philosophical and psychological involvement, he launches an epistemological discussion of the relationship of knowing and believing and that is not the only case of trespassing into the neighboring fields of semiotics.

So the main tendency in Greimas's works is a continuous effort to work out reliable ways and methods to invent proper tools for knowing and for finding an objective scientific sense in all areas of the human environment. These are seen always as consisting of signs and signification, bearing meaning which is susceptible for logical articulation and limited to its essence or to a certain number of isotopes. This epistemological super-task diminishes the traditional division between the natural and humanitarian sciences. This is because the data of both while presented by means of their own languages and signs, are translatable into another coherent descriptive language articulating meaning units which at first sight are intangible.

The latter translation, again by means of transformations, is to be raised to a more formalized epistemological level, setting an exhaustive number of possible readings of any discourse of literary, scientific, cultural, gestural, or whatever origin. A last epistemological level is a previously designed logical model and can be applied only deductively; hence it is capable not only of interpretation, but also of restoring missing parts or details in an investigated field. (Again the best example is mythology.) Thus it provides a possible hierarchical structure, stemming from the structure of language itself as the most sophisticated system, and capable of articulating and, by means of transformation from one epistemological level to another, tracing the whole semiotic path (*parcour semiotique*) leading to the deepest nucleus of meaning and thus informing us of what is really happening. Thus meaning can be called a possibility of translation from one language (language-object) into a stricter metalanguage of description, and thence into an epistemological language which is supposed to be an already fixed and tested structure working on the principles of verification and deduction.

All this requires a great deal of formalization and elaboration. This is what we find in the books and articles by Greimas who is constantly aware of all possible dangers and critiques from all sides of the creatively inclusive and at the same time autonomous character of his theory. "Tirillé entre des exigences pratique contradictoires, l'auteur ne peut choisir, au risque de mécontenter tout le monde, que la voie moyenne pour se faire comprendre des deux cotés."<sup>10</sup> The middle way is between logic, philosophy, psychology, literature, history and other surrounding sciences; and the result is a narrative grammar and theory of modalities. This is absolutely necessary when attempting to expand the limits of the semiotic approach to all human activities and to cover such fields as axiology, aesthetics and the world of feelings.

It is also quite true that Greimas was always conscious of the incompleteness of his model, regarding it as a continuous creation, correction, improvement and enlargement which he had no great hopes of completing. But he longed to see his beginnings carried on by others, because the project is suffused with the principle of continuity, flexibility and dynamics. It is to be accepted and treated as a permanent striving for reality in search of its deeper and more objective, though endlessly concealed, elements. As Greimas puts it in one of his last and most emotional books, *De l'imperfection*: there is only one way leading to aesthesis, namely, a revival of body and soul. This takes place only when the binary objects of our everyday life are resemantized, i.e., when a new meaning is found attached or when we seek to escape from bored monotony and transfer ourselves somewhere else. In every case it turns out to be an interruption of commonness, changing the distance between subject and object, preceded by a special waiting (*attente*) of something unexpected (*inattendu*). Thus:

*Vaines tentatives de soumettre le quotidien ou de s'en sortir: quête de l'inattendu qui se dérobe. Et, pourtant, les valeurs dite esthétiques sont les seules propres, les seules, en refusant toute négativité, à nous tirer vers le haut. L'imperfection apparait comme un tremplin qui nous projette de l'insignifiance vers le sens.*<sup>11</sup>

In such a way the circle, after reaching and passing various distant domains, again is closed on man and the problem of his existence in this world.

From a contemporary perspective the appearance of his "Structural Semantics" in the late 70s has played a really revolutionary role as the very first and ambitious attempt to bring life to a structuralist method in its full-scale systematic form. It promised to transform not only linguistics, but every branch of the human sciences and to bring a marked shift in the fields of anthropology, psychoanalysis, literary criticism and elsewhere. According to some authors, such as Christopher, the role of Greimas is nearly mythical in the history of rapidly changing visions and revisions of European structuralism and semiotics. For quite a long time he remained unfamiliar to Anglo-Saxon readers, because the other branch of semiotics, developed by Charles Peirce, was mostly practiced in the USA and the Saussurian tradition was unknown or rejected. But now the situation has changed and nearly all the works by Greimas are available for an English reader and discussed in the publications of scholars.

If, from the philosophical point of view, Greimas is said to be following a wide neo-Kantian tradition, it is because of the anthropomorphic element in his theory: that is, a place is left for consulting reality and practice by means of straight perception and experience and there is a role for a knowing subject.

We deliberately avoided further details of Greimas's theoretical underpinnings, and for serious reasons: first, the vast volume of his writings; second, the special terminology of theory

construction is too narrow a place to provide sufficient definitions; and third, it is the task of the reader to pick up the real essence as well as to evaluate and attempt to introduce it.

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## Notes

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3. Jn: *Le français moderne*, 1956. Nr. 3.
4. *L'Héritage indo-européen à Rome* (Paris, 1949); *La Saga de Hadingus: du myth au roman* (Paris, 1953).
5. *Anthropology structurale* (Paris, 1958), p. 40.
6. C. Lévi-Strauss, "La structure et la forme: reflexions sur un ouvrage de V. Propp", *Chair de l'Institut des Sciences Economiques Appliquées*, 99 (1960), pp. 3-36.
7. "La Structure des mythes" in *Anthropologie sructurale*, vol. 1 (Paris: Plan, 1958).
8. *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris, 1945).
9. *Semantique structurale*, p. 5.
10. *Sémantique sructurale*, p. 8.
11. *De l'imperfection*, p. 99.
12. See R. Schleifer, *A.J. Greimas and the Nature of Meaning* (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1987), p. x.



## Chapter XVIII Vytautas Kavolis as Social and Cultural Critic

*Leonidas Donskis*

I become through my relation to the Thou; as I become I,  
I say Thou.  
All real living is meeting.<sup>1</sup> *Martin Buber*

This study is an analytical attempt at mapping Vytautas Kavolis's theoretical thought by tracing it within the framework of his social and cultural criticism. It is not so easy to provide such a discursive map, since Kavolis's theoretical legacy may well be referred to as his silent intellectual and moral autobiography. Therefore, it increases the responsibility of the author who comes to examine such an intimate and deeply personal thing as another scholar's autobiography. Every statement and passage of Kavolis's thought, every formulation or sequence of his working hypotheses — all are permeated by Kavolis's existential and social experiences. This is why the theoretical reconstruction of Kavolis's social and cultural theories, if reduced to the examination of his statements' formal logical structure or of the context and analytical organization of his thought, would enable us to merely employ a scientific jargon by pointing out those paradigms of sociological thought that have been accepted and then further elaborated by Kavolis.

Kavolis was very skeptical and critical about such a banal, trivial and even "soulless" (as Kavolis would have said himself) concept of the social sciences and the humanities, and of scholarship in general. Moreover, he was quite convinced that the attitude toward scholarship and ideas, which refuses to take the multi-faceted human experiences seriously, fails to enrich somehow either scholarship as such or the individuality of a scholar himself/herself. Kavolis was extremely attentive to human diversity, spontaneity and unpredictability, let alone those empirically invisible intellectual dramas and ideological passions that essentially stimulate one's need for constructing the critical and analytical thought capable of articulating both oneself and the world.

He was very much interested in the actors of various societies and historical epochs, traced back in his analytical studies and interpretive essays, — not in certain social or cultural types, but rather in flesh-and-blood human beings whose moral stances, modes of sensibility and nuances of emotions come to uncover the Great Chain of Being (to recall Arthur Lovejoy's term) and the mystery of social becoming as well. This is to say that Kavolis seems to have been constantly trying to answer the question which is most puzzling for every social analyst: What is the way the organized societal life and colorful social theater spring from such ordinary and mundane things as individual self-understanding, fellowship and friendship, mutual trust and human interaction in general?

Instead of merely examining Kavolis's theoretical constructs, I would like to make them talk to us — in order to conceive where they came from and how they came into being. In doing so, I will trace those implications of Kavolis's thought that evidently evoke theoretical dialogue and further elaboration. My analysis rests basically on what, for the American and international academic community, are unknown works of Kavolis, written to bridge the specifically Western ways of looking at society and culture on the one hand, and the Lithuanian patterns of consciousness and social existence on the other (although Kavolis's monographs, reflecting his

major contribution to both civilizational analysis and the history of consciousness, are also included in the frame of reference). It is hoped that such an arbitrary selection of Kavolis's theoretical legacy, accompanied by somewhat unusual emphases, might serve as a certain interpretive key in understanding the origins and meaning of his social and cultural criticism.

## **Truth and Value**

Many concepts and definitions of social and cultural criticism have been offered by the 20th century sociologists and intellectual historians. Yet, I am not tempted to join the mainstream interpretation of the social and cultural criticism by simply reducing it to the spread of left-wing radical (i.e., more or less related to Marxism) ideas in the social sciences and the humanities; nor would I refer to it as a mere social disconnectedness of a scholar/intellectual from his/her milieu; nor am I going to treat it as an allegedly obsessive revisionism. Rather, the point is to deal with the social and cultural criticism as the immanent and inescapable part, or even inner spring, of the modern social sciences and of the humanities. Such a standpoint is the only one that makes sense from the perspective of this turn of the millennia.

One recalls Louis Dumont's statement on the need to reconcile truth and value that have been radically separated and contrasted to each other by modernity. This was particularly so in Kantian philosophy where the gap or rather abyss between truth and value acquired its paradigmatic form. Dumont calls for a reconciliation of the two within the framework of a modern symbolic configuration.<sup>2</sup> I too would like to point out that a sharp dividing line between truth and value, in the context of the social sciences and the humanities is artificial and even false. Moreover, the radical distinction between truth and value simply does not work in tracing the phenomena of human consciousness. It refers to the ambitious epistemological program of modernity, rather than to the allegedly principal feature characteristic of the social sciences themselves (not to mention the humanities).

In the discursive universe of both social analysis and the interpretation of culture, value reveals itself as always lurking behind truth. The moral argument may quite naturally be extended to, and translated into, the explanatory framework. This is to say that value is always prior to truth. More than that, value is the very starting point in the quest for truth ; therefore, the former obviously underlies the latter.

Any study in social philosophy, sociology, intellectual history, anthropology or literary theory, which has some implications for social and/or cultural criticism, becomes part of its author's intellectual and moral autobiography, thus mapping his/her existential and social experiences. Social analysts and/or interpreters of culture usually arrive at the subjects of their studies through their value orientations and moral choices, rather than through specifically theoretical preconditions. (One might wonder whether and how it would be possible theoretically to explain one's dedication to, say, the study of medieval European culture, the latter being taken as a more or less conscious alternative to, and a basis for, the critique of the predominant tendencies and limitations of modernity and of its consciousness/culture as well.) Social analysts or interpreters of culture first release their social, historical, cultural and moral imaginations. Then they employ the diverse techniques of analysis/interpretation, which afterwards are qualified and named by various referent groups in terms of analytical approaches, strategies of research, methods, perspectives, multi- and interdisciplinary studies, etc.

This statement may well be exemplified by the fact that almost all major students of nationalism seek to understand the relationship between their individual identity, and the collective

identity of the nation and its culture they take as their existential priority, background and choice. In fact, Anthony D. Smith and Ernest Gellner, though they have never been explicit on this issue, have been trying to conceive how modern Jewish nationalism and the modern state of Israel came into being. In so doing, they have provided a broad historical context and comparative perspective: one can perceive oneself insofar as the Other is perceived.

At this point, the case of the late Gellner is very interesting. He seems to have arrived at the comparative study of Muslim societies and of Islamic civilization by driving at his initial intention. This was to explore the constellation and symbolic configuration of, to use his own terms, the Great Tradition/High Culture and popular culture (and, of course, the viability or, on the contrary, fragility of this constellation) within the frame of both Islamic and Jewish histories and civilizations.<sup>3</sup>

This is how the social analyst's imagination works. It by no means implies a certain narrow-mindedness on the part of those eminent scholars. It suffices to recall how theoretically broad and empirically inclusive was Gellner's horizon by referring to the major issues he was addressing in his works: the relationship between the great doctrinal and scriptural religions and the realm of political power; the interplay between the predominant political ideologies of modernity and the dynamics of modern secularized society; the constant tension between human modularity and idiocratic communities. The latter he traced from the specifically Islamic principle of Umma to the Communist regimes' political practices.

Therefore, the disciplinary choice, methodological preference, and emphasis placed on some subject matter by scholars, accompanied by their conscious attachment to the society analyzed/culture interpreted<sup>4</sup> — thus bridging the individual identity and experience, on the one hand, and a certain social/cultural whole, on the other — are inevitably caused by his/her moral stance and value orientation. Nothing but the scholar's sophistication and skill may hide his/her value orientation, political or ideological preferences, fidelity to one or another cultural tradition, and the like, thus dissolving those things in the precise formulations and incisive analytical language. As Vytautas Kavolis has noted himself, it makes sense to rely on the ideological assumptions and value systems in formulating the questions, but not in searching for the answers.

In this problematical focus, Vytautas Kavolis appears as one of those highly integral 20th century intellectuals whose critical thought was in constant interplay with the subject matters chosen for the analysis, and whose disciplinary choices or methodological preferences were derived from, and suggested by, their existential social experiences. The ways of looking at society and culture, conceptualized and articulated by Kavolis, obviously reflect his passionate striving for the active participation in, and even symbolic correction of, social reality.

It suffices to glance at his numerous social and cultural critiques written in his native Lithuanian, in order to see how prescriptive was Kavolis's discourse in dealing with Lithuania's history or present Lithuanian society and culture. His point was to show where, how and why his country fails to represent or share those principles, norms, ideals and values which Kavolis himself was passionately advocating.

Kavolis's social and cultural criticism would be unthinkable without the methodologies elaborated and vitalized by him — the *civilization analysis* (along with Benjamin Nelson, Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt and Louis Dumont) and the *history of consciousness*. Among his predecessors and co-contributors, in theoretically constructing the latter, one could list Philippe Ariès, Michel Foucault, Louis Dumont and Hayden White. The former provides a framework within which the key components of every sociologically identifiable civilization, namely, its social structure and symbolic organization, can be traced in order to uncover the flux of symbolic meaning. The latter

employs in-depth structural exploration of the dynamics of the tendencies of consciousness and of the predominant ideas in a given society, culture or historical epoch.<sup>5</sup> Both bring us to a proper understanding of what has been suppressed in one civilization but more or less released and developed in other, as well as the models of self-understanding and the ways of perception of the *Otherness*.

In fact, the social analysts or interpreters of culture are condemned by virtue of their disciplinary choice and theoretical self-determination that are at once the moral choice and existential self-determination to become the social/cultural critic. If they happen to break away from social and cultural criticism, such a stance might be explained by referring to values, rather than to theory. Society and culture, if chosen as the subject matter and field of studies, imply not only analysis and symbolic correction of human reality, but critical self-reflection and capacity for self-questioning as well. Failing that, we can only conclude that the problem lies either in segmentary consciousness, losing any coherence and integrity, or in the symptomatic schism between truth and value.

### **Liberalism vs. Nationalism: Bridging Moral Cultures**

One of the tensions experienced and reflected on by Kavolis (particularly, in his Lithuanian essays) is that between a self-appointed liberalism and the authentic liberal stance. In his essay, "The Current Meaning of Being Progressive," Kavolis points out that:

We feel spontaneously that we can never consider as liberal the one who, though he appoints himself to be liberal, fights for the restrictions of the freedom of discussions. This contributes to a societal atmosphere in which one is afraid to express one's non-conformist opinion. We consider as liberal the one who, notwithstanding his ideological views and political coalition, fights for the diminution of restrictions in his milieu and in the world in general. In this sense, John XXIII and Paul VI, by virtue of having done their best to diminish restrictions within their institution, far surpass those . . . turning to mere political propagandists of anti-communism.<sup>6</sup>

Kavolis also adds that liberalism can in turn have its own limitations. As editor of *Lithuanian Liberalism*, a unique book indeed in the context of 20th century Lithuania, he had severely criticized the weak points of liberalism and was perfectly aware of its ups and down:

In some cases, liberalism may be unprogressive: when children are given more freedom than they can assimilate; when there is more care about criminals and their rights than about the protection of their victims. However, even in those cases when liberalism, in its effects, is unprogressive, it is assessed in terms of the effort at diminishing the restrictions, rather than in terms of some abstract principle.<sup>7</sup>

Another tension, which might be considered as the most intense and, in the theoretical sense, the most dramatic in his works, is that between liberalism and nationalism. This tension was of decisive importance to Kavolis for a couple of reasons: first, Lithuanian liberalism, mapped through Kavolis's studies in Lithuania's intellectual and cultural histories, had to be contextualized somehow within the frame of the modernization of Lithuanian consciousness and culture. That is, liberalism somehow had to be culturally assimilated and subsequently reconciled with Lithuanian



nationalism. Second, Lithuanian nationalism has never had the theoretical and intellectual context that its counterparts have provided in other European countries.

On the other hand, for such a theoretician of responsible, i.e., morally committed, individualism as Kavolis, it was obvious that liberalism and nationalism might be not only compatible but even complementary phenomena — particularly, in bridging individual and collective identities. However, the elitarian and aristocratic nationalism of the first half of the 19th century, that is, nationalism of the so-called spring of peoples which manifested itself in Adam Mickiewicz and Giuseppe Mazzini's visions and their struggle for peoples' independence and freedom, had eventually transformed itself into a more exclusive nationalism. The latter, in the second half of the 19th century and, particularly, in the first half of the 20th century, was getting more and more mass, doctrinal and ideological.

So it is not accidental that the nationalism of the epoch of the spring of peoples, which has come to respect and esteem the Other's freedom in the same way it did with regard to its own people, has been qualified by Kavolis as nothing other than a very liberal nationalism. According to Kavolis, this was replaced afterwards by the above exclusive, doctrinal nationalism permeated by what might be called, in Kavolis's own terms, moral provincialism. In his article, "Moral Cultures: Maps, Trajectories, Tensions," Kavolis put it thus:

The danger of nationalist [moral] culture lies in its moral provincialism. Nationalism, as John Stuart Mill noted, makes people indifferent to the rights and interests of any part of humankind, except for that which is called the same name as they are, and speaks the same language they do. Not always, however, has nationalist culture been provincial. In the first half of the 19th century, Europe was full of liberal nationalists who believed that the struggle for the liberation of all peoples is but a common cause: therefore, a patriot of one people must help other peoples as well. Thus, later on, Basanavicius [one of the founding fathers of Lithuanian nationalism, the exponent of its liberal version] participated in the movement of Bulgarian democrats, and Georg Julius Justus Sauerwein [the nineteenth-century Lithuanian romantic nationalist of Sorbian origin] wrote "We Were Born Lithuanians" (and another version of the same song which was dedicated to the Sorbs). Yet, nationalism of the second half of the 19th century — in part, because of the impact of social Darwinism — moved away from the notion of universal brotherhood, enthusiastically shared by all nationalists, and reshaped itself within quite a narrow frame of the exclusive ("zoological") defense of people's interests by all means. This is to say that nationalism got "primitive." (In many non-Western countries — for instance, in India, — the 20th century nationalism has repeated this sequence; so perhaps it might be taken as a natural part of the nationalist movement's evolution, that is, as a consequence of the transformation of nationalism into a mass phenomenon?) Exclusive nationalism is incompatible with liberal culture which is, in principle, morally universalistic. (In the rationalist version of liberal morality: *all are equal in their rights*; in the Romantic version of liberal morality: *all are equal in their pain which equally hurts everybody*.)<sup>8</sup>

The question arises: Why and how did such a focus of theoretical and ideological tension appear in Kavolis's discursive universe? The reason seems to be quite simple. As a devoted student, theoretician and even ideologist of liberalism in at once the most inclusive and exclusive sense of the term, Kavolis was perfectly aware of the total absence and even impossibility of liberalism, in its paradigmatic Anglo-Saxon, i.e., Millian, version, in Lithuania. One's obsessive efforts by all means to identify it in, or to impose it on, Lithuanian consciousness and culture would have led nowhere else but to a coercive falsification of Lithuania's history, politics and culture.

The origins of political liberalism, that is, its historical and sociocultural context which originates from the emergence of the self-governing cities in medieval Western Europe and then goes across the Puritan Revolution in England and the 19th century English intellectual culture in general, can only be traced in terms of the phenomenon of the specifically Anglo-American variant of Western civilization.<sup>9</sup>

The only prerequisite of political liberalism and, at the same time, one of its historical origins, which may indeed be identified in Lithuania's history, dates back to the 16th and 17th centuries: this is the aristocratic legacy of liberalism and some manifestations of political and religious tolerance in 16th and 17th century Lithuania. These were explored by Kavolis in his painstaking study of the Renaissance and Baroque Europe. He was fascinated by beginnings of political and religious tolerance in Lithuania that manifested themselves in Lithuania's historical virtue of once having been a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural country. This is why he considered the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural past of Lithuania its golden age.

Therefore, Kavolis had to search for what have been termed by him the responding tendencies in consciousness and culture. In other words, he had to find room within the framework of Lithuanian consciousness for the theoretically identifiable beginnings of liberalism in the form of the responding historical trajectories and tendencies of the thought and of intellectual/moral stances. This is exactly how Kavolis came to construct the concept of cultural liberalism. The latter served as a means to culturally assimilate liberalism to modern Lithuania's mainstream value-and-idea system. (In fact, liberalism in Lithuania used to be quite frequently misinterpreted and misrepresented as just another term for agnosticism or left-wing political stances; this is still the case). Moreover, the concept of cultural liberalism came to enable Kavolis to hypostatize liberalism as such as an autonomous moral culture or even paradigm of consciousness. This sheds new light on the way Kavolis employs the comparison of the nationalist, liberal and romantic moral cultures. The nationalist moral culture, placed at the level of a broad comparative historical perspective, is assessed by him in the following way:

The moral culture of this type is deeply rooted in history; one may find its early, premodern forms in Jewish and Chinese traditions. Those traditions were but "ethnocentric," i.e., perceiving the entire virtue of the world as represented solely by their own communities. Current nationalism is said to have become, in the brightest manifestations of its maturity, "polycentric," i.e., striving for the equal and normal participation of its own nation in the whole concert of all the rest of the nations — consulting their equally valuable cultures and learning from them.<sup>10</sup> The symbolic arena of nationalist culture is the ritual of the repetition of history, be it the never-ending campaign to reconquer Elsass or Gandhi's demonstrations of non-violent resistance. The addresses of nationalists are just the same — the everlasting repetition of the same.<sup>11</sup>

Being aware of how problematic is the search for the origins — or at least manifestations — of liberalism in Central and East European political history, Kavolis was trying to identify and analyze both the particular liberal stances and the element of liberality itself in the history of Lithuania's national rebirth (or, to be more precise, of Lithuanian modernity, however failing in the course of history). He had qualified the ideas and stances of the *Varpas* [The Bell] and *Ausra* [The Dawn] nationalist movements (along with those of their leaders Vincas Kudirka, Jonas Basanavicius and Jonas Sliupas) as liberal, thus drawing a sharp dividing line between liberal conservative nationalism. In so doing Kavolis was theoretically and intellectually bridging the nationalist and liberal moral cultures by employing the perspective of the history of consciousness

(otherwise, he would inevitably have failed to accomplish such a task, for neither political theory nor political practice provide a sufficient basis for bridging those, one would think, mutually exclusive positions). At the same time, Kavolis was consistently trying to overcome the abyss between his own frame of reference, conceptual framework and analytical/interpretive language, on the one hand, and the mainstream Lithuanian consciousness and culture, on the other.

In his comparative studies, Kavolis impressively contextualized cultural liberalism, tracing it back to: Socrates's ethical intellectualism and, particularly, his idea of the priority of the individual reason and conscience over the collective decisions; some elements of Christian theology stressing the crucial importance of the principle of free will; Chinese neo-Confucianists' intellectual and moral stances; the frame of mind of the Heian epoch Japanese aristocratic culture; Hinduism; the Grand Duke of medieval Lithuania, Gediminas's, assertion that all the ways — regardless of how distinct — lead to that same God; and even the early Islamic principle of *ijtihad*, according to which one is entitled to use one's individual reason in interpreting the religious laws of Islam.<sup>12</sup> Kavolis seems to have always been convinced that cultural liberalism, both in the West and in non-Western civilizations, spreads as the universal element of human experience, although the explicit and developed political liberalism has been unambiguously taken by him as a solely Western phenomenon of political consciousness. (Therefore, the possible implication of this thought would be as follows: cultural liberalism is possible even in those societies and cultures where political liberalism, historically thinking, has never come into being.)

The theoretically accurate, flexible and differentiating attitude toward nationalism made it possible to make clear distinction between the Herderian-Renanian paradigm of nationalism, that is, liberal nationalism par excellence, and the *Action Francaise*-type of reactionary, radical and integral nationalism, not to mention the grasp of how the modern Central and East European nations came into political existence. This flexible attitude assisted Kavolis in embracing the grandeur and misery of nationalism:

For liberals, the principal criterion for evaluating nationalism is that of free self-determination. The nation's rights to political and cultural independence are protected insofar as the nation expresses its members' self-determination to perceive themselves the way the nation represents. Yet, the liberals will always raise their voices in defense of the individuals' rights and, above all, of the right of self-determination about how to be a human in the following cases: if the authorities of a given nation happen to determine who does belong to the nation, and who does not; what should be found in its members' souls, and what can never be found; or if they happen to deny the normal human rights of those who do not belong to that nation/those who do not want to belong to it. The collective may be respected insofar as it respects both the individuals and the variety of their reason, conscience and life-styles. In liberal democracy, only pluralist and ethnically unlimited nationalism is acceptable, whereas assimilationist and ethnicity-cleansing nationalism can never be accepted.<sup>13</sup>

However, in bridging Lithuanian consciousness, as one of the manifestations and agencies of the nationalist moral culture and the liberal moral culture, Kavolis remained faithful to the principle of critical self-reflection. As noted, Kavolis was perfectly aware of the limitations of liberalism itself. This is why he was striving for its integration in a multidimensional, complementary and coherent framework for a more proper interpretation of the world. Both as one of the modern moral cultures and as one of the predominant political ideologies of the modern world, liberalism is merely one of many ways to reflect on social reality and the human individual,

one of many possibilities to describe human consciousness in terms of existential and social experiences. In fact, being the derivative of Western rationalism and individualism (inseparable from the British empiricist tradition and common sense political philosophy as well), liberalism missed many points of human experience that are deeply grounded in other faculties of human sensibility: the sense of history, collective identity, group commitment, joint devotion, religious and mystical experiences, and the like. Needless to say those points, throughout history, have been dealt with and articulated by other moral cultures.

One of the paradoxes of liberal social philosophy and of liberal moral culture would be that the classic British version of liberalism, i.e., Millian liberalism of the 19th century, remained surprisingly insensitive to the process of the formation of new national entities, and particularly to the cultural and moral dimensions of this process. One wonders why and how this could be the case, since nothing else but liberalism came to construct the concept of the political nation thus lifting it to the rank of the key ideas of modernity. The concept of political nation came into being through the French social philosophers of the Enlightenment (at this point, nearly all the *philosophes* are worth mentioning here; yet, such theoreticians of equality and tolerance as Montesquieu, Condorcet, Helvétius and Bayle should be mentioned first) and Anglo-American political philosophy of the 18th and 19th centuries.

This is the reason why the disconnection of the 19th century liberalism with regard to those dramas and passions that captivated half of Europe is really surprising. Most probably because of this Kavolis, in his works, mentions from time to time the inability of liberalism to conceive of a number of the structures of sentiments and the nuances of emotions that are of decisive importance for individuals' moral stances and for social connection as well.

Notwithstanding its limitations, liberalism was considered by Kavolis as the only moral culture whose very essence lies in advocating the principles of individual reason and individual conscience. Nowhere else but in the liberal moral culture and the historical prototypes that anticipated and shaped cultural liberalism has there emerged the free human being capable of determining himself by his own reason and individual conscience, and critically questioning himself and their society/culture .

It should never be forgotten, however, that nationalist moral culture has also made its substantial contribution to social and cultural criticism, for nothing but the nationalist type of moralization has promoted the connected and committed socio-cultural criticism. Through the notions of the universal brotherhood/sisterhood and the moral egalitarianism immanent to, and deeply inherent in, nationalism, nationalist moral culture has promoted the historically unprecedented social intimacy between a particular individual and their imagined<sup>14</sup> or real community. (This moment of importance will be traced below.)

By stating the insufficiency and limitations of the liberal moral culture in embracing the variety of the forms of modern consciousness and culture, Kavolis notes:

Liberal culture itself insufficiently embraces the totality of the human essence and of the human relation with the milieu. The 19th century liberal culture took seriously neither nature, nor radical evil, nor the distinctiveness of national cultures, nor the subconscious sphere of human experiences and its demands. It failed somehow to identify the emotional reciprocities and emergent, though never verbalized, human solidarities — *Seelengemeinschaften*.<sup>15</sup>

At the same time, Kavolis never had any doubts about the liberal moral culture's ability to provide a serious alternative to those negative tendencies of other moral cultures that have been termed by him moral provincialism, ecclesiastical imperialism, ascetic revolutionism and

irresponsible determinism.<sup>16</sup> Neither has Kavolis had any doubts that liberal culture underlines one of the basic human elements suppressed in other moral cultures: one's ability rationally to judge everything by his own reason and conscience, while recognizing others' rights to arrive at conclusions different from his, and one's duty to perfect the ability of his judgment all the time: the problems we encounter in the course of human and civilizational development tend to become more and more complex.<sup>17</sup>

Although Kavolis has always subscribed to the liberal standpoint, the liberal moral culture, in his theoretical vision, can only acquire its real theoretical and moral value by entering the space of dialogue or even polylogue with other — both classic and modern — moral cultures. The same interpretive principle of polylogue, translated from his moral stance into the explanatory framework, has been applied by Kavolis to the comparative study of civilizations: there are no (and in principle there cannot be) self-sufficient civilizations, since some of them come to release and develop something that is inevitably suppressed, or at least neglected, in others. Thus, the comparative study of civilizations coincides with social and cultural criticism — they even enroll in one while tracing the models of self-understanding and of the perception of the Other.

This is precisely the theoretical context and moral focus whence the idea of the bridging of moral cultures (that is, the idea of one's free participation in several moral cultures, which implies the critical questioning and symbolic correction of one's own culture from a comparative perspective). This is also source of the idea of the complementarity of civilizations, behind which manifest themselves not only the civilizational analyst's theoretical preconditions and working hypotheses, but the trajectories of his/her conscience and transcivilizational empathy as well. Therefore, the scholar's participation in, and critical examination of, several moral cultures (i.e., one's capacity for reflection on one's own participation in several models of cultural logic, thus theoretically attaching oneself to, and contextualizing in, their interplay) becomes part of the scholar's moral biography. In so doing, he/she places himself/herself in the imaginary gallery of other individuals and in the symbolic archives of their moral biographies as well.

Kavolis has advanced the following hypothetic thesis on the contrasting logics of moral cultures:

Moral cultures have different logics that tend to contradict each other. The thinking of those who participate in, at once, several moral cultures (i.e., the thinking of those who think from within of the contemporary person's existential situation) should rest on their clear awareness of the inexorable conflicts between these cultures and of the ways of dealing with these conflicts: What kinds of things are to be bridged? What kinds of abysses (or of qualitative stumblings) are to be accepted and penetrated by their lives and destiny? One of the tensions, which manifests itself in the contemporary liberal culture of the West, is as follows: Is rational public life possible when intimate culture is romantically anarchist? Should one search for the common ground for these separated spheres of modern existence? If so, should one return to some traditional concept of transcendence or should one move forward towards the totality of human experiences as a common link between what has been separated by modernity?<sup>18</sup>

Kavolis seems to have penetrated the very core of modernity and its challenge by offering this inclusive theoretical alternative. How to react to the challenge of modernity? How to accept it? (This problematical focus sheds new light on postmodernism as one of the possible responses to the fundamental theoretical alternative and existential dilemma formulated by Kavolis. He considered postmodernism to be a possible way to reconcile those things that have been taken by

modernity as incompatible in principle, rather than as merely fashionable trend.) How to reconcile and bridge what has been ruthlessly separated by modernity: truth and value; rationality and emotional intimacy; expertise and sensitivity; hierarchy and equality/individualism; tradition and innovation; the classic canon and the released creative experiment; metaphysics and phenomenal science; the particular individual and community; the particular community and universal humanity?

One of the possible ways would be the return to metaphysics and religion (that is, to what has been called by Kavolis the traditional concept of transcendence) — the phenomena that have been, from the point of view of the split between truth and value, neutralized, relativized and, consequently, placed by modernity on the margin of consciousness and existence. Another way (suggested by the sequence and logic of Kavolis's thought and by his ambitious epistemic program for both the social sciences and the humanities) would be rather an attempt at analytically embracing and, by attaching the dimensions of value and meaning, encompassing the totality of human experiences through the comparative study of civilizations. The latter implies the analysis of the flux of symbolic meaning and of the change of the structures of consciousness over time in Western and non-Western civilizations by capitalizing on civilizational analysis and the history of consciousness.

Modernity with a human face — this term, coined by Kavolis, refers to the need for sensibility in social analysis and the interpretation of culture. Both coincide with social and cultural criticism, since they are constantly accompanied by the tension between the "is" dimension and the "ought" dimension. On the other hand, truth and value can never be located in a single culture or civilization. Truth and value disseminate insofar as a comparison of the complementary, though distinct, models of self-understanding are employed.

Kavolis was an exponent of modern sociological disciplines, theory of civilizations and sociology of culture. It was he who invented such a hardly possible sociological discipline as the sociology of the fine arts. Yet he seems never to have been tempted to exaggerate the significance either of Western scholarship or of Western intellectual culture in general. He has been interested in Western civilization's "conquest and exodus". Kavolis used this term introduced by Eric Voegelin in his philosophy of history,<sup>19</sup> although he did not subscribe to Voegelin's point of view). Kavolis was interested not only in the Western political and cultural accomplishments, crises and *cul-de-sacs*, but in the possibility of theoretically contextualizing its civilization by conceiving of it within, in Kavolis's own terms, the idiom of both self and civilization.

The question is: Whether it is possible adequately to conceive of Western civilization only within the framework of the modern configuration of values and ideas, i.e., in the context of the West and of modernity, which mean virtually the same? This issue might be referred to as the very point of departure for Kavolis's notion of the comparative study of civilizations: to provide an interpretive and conceptual framework for self-understanding within the idiom of self-and-civilization, thus transforming the comparative studies into, or at least tingeing them with, one's own intellectual and moral biography. In this way Kavolis arrived at both civilizational analysis and the history of consciousness. His enthusiasm about, and dedication to, the comparative studies had nothing to do with the doctrine of political correctness. Kavolis's civilizationist commitment is much more likely to have been directly related to his intellectual conscience. The latter, as the *conditio sine qua non* for transcivilizational empathy and theoretical sensibility in general, seems to have become one of the principal categories not only for Kavolis but for his predecessor Benjamin Nelson as well.<sup>20</sup>

However, for Kavolis, modernity was too complex a phenomenon to be reduced to some simplistic schemes or over-generalizations: he took modernity instead in the all-encompassing variety of its forms and national variants. Tracing some anti-modernist intellectual and moral stances or the anti-modernist tendencies of the consciousness of a given society (e.g., examining a series of the failed modernizations in Central/East European countries), Kavolis perceived them as but an inescapable and unavoidable part of modernization itself.

For instance, one of the most interesting implications of Kavolis's concept of modernization is his statement that nothing but modernity comes to reveal/invent the tradition, for, according to him, we simply do not have another interpretive framework to articulate it except that within which historical consciousness and historical narratives disseminate. In fact, historical consciousness (i.e., backward- and forward-looking consciousness critically questioning or even rejecting the present) is just another term for modernity. Therefore, the stances of traditionalists and even of fundamentalists of various kinds — no matter whether they are aware of it or not — are merely a certain inversion of modernity. Other conceptual or interpretive frameworks, within which it would be possible to reflect on traditions or traditional cultures or premodern civilizations, simply do not exist.

This statement might best be exemplified by referring to Kavolis's analytical study, "Civilizational Paradigms in Current Sociology: Dumont vs. Eisenstadt." Having noted that Dumont is evidently criticizing modernity from a premodern perspective, Kavolis points out:

What is problematic about this type of critical theory is that Dumont judges modernity from premodern premises (which, he argues, have in crucial respects been validated by the shortcomings of modern experience). Dumont justifies choosing this perspective by arguing that the premodern is, in the experience of humanity, the typical case, the modern the exceptional. . . . But it might also be thought that the premodern should be approached through the particular version of the modern (taking for granted that modernity emerges in culturally diverse forms) in which the directions of development of the former are revealed.<sup>21</sup>

Yet, the discursive map of Kavolis's social and cultural criticism, as well as his intellectual portrait in the broader sense, would miss the point if we passed by one more important aspect of his personality and activities. Kavolis seems to have never been a disconnected academic professional locked solely within a narrow world of academic references and connections. I am referring not only to Kavolis's intellectual and moral commitment to Lithuanian culture, but also to his need for active participation in, and symbolic correction of, the society and culture that have been freely and consciously identified by Kavolis as his own.

In other words, he needed not only to construct cultural theory but symbolically to construct as well a dynamic cultural practice which he could symbolically complement, correct or at least affect somehow through his explanatory framework, interpretive skill and incisiveness, and massive analytic equipment. After all, Kavolis has always striven not for the formation of his referent group *sensu stricto*, but rather for the formation of his *Seelengemeinschaft*, that is, the community of souls providing some intellectual and emotional intimacy of human connection. As cultural theoretician, Kavolis has always been trying to transcend purely theoretical constructs in order to enter the dynamics and mundane reality of his own culture, and, then, to experience and describe them from within. This is why Kavolis has come to define Lithuanian culture in terms of a certain cultural workshop, thus bridging the dimension of cultural theory and cultural practice. In doing so, he has been tracing and critically examining, in his own culture and its

political/linguistic practices, those forms and models of the universally valid human experience that have been suggested by his comparative studies and theoretical reconstructions of society and culture.

Exactly the same might be said about Kavolis as sociologist. He has been very active in the construction of Lithuania's social and cultural reality, thus transcending the limits of social analysis and trying to find out whether his imagined community is constituting itself as the society *par excellence*. That is, as a common political and legal framework for the self-activating public domain moved by both the political and moral commitment and by human trust, rather than as a mere arithmetic totality of atomized and victimized human individuals.

At this point, Kavolis appears to have been nearly the paradigmatic intellectual. His life and intellectual/moral stance may well illustrate the notion of intellectuals, widespread in the current studies of the issue, as the agency of consciousness. Kavolis was the intellectual by definition, a man of the movement. For him his group was of great importance in experiencing a collective identity/group commitment or cultivating a strong sense of "us" against "them". Without his vigorous journalism, persuasion, political propagandizing, polemic passion, and even ruthless irony targeted at the conservative part of the Lithuanian emigré community in the U.S., Kavolis would be unthinkable. He saw his group as important also in disseminating his social and cultural imagination and implementing his ideas.<sup>22</sup>

Every intellectual movement comes into existence through a certain kind of self-legitimizing discourse or rather metadiscourse from which there result such phenomena as: theoretical strategies, methodological preferences and disciplinary choices; the proliferation of the social sciences and/or the humanities; keywords (such as "the people," "freedom," "tolerance," "justice," "equality," "liberalism," "human rights," etc.); and the discourse — i.e., the complex of the modes of speaking and thinking — of something that is equally important for all members of a given group or movement.

Such a metadiscourse or background consciousness containing the significations/signifying centers of social reality, on the one hand, and the strategies or modes of speaking of them, on the other, needs the Grand Text — it may well be a program document or manifesto or encyclopedia (as in case of the *Encyclopédie* of the French Enlightenment movement) or journal (as in case of the *Ausra* [The Dawn] and *Varpas* [The Bell], nationalist movements and their journals on the eve of the emergence of modern Lithuania).

For Kavolis, the *Santara-Sviesa* [The Concord-Light] union (that is, the cultural union of Lithuanian émigré liberals in the U.S. headed by Kavolis) has virtually become both his intellectual/cultural movement and *Seelengemeinschaft*; whereas the vision of modern, liberal and West-oriented Lithuania, accompanied by the search for the new political and cultural discourse capable of contextualizing and articulating Lithuanian liberalism, has served as the above metadiscourse. Subsequently, the *Metmenys* [Patterns] — i.e., the journal of the *Santara-Sviesa* movement edited by Kavolis from 1959 to 1996 — has become his Grand Text.

It suffices to glance at the way Kavolis has been leading the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations to prove that he has always been the program intellectual, a man of the movement *par excellence*. In the U.S. (or, to be more precise, in the Anglo-American world), the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations has become, for Kavolis, his intellectual movement and *Seelengemeinschaft*, while his international metadiscourse might have been defined, in his own terms, as the search for the "multicivilizational universe of discourse" in the social sciences and the humanities.<sup>23</sup> Needless to say the *Comparative Civilizations Review* has served, for Kavolis, as the Grand Text, even in the sense of a certain



historical narrative. The movement of North American civilizationists, initiated by Pitirim A. Sorokin and then essentially influenced by Nelson and Kavolis, seems to have been perceived by Kavolis as somewhat the collective alter ego of the *Santara-Sviesa* movement (the latter named, not incidentally, by Kavolis the Institute for Multidisciplinary Studies; thus his intellectual and moral commitment coincided). Exactly the same may be said about the invisible kinship between the *Metmenys* and the *Comparative Civilizations Review*.

Kavolis's attempts at reconciling and bridging those moral cultures and cultural logics which though separated by modernity, as noted, have always been present behind his scholarly projects and academic activities. The following passage, dealing with the tension between the rational public life and the romantically anarchist intimate culture in the *Santara-Sviesa* movement, shows how deeply permeated by the challenge of modernity were Kavolis's individual existence and public life:

Perhaps, throughout the history of Lithuanian cultural movements, this tension has nowhere else been so dramatic as in the spiritual universe of the *Santara-Sviesa* where both of these stances — the rational public life and the romantically anarchist intimate culture — are equally intensively emphasized, equally spontaneously accepted.<sup>24</sup>

The theoretical construct, therefore, had to be embodied in cultural practice and mundane reality. On the other hand, even the theory itself turns out to be quite frequently inspired by human friendship.

### **The Pathologies of Ambiguity and the Ambivalence of Criticism**

Kavolis's works on both "the ambiguous man" and "the pathologies of ambiguity" throw new light on his notion of social and cultural criticism. The distinction between the "unambiguous man" and the "ambiguous man" refers to cultural psychology — one more boundary discipline balancing between the social sciences and the humanities — which has been elaborated by Kavolis. (Such disciplines as cultural psychology or literary sociology or sociology of fine arts resulted from Kavolis's conscious attempts at crossing the boundaries of disciplines, on the one hand, and bridging the social sciences and the humanities, on the other.) Hence Kavolis's studies in comparative social pathologies examining the origins of destructiveness and tracing the models of evil.

Once more, let me recall the fact that Kavolis was an untypical sociologist. Moreover, the frame of sociology was too narrow for him. Not in vain, one of Kavolis's main theoretical ambitions was to provide a multi- and interdisciplinary framework for a civilization analysis within which it would be possible to bridge social philosophy, sociology, psychology, anthropology (particularly, symbolic anthropology based on the interpretive framework of Clifford Geertz's works — it was one of Kavolis's methodological and disciplinary preferences), intellectual history, cultural history, historical semantics, semiotics, and literary theory.

He was by no means a globalist, globalization theory seeming to have been outside Kavolis's scholarly concerns. He was by no means dreaming about certain "great syntheses;" nor was he longing for the revival of the Grand Theory. Kavolis never had any doubts about the priority given to the relationship between theoretical sophistication and empirical evidence, rather than to purely speculative thought. Therefore, *psychohistorical anthroposociology* — such a term was first coined by Nelson and Kavolis for civilization analysis — came to refer not to a certain pigeon-

holing methodology but, on the contrary, to joint disciplinary dedication to the analysis of such problems that are hardly possible for particular disciplines to embrace or at least to handle. Note that Kavolis was always stressing short-term, *ad hoc* disciplinary alliances that are very easy to dismantle immediately upon one's arrival at some conclusion summing up the complex research.

Small wonder, then, that it was vital for Kavolis to demonstrate, in the perspective of cultural psychology, how the structural shifts of symbolic meanings and/or the symptoms of societies, historical epochs, cultures, and civilizations in crisis manifest themselves through a particular human individual and his/her behavior or stance. One should admit that a society or culture in crisis inevitably reveals itself through the individual consciousness/human individual in crisis. One of such manifestations of culture in crisis is what has been termed by Kavolis the ambiguous man.

In his analytical study, "The Pathologies of Ambiguity," Kavolis notes that a number of humans quite frequently reveal, for themselves, their psychic ambiguity, although they become absolutely clear and unambiguous in forming or at least influencing other humans' behavior and stances. In Kavolis's opinion, the ambiguous man longs especially for intense experiences: this kind of striving for intensity, which is psychoanalytically identifiable and exploitable, jeopardizes not only the personality of the ambiguous man, but the entire modern consciousness and culture as well. According to Kavolis, where there prevails the striving for intensity, there predominates — quite often — the authoritarian style in both thinking and decision-making, even when the conscious contents of the thought is libertarian:

Let's take, for example, Marcuse or the Living Theater. The intensity diggers quite naturally tend to think in polarities contrasting "truth" to "error," or "virtue" to "meanness," instead of searching for some missing links and nuances. Those nuances represent nothing other but the psychic ambiguity in their character which they consider unbearable and try to repress with arbitrary, though "real," moments of intensity. This is why they, even in demanding the freedom of choice, expect others to choose their way to be free or even their way to conceive of freedom. The dogmatic demands to the world spring from the inner ambiguity of personality. One can be preserved by the vigorous terms from one's inner dissolution. (Psychoanalysts used to identify this mechanism in the earlier, more or less romantic, Russian revolutionaries.) Dogmatism is the mechanical stabilization of the ambiguous man, rather than the organic one springing from the depth of his personality. (Yet, this kind of protective armor, deep inside the ambiguous man, sooner or later comes to crack down and destroy either the ambiguous man himself or others.)<sup>25</sup>

One of the possible implications of Kavolis's thought would be that the ambiguous man, being incapable of analytically grasping and critically questioning himself, eventually comes to misrepresent social reality itself projecting on it those painful elements of his personality and experience that are too hard for him either to understand or to eliminate from himself. (It would be some kind of dogmatism which springs from cognitive dissonance.) Therefore, if "the dogmatic demands to the world spring from the inner ambiguity of personality," dogmatism itself is merely an illusion of both the clear standpoint and transparent thought.

One's striving for intensity in one's milieu actually betrays one's ability critically to analyze neither oneself nor human reality as it is — before its enchantment with some kind of ideological magic, idiocratic formulas, carnal and psychic experiments, and the like. The dogmatic/ambiguous man is incapable of critically analyzing at all: he is capable only either of creating some gloomy prophecies or of symbolically excommunicating those who are considered to be a threat to the

body social and its nearly mystical coherence. When the quest for enemies comes to replace critical analysis, his troubled imagination easily provides a group target.

Kavolis offers an even more strict formulation: "The demand of intensity may be easier satisfied by action — or by "carnal thinking," i.e., by the substitution of thought for motions and sounds, — than by the intellectual (especially, disciplined), self-critical analysis; it may be easier satisfied by the destruction of what is present (or by some bizarre experiments) than by the creation of something new."<sup>26</sup> Then we can observe a sudden transition of Kavolis's thought to the new theme which was most probably of great personal importance for him: "This may throw new light on the ambiguous human tendency toward cultural pessimism, that is, to extreme criticism of a given culture and its institutions. Such criticism was widespread in Germany from the end of the 19th century to the Weimar period, and it prepared the soil for the Nazi 'Utopia'. . . . This case falsifies the standpoint that criticism is always a remedy of society."<sup>27</sup>

Kavolis's statement implies that the extreme, radical and detached social and cultural criticism (or, to use one of Michael Walzer's key terms, disconnected criticism)<sup>28</sup> flourishes in the countries which have a relatively weak tradition of politically committed, i.e., connected, social and cultural criticism. So Kavolis might have employed the following working hypothesis. Disconnected criticism (which I would define as *ad extra* criticism) and cultural pessimism come into existence where it was virtually impossible to disseminate either utopian imagination (in its classical shape) or connected critical thought, i.e., the *ad intra* criticism. This could be either because of a historically short, weak and fragile tradition of liberal democracy (as in nearly the entire Central and Eastern Europe, except for the Czech lands) or because of the historically unprecedented oppressiveness of the state power structure and the deeply grounded gap between culture and politics (as in Russia).

The question arises: Whether and how social criticism is possible where there is neither public domain nor elaborate public political discourse, and where criticism can manifest itself only either through the anti-structural movements (as, for instance, the *skomoroch* — Russian tricksters in semi-Byzantine medieval Russia or, say, the *yurodivye* in the Russia of Ivan the Horrible or of Boris Godunov) or through exaggerated cultural pessimism, over-generalizations and gloomy prophecies? What remains of the society as such if the public domain and public political discourse happen to be eliminated? Where can connected criticism come from if this be the case? It would be difficult to imagine a West European or North American critical thinker depicting his/her country in the way the great Russian cultural pessimists Piotr Chaadaev and Vladimir Pechorin did. Only by noting the difference between the latter, on the one hand, and, for example, Ralph Waldo Emerson or William Morris or Samuel Butler, on the other, can one properly understand the crucial difference between *ad extra* and *ad intra* criticism.

One of the most profound of Kavolis's insights into the moral origins of the nationalist critique of nationalism, that is, of social and cultural criticism within the framework of the nationalist moral culture, reveals a hardly identifiable basis for the politically and morally committed criticism in the 20th century:

The liberal and romantic moral cultures, after all, are rooted respectively in the individual's rational (ascetic) and emotional (mystical) depth, whereas the nationalist moral culture rests on community, i.e., a historically concrete, "natural" community, which, on a voluntary and mystical basis is maintained or revived by the committed individual. The individual finds himself as having received a significant part of his moral substance from his community, and is prepared to hand over this substance, after having it refracted through his own experience, to the next generation of

community members. But inasmuch as his community's experience becomes his personal substance, part of his identity, he strictly judges this community and its history rejecting those things that are perceived by him as a deformation of his moral character. At the same time, he judges himself asking whether his contribution to community coincides with what it needs the most.<sup>29</sup>

Then Kavolis ironically sums it up:

. . . What it actually needs, not necessarily coincides, in the nationalist view, with what its people concretely want. The nationalist follows and conforms to a theory which provides the ready-made answer to what the people want, not to opinion polls of the population.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, if the social/cultural critic, instead of participating in several moral cultures, limit and reduce themselves to a single nationalist moral culture, they betray either the symptoms of ambiguity in their consciousness and moral stance, accompanied by the striving for intensity and political power, or a shabby individual identity, accompanied by a desperate need for some kind of symbolic compensation or dissolution into the mystical collective body.

This is to say the ambiguous man can never become a connected critic. Such human ambiguity may easily transform itself into the ambivalence of severe critiques of those social phenomena (certain models of social order or of culture, modes of human interaction and self-expression, institutional practices, networks of social organization, etc.) that are considered by the critic to be alien and hostile to his/her imagined community and its lost golden age. Needless to say this is nothing other than the classic love-hate attitude one can direct either to oneself or to others. In brief, the connected critic is unthinkable without what has been called by Kavolis a clear structure of identity and personality.

The connected social and cultural criticism might best be defined in the following way: it implies and rests on one's ability to experience the dynamics and dissemination of one's society and culture as one's own drama, while treating social analysis as the correction of the field of one's own intellectual possibilities and moral choices. In other words, criticism means one's ability to absorb the most symptomatic tendencies of social and cultural change taking place in one's society and culture, and, then, to return them — permeated by one's individual experience and theoretical articulation — to one's community or society, in the form of critical warning or of intellectual and moral trial.

The most proper context of Kavolis, as social and cultural critic, is the company of "the nationalist critics of nationalist politics", following the way in which Michael Walzer has described Martin Buber.<sup>31</sup> This company is primarily represented by such non-conformist and politically committed critics as Albert Einstein and Martin Buber — both dedicated Zionists, though mavericks and dissenters in the Zionist movement, who frequently criticized the Zionist movement leaders and their policies. As Walzer has incisively noted, Julien Benda — the very embodiment of disconnected criticism — would undoubtedly have thought such a position impossible.<sup>32</sup> However, Benda would most probably have in turn been labeled by Kavolis as an ambiguous critic.

The question may arise: Does it make any sense to compare a Lithuanian émigré interactionist sociologist and civilizationist with an Austrian-Jewish philosopher and theologian, the founding father of the dialogue-based personalism, and both a committed Zionist and one of the most severe critics of its politics? Such a comparison makes sense in many respects. First, like Buber who might best be defined as the philosopher of the return, Kavolis is the withdrawal-and-return

sociologist (to slightly modify Arnold J. Toynbee's term). Both have severely and consistently criticized what has been perceived by them as the object of their devotion — their imagined communities that have eventually come into being as nation-states — and both have essentially contributed to the nation-building process. One would think that it is they of whom Lewis Coser has said: "We are likely to be especially critical of the things we love."<sup>33</sup>

Second, another common feature of Kavolis and Buber is their particular intellectual sensibility, which may well be described in terms of theoretical and moral empathy. It suffices to recall Kavolis stressing the importance of the ethics of compassion, inherent in the romantic moral culture (as in the romantic version of liberal morality: all are equal in their pain which equally hurts everybody), and of the perception of the Other. Walzer characterizes Buber's empathy by referring not only to him, but to the Talmud as well:

'It is only common sense,' as the Talmud says. 'Who knows that your blood is redder [than his]? Perhaps his blood is redder'. . . . The same argument holds with regard to the group: 'There is no scale of values for the function of peoples. One cannot be ranked above another'.<sup>34</sup>

Both Buber and Kavolis, by virtue of having been dialogue theoreticians *par excellence*, have raised their voices against instrumental and manipulative exchanges. Last but not least, both can be analyzed as nearly paradigmatic cases of liberal nationalism which always has its universalistic moral implications.

Kavolis's attitude to the intellectual, emphasizing ascetic self-discipline, self-denying love of work, and self-dedication, evidently relates to the universalist origins of the liberal moral stance. As Walzer puts it:

The crucial moral principle of the true intellectual has the form of a self-denying ordinance. This was perfectly expressed many centuries ago by a Jewish sage giving advice to other sages and would-be sages: 'Love work, do not domineer over others, and never seek the intimacy of public officials'.<sup>35</sup>

This attitude obviously penetrates Kavolis's closing remark on the cultural liberal: "For the cultural liberal, it suffices to do his work, to be immune to various distractions, and to resist moral corruptions in himself."<sup>36</sup>

It is very important to note that Kavolis, in spite of his fidelity and commitment to his native Lithuania, has never completely identified himself with anything, thus preserving his critical distance and individual independence from the establishments, political authorities and bureaucracies. His stance might best be summed up by referring, once more, to Walzer's words on Albert Einstein: "A man of passion and detachment, he found his own equilibrium in a balance of the two."<sup>37</sup> These words perfectly fit Vytautas Kavolis as well.

## **Postscript**

My main task, in this study, to substantiate the working hypothesis that Kavolis's great theoretical ambition to bridge the social sciences and the humanities, their disciplines and approaches, methods and perspectives, etc., was nothing other than a continuation and derivative of his great ethical intention to bridge the distinct moral cultures and models of self-understanding.

This is exactly how value comes to manifest itself in the universe of the social and cultural critic's discourse, constantly underlying what we take as truth, i.e., the *adequatio rei et intellectus*.

Therefore, Kavolis's multi- and inter-disciplinary studies of society and culture can be depicted as the very tip of the iceberg, beneath which there lurks his conscious and even highly prescriptive participation in the distinct, though complementary, realms of human existence (in Kavolis's terms, in the distinct symbolic logics and frames of meaning). Having defined civilizations — the largest comprehensive and sociologically identifiable sociocultural entities — as symbolic designs emanating values and meanings for human self-understanding and self-fulfillment, over time Kavolis has come to treat the comparative study of civilizations not only as a specifically theoretical project, but as a phenomenon of transcivilizational sensibility and conscience as well. Such a concept of civilization, which deals with it as consisting of social structures and symbolic organization, came from Nelson's works (Kavolis has acknowledged that Nelson has been a major contributor to this perspective — a perspective which seems to prevail in current comparative studies).<sup>38</sup>

Like all great theoreticians who are — by virtue of being provocative and challenging — far ahead of plain empiricism and obedient school-theorizing, Kavolis had some vulnerable points in his analytical studies and interpretive essays. (As noted, Kavolis applied interactionist sociology to the comparative study of civilizations.) Having capitalized on some humanist interpretive techniques and cultural (particularly, literary) documents, he crossed the boundaries of disciplines to expand the horizon of the social analysis, let alone his numerous challenges to the things that had been taken for granted before. Yet, he took empirical data and information about societies and cultures solely from scholarly journals and books. This is why his direct contact with social reality sometimes seems to be problematic (although Kavolis's rare theoretical and cross-cultural sophistication has essentially contributed to the incisiveness of his social analyses.) Moreover, Kavolis took empirical data on non-Western civilizations solely from secondary sources, i.e., the monographs and studies written by other authors, where the facts and data were already refracted through a certain explanatory framework or analytical scheme. Most probably, this is one of the unavoidable problems of every methodologist and conceptualist.

Kavolis's last theoretical concerns revolved around the problem of human trust, which was lifted by him to the rank of a fundamental sociological issue. How does the human capacity for association and communication, originating from such unimportant things as various voluntary societies and clubs, eventually turn into the mighty social capital from which there results the modern — pluralist and civil — society? Why do humans, in well-organized social life, no longer cling together or strive for, in Kavolis's terms, the "strong" relations and extremely intense friendships (that would be perceived as the only hope for the meaning of their lives)? Why is this still the case in Central and East European countries where intense and strong human friendship is frequently accompanied by absolute mistrust regarding the state and its institutions, i.e., the forms of organized societal life? How does society — which should never be confused with the arithmetic totality of human beings — originate in general? These questions reflect the basic sociological concerns of Kavolis in his last Lithuanian contributions. They show him as having returned to the primary questions of the social analyst and critic.

The critic is always in the universe of primary questions and in the situation of a permanent beginning.

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## Notes

1. Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 11.
2. See Louis Dumont, "On Value," in *The Proceedings of the British Academy*, 66 (1980), pp. 207-41.
3. On the similarities of Jewish, Christian and Islamic civilizations (in terms of social structure and symbolic organization), and on the spread of nationalism in the great monotheistic civilizations as well, see Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
4. On the distinction between the analysis of (social) structure and the interpretation of (cultural) energy from a civilization-analytic perspective see Vytautas Kavolis, "Structure and Energy: Toward a Civilization-Analytic Perspective," in *Comparative Civilizations Review*, 1 (1979), pp. 21-41.
5. For more on the history of consciousness and civilizational analysis, see Vytautas Kavolis, "History of Consciousness and Civilization Analysis," in *Comparative Civilizations Review*, 17 (1987), pp. 1-19; Vytautas Kavolis, *Civilization Analysis as a Sociology of Culture* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1995).
6. Vytautas Kavolis, "Siandienine pazangumo reiksme" (The Current Meaning of Being Progressive), in Virginijus Gasiliunas, ed., *Metmenu laisvieji svarstymai: 1959-1989* (Free Debates of the Metmenys: 1959-1989) (Vilnius: Lietuvos rasytoju sajungos leidykla [The Lithuanian Writers Union Press], 1993), p. 58.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Vytautas Kavolis, "Moralines kulturos: zemelapiai, trajektorijos, itamos" (Moral Cultures: Maps, Trajectories, Tensions), in *Metmenu laisvieji svarstymai, op. cit.*, pp. 184-85.
9. This statement may best be proved and exemplified by the dialogue between French and Anglo-American political philosophies and paradigms of political thought. The most incisive, profound and subtle analysis of the differences between the Anglo-American world and continental Europe (from the point of view of political consciousness, social order, political and religious practices) has been provided by Alexis de Tocqueville: his magnum opus *De la démocratie en Amérique* (1835) remains unsurpassed and even unchallenged as the comparative study of political liberalism, democracy and individualism. On the late and strange birth of liberalism in France (French intellectuals having failed to essentially contribute to the formation and dissemination of liberalism after the epoch of the Enlightenment), see Mark Lilla, "The Strange Birth of Liberal France," in *The Wilson Quarterly* (Fall 1994), pp. 106-20.
10. This difference has been examined by Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 158-60. Kavolis refers to this position himself.
11. Kavolis, "Moralines kulturos . . .," *op. cit.*, pp. 183-84.
12. See Vytautas Kavolis, "Liberalaus galvojimo erdveje" (In the Space of the Liberal Thinking) in *Metmenys* (Patterns), 63 (1992), p. 39.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
14. The term "imagined political community," coined by Benedict Anderson for the definition of the nation, seems to express the very essence of both the nationalist moral culture and of

nationalist historical and cultural imaginations. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 5-7.

15. Kavolis, "Moralines kultūros . . .," *op. cit.*, p. 191.

16. Later on, Kavolis, in his monograph, *Moralizing Cultures*, comes to name the irresponsible determinism "a modern amoral culture" and "the culture of determinism." This concept, as well as the terms signifying it, obviously had assisted Kavolis in providing some incisive insights in the phenomena of the conspiracy theory, victimization and technocratic consciousness. See Vytautas Kavolis, *Moralizing Cultures* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1993), pp. 48-9.

17. Kavolis, "Moralines kultūros . . .," *op. cit.*, pp. 191-92.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 190-91.

19. See Eric Voegelin, *Order and History*, Volume 4 (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), pp. 212-38.

20. For more on this issue, see Vytautas Kavolis, "Nelson's Legacy of Comparative Studies," in E. V. Walter, Vytautas Kavolis, Edmund Leites and Marie Coleman Nelson, eds., *Civilizations East and West: A Memorial Volume for Benjamin Nelson* (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1985), pp. 17-24.

21. See the revised version of this study in Kavolis, *Civilization Analysis as a Sociology of Culture*, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

22. Exactly those features as characteristic of the modern intellectual are referred to by Robert Darnton. In his brilliant article on the 18th century French Enlightenment movement led by the *philosophes*, Darnton considers the latter to have been the very prototype of what we call the intellectuals. See Robert Darnton, "George Washington's False Teeth," in *The New York Review of Books*, XLIV, 5 (March 27, 1997), pp. 34-8.

23. For more on this issue, see Kavolis, "Structure and Energy: Toward a Civilization-Analytic Perspective," *op. cit.*, p. 38.

24. Kavolis, "Moralines kultūros . . .," *op. cit.*, p. 191.

25. Vytautas Kavolis, "Neaiskumo patologijos" (The Pathologies of Ambiguity), in *Metmenu laisvieji svarstymai*, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.* In stating this, Kavolis refers to Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963).

28. See Michael Walzer, *The Company of Critics: Social Criticism and Political Commitment in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), pp. 3-28.

29. Kavolis, "Moralines kultūros . . .," *op. cit.*, 183.

30. *Ibid.*

31. See Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

32. See *ibid.*, pp. 37-8; p. 66.

33. Quoted from *ibid.*, p. 43.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-4.

36. Kavolis, "Liberalaus galvojimo erdveje," *op. cit.*, p. 45.

37. Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, *op. cit.* p. 38.

38. For more on this issue, see Kavolis, *Civilization Analysis as a Sociology of Culture*, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.