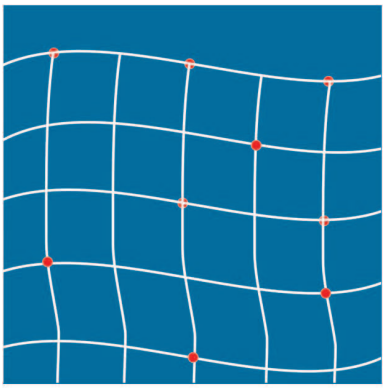
ISSN 1691-5038

DAUGAVPILS UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
INSTITUTE OF COMPARATIVE STUDIES

THE MEMOIRS OF THE 20TH CENTURY: NORDIC AND BALTIC EXPERIENCE



Nordic – Baltic – Russian
Network in Comparative
Cultural Studies

COMPARATIVE STUDIES Vol. III (2)

DAUGAVPILS UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC PRESS "SAULE"
2010

Comparative Studies. The Memoirs of the 20th Century: Nordic and Baltic Experience. Vol. III (2). Daugavpils: Daugavpils University Academic Press "Saule", 2010. 184 p.

ISSN 1691-5038
ISBN 978-9984-14-493-1

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FOREWORD

The collection of research articles titled *The Memoirs of the 20th Century: Nordic and Baltic Experience* regards the issues of Nordic, Baltic, and Russian culture processes and culture contacts in a comparative perspective. In 2005, *Nordic – Baltic – Russian Network in Comparative Cultural Studies* was formed at Daugavpils University. In the course of its existence, two international research conferences were organized within the network: the first one on 9 – 10 May 2006 in Daugavpils, another on 10 – 11 May 2008 in Oslo. The materials of the former conference *Communication as Translatio – Nordic – Baltic – Russian Dialogues* were published in the collection *Comparative Studies. Volume I (1)* in 2008.

The present collection entails papers presented at the conference *The Memoirs of the 20th Century: Nordic and Baltic Experience* that took place in Oslo with participants from Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Norway, Finland, and Sweden. The conference was dedicated to the typological forms of memory appearing in the specific contexts of the Nordic, Baltic, and Russian culture and history.

The cooperation network was coordinated by Daugavpils University Comparative Studies Institute professor Maija Burima and research fellow Ilze Kačāne who were also the conference organizers.

To extend the thematic field marked by the conference, several authors were invited to participate with their articles in the compilation of the collection of articles.

Baltic and Nordic regions have long-standing culture contact traditions. There are parallels in the people's identity and national character of both regions, e.g. in the perception of landscape, attitude towards nature and people around. Culture parallels between Nordic and Baltic countries have formed a continual process marked by specific crosspoints that are often closely connected with global historical events.

The present collection is aimed at analyzing the role of memory as a culture phenomenon in the process of literature by marking the theoretical framework and cultural discourse of memory interpretation, noting its determined genre modifications and describing the resonance of global and local historical events in memory narratives that are especially popular among Baltic researchers due to the fact that this region has been affected by the historical cataclysms of the 20th century. The collection also entails articles that regard the phenomenon of memory as a component part of literary contacts of diverse ages.

The articles in the collection on the whole crystallize the idea that memory is a complex psychological mechanism, thus having manifold opportunities of actualization in literature: variating reproduction strategies of past events, different kinds of relating memories manifesting in several modifications of genres, specific character of depicting individual and collective experience, rewriting history, etc.

The editors hope that readers will find in this collection new ideas on the phenomenon of memory as well as the investigation of Baltic and Nordic culture contacts.

Maija Burima

MEMORIES AS THE PHENOMENON OF THEORETICAL AND CULTURAL DISCOURSE

Fjodors Fjodorovs

MEMOIRS IN THE SYSTEM OF EGO-LITERARY GENRES

Summary

Literature is concentrated on modeling a relative world, by means of which the normative reality is affirmed or the present-day life is analyzed; in this sense literature is a distant-removed structure to a greater or lesser extent. Ego-literature is concentrated not on the relative, but on the concrete-personal world, the world limited by the author's life story, his life experience, directly declaring his views. The subject of literature is 'he' or 'they'. The subject of ego-literature is 'I' or 'they' through the prism of 'I'. The methodology of literature is ***description****, be it mythology or reality. The methodology of ego-literature is* ***self-description****. Literature describes the world and life through the system of mediators, figureheads. Ego-literature author gets along without meditation. Literary author objectifies the world; ego-literary author subjectifies the world. The history of literature as entirety including literature proper and ego-literature entails a process declaring the advance of subjectivity.*

The 18th century in France set forward memoirs as a major genre of ego-literature. Memoirs as important cultural fact have received little theoretical investigation. Two problems are especially significant: 1) artistic – inartistic; 2) the criterion of truth.

Key-words: description, self-description, confession, memory, truthfulness, emigration, motherland, foreign land, messianic

*

The study of literature in recent four or five years has shown a keen interest in the research of ego-literature. The term 'ego-literature' is precise enough. Literature is concentrated on modeling a relative world, by means of which the normative reality is affirmed or the present-day life is analyzed; in this sense literature is a distant-removed structure to a greater or lesser extent. Ego-literature is concentrated not on the relative, but on the concrete-personal world, the world limited by the author's life story, his life experience, directly declaring his views. The subject of literature is 'he' or 'they'. The subject of ego-literature is 'I' or 'they' through the prism of 'I'. The methodology of literature is **description**, be it mythology or reality. The methodology of ego-literature is **self-description**. Literature describes the world and life through the system of mediators, figureheads. Ego-literature author gets along without meditation. Literary author objectifies the world; ego-literary author subjectifies the world. The history of literature as entirety including literature proper and ego-literature entails a process declaring the advance of subjectivity.

Ego-literature appears when there is a need for self-description for human, but this is the need of a 'self-realized', 'self-realizing' personality. The classical world of the times of Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle devotes itself to the comprehension of the Universe

and human as its specific phenomenon. *Plato and Aristotle are objectivists. They treat human personality as emanation of common existence, as outflow of cosmic Consciousness*.[1] Only Hellenism confirms *concrete and single individuality*.

> *In the period of Hellenism, philosophy loses its strict contours of Platonism and Aristotelism, and is mainly engaged in the questions of organization of personality, and depending on it develops the questions of logic, physics, cosmology and ethics…*[2]

Theophrastus who lived at the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd century A.D. wrote his famous book *Characters* where he classified human types. At that time a number of philosophical doctrines appeared – stoicism, Epicureanism, skepticism, – the object of meditation and care of which is the human personality.

Ego-literature is a multi-genre space; every genre predetermines and explains the level of author's identification. The chief role in switching attention from the world to the human personality, to 'I', was played by Christianity with its internalized (intrinsic) programme. The first and the most important ego-literary genre regulating the relationships between human and the God is **confession**; the confession, being an **oral** text, is indispensable ritual action in the church life. But owing to Augustine Aurelius (354 – 430), this genuine 'teacher of the West', the confession acquires the status of a written, i.e. literary genre, that had a determining impact on all Christian literature, and not only the Christian but also Post-Christian one. *The Confession* by Augustine Aurelius is a precedent confessional text. The essence of the confession is **penance**, but penance is self-analysis and its task is overcoming of sin; penance is based on the mechanism of relationship between the real human life and the Christian ethic norm. In this sense, confession is the most adequate ego-literary text, but, naturally, adequate for a Christian.

Augustine Aurelius views on the example of his own life the story of pagan turning into Christian, i.e. at the basis of his *Confession* there is a fundamental spiritual act, fundamental ontological metamorphosis.

> *Augustine's torments – orders of the forming soul, in a strictly strong-willed, but also miraculous way (as a reward for personal volition) discovering the light of God's Word – the soul beginning to see clearly*.[3]

Augustine Aurelius' *Confession* is the Christian canon.

The second most important monument of the confessional literature – *History of my Disasters* by Pierre Ablard (1079 – 1142). The title is very important. Augustine Aurelius calls the story of his life *The Confession*, excluding his name from the title; he ascribes to the book a universal meaning, the meaning of a religious model. Abélard writes 'the history' of his life. Bibliography is an Antique genre, glorified by Plutarch. But Abélard does not write about caesars and heroes, but about excruciating troubles of **his** life, about sublime and tragic love, about common envy, about persecutions and humiliation. *Abélard's Confession is in principle anti-Augustinian confession, because the suffering body is confessing, and only somewhere at the edge of life there is the suffering soul*.[4]

The main thing is something else: by telling the story of his disasters Abélard affirms his 'I' as equivalent to Antique heroes and Christian saints. The bibliography of a separate personality is no less significant than their bibliographies. And in this sense Abélard's book is an act of self-consciousness and self-affirmation of a private personality. However,

dismay does not leave the self-affirming Abélard, which is dictated by the natural circumstance that on the screen of his consciousness Christian commandments are present.

The classical confession of the new time is *The Confession* by Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 1778) written in 1765 – 1770. It is entirely removed from the sphere of Christian purposefulness. Rousseau begins his narration by describing the **uniqueness** of his task:

> *I undertake an unparalleled task that will not find an imitator. I want to show my fellow counterparts one man in all truth of his nature, – and I will be that man.*[5]

By the way, the task set by Rousseau explains the title: Abélard separated his book from the confession because its Christian meaning and its Christian nature were important for him; Christian connotations of the confession do not exist for Rousseau. Rousseau and similar author's task is revealing psychological mechanisms of these or those acts and actions. And it is rather significant that freedom from the absolute, from the Christian censorship gives the right to untruth; with Rousseau it is not concealment of evil actions, but the depiction of such evil actions which he did not perform, and in such a strange way Rousseau confirmed the absolute truth of his biography.

It is significant that confession and biography literature is the literature of **retrospective** descriptions, summation of life of its kind. Non-contiguity and the principle of retrospection determine this literature as literature of reminiscence, **memory** that makes it rather subjective. It is not a real, but a subjective life story.

And finally, despite the loss of Christian confessional character, secular confession to a greater or lesser extent, but not always, preserves the Christian matrix, although undoubtedly in a dotted-profane variant of **sincerity**.

The 17th century, and, first of all, the French 17th century brings forward to the cultural proscenium, together with moralism, such ego-literary genres most important for modern times as memoirs and epistolary.

Memoirs are also biographies, but the subject and, at the same time, the object of description is introduced into historic space, the borders of which are determined by the borders of his personal vision. It is very significant that La Rochefoucauld wrote both maxims and memoirs. Maxims are declarations of absolute truths, products of the efforts of mind. Memoirs are declarations of life realia, products of experience. In this sense the essence of the 17th century may be determined as the cross-point of mind and experience. And Luke Saint-Simon by his memoirs won the fame of Balzac of the 18th century, the creator of such old space that may be qualified as the space of 'I – epos'.

Memoirs are one of the most important genres of emigration. Memoirs for emigration are the experience of the past, the message to the future, and the way of life. The first Russian emigration created vast memoir literature.

The following thing should be stated here. The culture of emigration is genetically connected with the culture of Silver age, the first border of which lies in the 1890s, while the second – in 1917. Similarly to the Golden age (1810 – 1830s), the Silver age created great literature, painting, music, theatre, philosophy, science; it marked an unusual flourishing of spiritual life in Russia. But between the Silver age and the Russian world of first emigration there is a great drama that determined the fate of the whole country and every Russian, that divided the nation. It was an unbelievable, as to its scale, exit into emigration. The total number of emigration cannot he counted, according to

different authoritative sources it oscillates within 2 – 3 million. This figure grows if we take into consideration those inhabitants who found themselves abroad as a result of the collapse of the Russian empire. Russian dispersal embraced all Western Europe, South and North America, Asia, first of all, China, Australia, the Pacific Ocean islands, Africa; it can be compared only with the ancient Jewish scattering. As a result of revolution and civil war, two Russias emerged – the Soviet Russia (metropolis) and the Transfrontier Russia. The most important theme of emigration consciousness was the theme of Russia, its past and future fate. The loss of Russia made it not only the object of constant emotional experience; Russia as it settled in one's heart, in the consciousness of exiles. Russia acquired the character of that psychological space which was almost more significant than the physical one. Russian emigration interprets the history of Russia through the history of human life and fate; in this connection it is more concrete, the main thing, it is more **personal** than Silver age. In the book *The Russian Idea* (1946) Nikolai Berdyaev wrote that disposition of artists of the Silver age *stood under the sign of cosmos, but not Logos*.

> *That is why cosmos swallows their personality; the value of personality is weaker [..]. The pagan cosmogonic, although is a very changed form, predominated over Christian personalism.*[6]

The culture of Russian emigration avoids both the abstractions and also the play that was characteristic of the Silver age. It returns to literature a real, concrete-historical human who is the centre of interpretation of such ontological notions as life and death, love and hatred, motherland and exile, hope and disbelief, joy and suffering, etc. **Art** was the most important for the culture of the Silver age. **Artlessness**, or as Georgiy Adamovitch, one of the most authoritative representatives of the culture of Russian emigration, said, *genuine humaneness* is the most important for the Russian emigration[7].

Emigration strives to comprehend the spiritual experience of the nation and then pass it to descendants, to the future. And it is not only the experience of the pre-revolutionary Russia but also one's personal experience. For Russian emigration, a significant part of it, the revival of Russia is inevitable. From here comes the striving of emigration to preserve and pass to the future Russian experience thought, Russian spirituality. In her poem written in 1920, Nina Berberova pronounced bright, one can say, happy words: *I am not an exile, I am a messenger…*[8], the contemporaries transformed this world into a plural form: *We are not exiles, we are messengers*. They were very widespread because they expressed the ideas of **Messianism** so characteristic of the Russian emigration.

Owing to not only the 'mnemonic' impulse but also to Messianic idea, the most important **word** of the first Russian emigration was memories.

Memoir collections of emigration are the live word of thousands and thousands of people. All wrote memoirs – writers, actors, musicians, artists, philosophers, scientists, politicians, military, the members of the emperor's family and 'private' people. This provides a wide panorama of the pre-revolutionary life: everyday life, morals, thoughts, feelings, family, clan, class relationship, etc. The exceptional significance of memoirs lies in the fact that it is **the voice of each separate 'I'**, the big and the small one.

But obviously memoirs initially presuppose essential corrections of one's own life and another life. Historical distance and system of taboos accepted in the society 'dictate'

memoirs. Now it is necessary to mention two most important factors: the factor of idealization and the factor of deidealization; both of them produce mythology. Pre-revolutionary Russia is elevated into a positive myth, not always, not by all, but by the overwhelming majority, because it is **motherland**. Transfrontier Russia is degraded into a negative myth, because it is **a foreign land**; the more so because the life of exiles is hard as a rule. From Paris, the great poetess Marina Tsvetayeva asked her Czech friend:

> *[..] Perhaps you could get [..] some* ***dark*** *dress for me,* ***for the evening****. I don't go anywhere, because I have nothing to put on, and there is no money to buy anything. [..] I am invited to a number of places, but I can't appear there because I don't have neither a silk dress, nor stockings, nor patent-leader shoes* (here – 'uniform').
>
> *I would like to go to the den till the end of my days.*[9]

One of the main oppositions of exile consciousness is **motherland – foreign land**. Another no less important opposition is **a foreign land – the Soviet Union**, in which a foreign land bears a positive connotation, but the Soviet Union – negative.

Memoirs were written also in the Soviet Union, although very seldom, and mainly in the post-Stalinist period.

Taken together memoirs form an enormous **multi-voiced** space of the people, this or that territorial community, and the main thing is that this multi-voiced space, taking into consideration that also pseudo-memoirs are unavoidable, is the most correct embodiment of the mode of life – psychological national phenomenon.

Finally, memoirs are democratic because in memoirs geniuses and mortals are equal.

Memoirs, being a very important and voluminous phenomenon of culture, have received not much theoretical interpretation.

We will point out some of the major problems in this respect:

1. **Fiction – non-fiction**. Significant corpus of memoir literature has been created by professional writers, and it can be included into fiction because it corresponds to all criteria of high artistic value; such, for example, are memoirs by Hodasevitch, Berberova, Yanovskiy; these texts are ego-literary according to their task and literary according to their realization. Memoirs of non-professionals considerably surpass memoirs of professionals as to their volume. Being important information documents, they do not correspond to the traditional criteria of high artistic value and due to this reason fall out from the sphere of attention by literary historians. History of ego-literature has not been developed, and it cannot be created because of the borderline between fiction and non-fiction memoirs. Nevertheless the need for the history of ego-literature is great. We consider that the principle of selecting materials adopted by folklorists should be extended to memoirs.
2. The criterion of truthfulness is simple enough at the first sight. A writer of memoirs, describing his/her past without omissions, represents as if fearlessness of the truth. A writer of memoirs describing his/her past with omissions or obvious idealization creates a false picture of it. With idealization everything is clear as, in any case, it has the aims of the situation. But any description of reality needs ethnical self-censorship, otherwise the rights of personality may be violated.

One should say about Nikolai Berdyaev's position.

> *Memory about the past is creative, transforming memory, it selects, it does not reproduce passively the past. The beauty of the past is not the beauty of empirical past, it is the beauty of the present, transformed past that came into the present. [..] Time is the greatest metaphysical mystery and complete paradox. That is why it is so difficult to write about the past, that is why truthfulness is relation to the past is a very complicated problem. Memory in man is the greatest metaphysical mystery.*[10]

A special case is the memoirs created in totalitarian metropolis, for example, in the Soviet Union, and meant for publication. In 1959 Ilya Erenburg began working on memoirs *People, Years, Life*; they were not finished and the writer considered them as the main book of his life. They were of enormous significance for the young generation because they opened a window into the historico-cultural space of the world and Russia providing new knowledge and a new vision. Erenburg's memoirs met a very strong opposition from the authorities. At the same time, among separate representatives of intelligentsia, they were severely criticized for half-truth, especially nowadays. Erenburg wrote the truth, but he could not write about many events and many people; the publication was forbidden by censorship and the Central Committee of the Communist Party demanded the removal of 126 fragments in the sixth book. If Erenburg had written the whole truth, his memoirs would have remained forbidden till the second half of the 1980s and would not have performed the mission they did at the beginning of the 1960s. Erenburg's choice was tactically correct and even the only one, the more so that the curious obtained the impulse of cognition. And here, perhaps, the words of uncompromising Nadezhda Mandelshtam are appropriate, when addressed to Erenburg (1963):

> *You know that there is a tendency to blame you for not having turned the flow of the heavenly bodies, for not breaking the moon and feed with the moon gingerbread. Otherwise speaking, they always wanted from you to do the impossible, and they were angry that you did the possible. Now, after the latest events, it is seen how much you did and do for softening the manners, how great is your role in our life and how thankful we should be to you.*[11]

Finally, it is necessary to add about two more ego-literary genres, which are very important and considerably differ from those discussed above.

First of all, it is **epistolary**. Epistolary is the oldest structure that was widely spread in the Antiquity and basically in the ancient Roman world; Cicero's letters may serve as an example. The epistolary genre experienced a real renaissance in the 17th century. Contrary to retrospective genres, the epistolary represents a simultaneous speech act; it is almost the only form of written communication in the distance, the analogue of modern e-mail, that in essence destroyed the epistolary. But at the same time the epistolary is **momentary** intrusion into the historical space. When Madame de Savignie informs about Parisian news many addressees every day, she announces herself the partner of time and history; the more so, by evaluating history she announces her everyday 'I' not only as a preserver of historical moments but also their co-creator of a kind, and in a certain sense also the creator as they have been preserved till nowadays only due to her letters. The letters of Madame de Savignie represent the secular talk transferred from the oral

sphere into the written one. From here comes the exceptional role played by the secular epistolary in the development of the French literary language.

One of the widest epistolary heritage of the 20th century was left by Tomas Mann who wrote to many outstanding and ordinary persons, but every his letter is a long intellectual monologue directed not only to a concrete person but also to humankind; he demonstrates the subject as the centre of interpretation of I in the present and in the future.

The epistolary of the 17th – 18th century, being a private act, envisaged publicity that, even limited, demanded to observe certain communicative rules. During last two centuries, the epistolary became the subject of post-mortem publications.

And here I will say some words about the letters of Yevgeniya Alexandrovna Svinyina (1859 – 1942). Svinyina belonged to Russian aristocratic elite; the family had a high status in the administrative and military sphere. Her husband Alexander Svinyin was general and a member of the State Council; he died in 1913. After the revolution all of them left Russia except Svinyina; she did not manage to do it. She described her life in Soviet Russia in her letters to her daughter and granddaughter Asya, Anastasiya Durova, and it is one of the most shocking documents of the epoch, relating the horror of life and high spiritual staunchness, independence, mercy, and love.

Some fragments.

1. *I live [..] in a tiny room, so tiny, that when I need to pull the drawer from the chest of drawers, then I take the chair into the corridor, but when I go to bed, then I have to put the stool at the entrance door. [..] I can neither read nor write there, it is too tight and dark.*

2. *Now I, like many others, have a new way of earning. I stand in queues for food, I receive for it differently, sometimes 40 copeks, but sometimes 20, it depends on the success of my queuing, and sometimes nothing, if I bring nothing. [..] sometimes I become desperate, if after all swearing, pushing and tiredness I get nothing. [..] The main concern is to collect those 5 roubles I pay for my bleak, tight, infested with hungry angry rats corner…*

3. *[..] I often ask myself: what nation do I belong to?*
   What am I now and what are my crimes in front of my unhappy, buried alive fatherland, in order to turn from a free person into pariah?

4. *[..] What I worry most of all is about your striving for Russia. Why so? Do you really think that you will find here what you are aspiring for? I already told you however dear tomb might be, but you cannot live on the tomb and for the tomb.*[12]

Svinyina died during Leningrad blockade in the winter of 1942 and was buried in the common grave.

The highest and in a certain sense the final ego-literary structure is **diary**. Like epistolary, diary leads ego-literature out from the literary zone, from the zone of poetics and rhetoric. Diary is a very personal document, it is a talk with oneself and directed towards oneself, it is an act of self-analysis or document with the help of which the author may experience the past, the document under the aegis of Mnemosina, meant for the reconstruction of mnemonic space. The diary is not meant for publication, even post-mortem. But in the 20th century there were exceptional cases when the author

published his diaries during his life-time, it hardly corresponds to the nature of diary as it is an open form of self-assertion, envisaging self-control and self-censorship.

And there are also note-books. And many other things.

Ego-literature is a bottomless cultural continent, the great part of which is hidden in the storehouses (depositories), but without it we cannot imagine our past, and our present is deformed. One of the main tasks of the scholars of the present and the future is the discovery and research of this continent.

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Natalia Baschmakoff

REMINISCENCE – KNOWLEDGE THROUGH TRACES[1]

Summary

Human memory is, by all its definitions, crucial to the construction and reconstruction of the past. Paul Ricoeur considers that any documentary proof refers directly to the problem of 'knowledge through traces'. Memory also outstrips the history of historians, for it is always the memory of someone who has projects. Pierre Nora questions the relationship of memory and history highlighting two different notions: lieux de mémoire, sites of memory, and milieux de mémoire, real environments of memory. The former still exist, the latter are disappearing.

In this article, memory is discussed as a way of acquiring knowledge through the oral history method – a dialectic of remembering and forgetting – of three disappearing milieux de mémoire. My observations are based on the experiences of Russian 'non-elite' narrators, whose lives typify a given social experience within a small community: 1) life stories of old Russian émigrés in Finland remembering the years between the two World Wars; 2) place narratives from villages in the post-Soviet EU-borderlands of Pskov province in the late 1990s; and 3) everyday life experiences of post-totalitarian economic crises of summer-dwellers on the Karelian Isthmus, who recollect the 1993 and 1998 crises. A common denominator to all three communities is that their representatives know that their way of life and their values are disappearing, but, implicitly, some are still hoping for a miracle: that somebody – children, relatives, or other people – would be able to continue their tradition.

Key-words: memory, oral history, life stories, place narratives, everyday life experiences

*

Introduction

Human memory is, by all its definitions, crucial to the construction and *re*-construction of the past. As Paul Ricoeur puts it in *The Reality of the Historical Past*, the notion of any documentary proof – written or oral – always refers directly to the problem of *knowledge through traces*[2]. Another eminent scholar who questions the relationship of memory and history is Pierre Nora, the director and editor of the multi-volume series on French cultural memory *Les Lieux de Mémoire*. In his essay *Between Memory and History*, which refers to the disappearing peasant culture, Nora writes:

> *We speak so much of memory, because there is so little of it left. [..] There are 'lieux de mémoire', sites of memory, because there are no longer 'milieux de mémoire', real environments of memory.*[3]
>
> *Memory and history*, says Nora, *far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition.*[4]

> *Memory is life, born of living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. [..] History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer.*[5]

In this article, memory is discussed as a way of acquiring knowledge through the oral history method – a dialectic of remembering and forgetting – of three disappearing *milieux de mémoire*.

My observations are based on the experiences of Russian 'non-elite' narrators, whose lives typify a given social experience within a small community: 1) *life stories* of old Russian émigrés in Finland; 2) *place narratives* from villages in the post-Soviet EU-borderlands of Pskov province; and 3) *everyday life experiences* of post-totalitarian economic crises of summer-dwellers on the Karelian Isthmus. A common denominator to all three communities is that their representatives know that their way of life and their values are disappearing, but, implicitly, some are still hoping for a miracle: that somebody – children, relatives, or other people – would be able to continue their tradition. As representatives of small communities, these people are very tradition-bound. Another common denominator to all three is that they are *personal narratives*. The accounts of the first group follow a pattern of a life story, whereas the other two focus more on thematic description of local traditions, ways of everyday life, events and habits of the community.

The first group consisted of members of the Old Russian diaspora, mainly comprising native inhabitants of the Grand Duchy and the so-called first-wave émigrés and their children living in Finland, a diaspora to which I belong myself. Some of my interviewees lived in France and Sweden, where they had moved from Finland in the 1930s. Altogether this *life story* data contain over 200 interviews gathered during a rather long period in the 1980s – 1990s.

Secondly, my observations are based on a 10-year-long experience of everyday life in the disappearing villages in the former Soviet province of Pskov, where I have interviewed and recorded local *place narratives* of the last remaining inhabitants. This data compilation encompasses roughly 30 in-depth interviews of personal recollections conducted during several consecutive fieldwork trips in dying out villages near the city of Novorzhev in 1985 – 1989 and 2003 – 2007.

Thirdly, my material consists of the fieldwork experience I gained on the Karelian Isthmus, where I interviewed summer-dwellers telling about the post-Soviet economic crises of the 1990s. These *everyday life experience* narratives consist of half-structured interviews of 12 reminiscing summer-dwellers, all of whom had been spending their summers in the Peri allotment garden – a dacha colony – since the 1950s, on the Karelian Isthmus, some 35 kilometres from St. Petersburg.

The interviewees of the émigré group represented a wide variety of different social levels, from house-wives, workers, and teachers, to representatives of the intelligentsia, musicians, and artists. The interviewees of the Pskov group were divided into two subgroups: firstly, the permanent inhabitants of the villages – mostly former kolkhoz-workers, now retired independent small-scale farmers – and secondly, the summer dwellers. The dacha colony group consisted mainly of St. Petersburg intelligentsia, some

of them already retired, representing a wide variety of professions: engineers, physicians, researchers, economists, museum workers, librarians, and teachers, but all of them from a rather low income bracket.

What happens in reminiscence conversations?

Where accurate terms are required, we have to remember that what was told is not a 'relic from the past', but a *re-constructed* facsimile of an event in the past, based on fragmentary recollections, often lacking in detail, but told at the present moment. In some ways, we may say that a person acts or *performs* the reminiscence talk. Consequently, it is also crucially important to consider the person's feelings and emotions evoked by the event recalled. Finnish folklorist Lauri Honko compares the interviewer's role in an oral performance to reading a libretto: the interpreter tries to capture something ephemeral – a fleeting form.[6] Thus, the re-enactment and the role of the historical imagination of the past in the present become extremely important for both parties. Again, according to Paul Ricoeur, *[..] re-enacting does not consist in reliving but in rethinking, and rethinking already contains the critical moment that forces us to take the detour by way of the historical imagination*[7].

When a person narrates about his/her past life, the information can be regarded as a process as well as a message. Research based on oral history frequently emphasizes the message and tends to neglect the idea of processing reminiscence talk. Sometimes processing oral history can also serve to meet the interviewer's expectations. However, the interviewer can deduce from some details of the narrative facts that there are obvious factual quotations of the collective voice of the community, which do not fit in with the individually experienced part of the story.

The person's disparaging attitude towards his own reminiscence may also affect the processing. When history is written, and when the collective memory is put in words and then submitted to critical examination, it still has to be reintegrated into the collective memory, to be re-appropriated by it. Ricoeur says:

> *This is perhaps the other meaning of the word history, no longer the history of things that have been done, but history in process, that of the actors – in other words, 'the history that has a future'. It is very important to place history in the sense of historiography – which knows only the past slice of time – back within the history that is lived, that is being made, and that has a future. [..] It may well be that memory in this way outstrips the history of historians. For memory is always the memory of someone 'who has projects'*.[8]

Persons who think back on their own lives tend to firmly believe that their memories are true. An individual always has projects and wants to have control over his own life, including the past that he has been reminiscing about.[9] Yet it is widely recognised that subsequent events, the present ones in particular, strongly affect the meaning-making process of the interpretation of one's real life in the past and shape his narrative about the past.

Analysing the following sample of an interview with a Russian émigré woman from the Karelian Isthmus, we should ask how the interviewee – who in 1918, when these particular events she is telling about took place, was only an 8-year-old girl – can

know and remember the historical facts (Lenin's incognito visit to Halila) which were revealed much later. Here we have the case of 'filling in' the individual story with facts from the grand narrative (*Lenin came*), which was constructed and written after her individual story was experienced.

> *So, I do remember very well [..] those were already the Protection Corps (Schützkorps) with pistols who ran after my father. My father hid himself in the cave. That was really scary, because this (Halila sanatorium, the place were the narrator's family lived, N.B.) was a nest of Russians. Besides, the (Finnish) Reds were positioned there. Lenin came. The others were the enemies, the Red Army guards.*[10]

Personal and collective memories overlap in the reminiscing process; memories are conflated as they are continuously being revised. *Over time, the diverse expressions of individual memories gradually coalesce into stereotypical images that shape collective memories*[11]. What the person remembers and what the researcher *hears* him recall is also essential when interpreting and re-constructing the past within a common discourse.

Trauma-based or non-traumatic reminiscence talk

Traumas can be experienced very differently. Richard J. McNally underlines the importance of distinguishing trauma-based reminiscence from normal recollecting. The vividness and the flashback imagery produce a disturbing sense of reliving the experience, as if the trauma was happening all over again.[12]

To remember the traumatic may also carry therapeutic elements as noted by many researchers. For instance, the émigré Russian Nobel price winner Joseph Brodsky's therapeutic reminiscing went through a lengthy intellectual process. I am quoting the following text not because of its exotic qualities, but because I wish to attract the reader's attention to the coherence between therapeutically recalled events and recollections thereof and especially *the language used* in both; this, the healing power of the language, is something Brodsky strongly underlines. Brodsky reminisces in English about his childhood spent in a Leningrad communal apartment. He remembers himself young, expelled by a totalitarian regime from his native country and separating himself from his beloved parents. Years later, by the same totalitarian regime, he is not allowed to meet his parents on their deathbed. This equation turns into a trauma, which persists until the end of Brodsky's life. Thus Brodsky's choice to write in English about a deep trauma in his life can be interpreted as auto-therapy, a kind of emotional – even metaphysical silence:

> *I write this in English because I want to grant them a margin of freedom: the margin whose width depends on the number of those who may be willing to read this. I want Maria Volpert and Alexander Brodsky to acquire reality under 'a foreign code of conscience', I want English verbs of motion to describe their movements. This won't resurrect them, but English grammar may at least prove to be a better escape route from the chimneys of the state crematorium than the Russian. To write about them in Russian would be only to further their captivity, their reduction to insignificance, resulting in mechanical annihilation. I know that one couldn't equate the state with language but it was in Russian that two old*

> *people, shuffling through numerous state chancelleries and ministries in the hope of obtaining a permit to go abroad for a visit to see their only son before they died, were told repeatedly, for twelve years in a row, that the state considers such a visit 'un-purposeful'. [..] May the English house my dead. In Russian I am prepared to read, write verses or letters. For Maria Volpert and Alexander Brodsky, though, English offers a better semblance of afterlife, maybe the only one there is, save my very self. And as far as the latter is concerned, writing in this language is like doing those dishes: it's therapeutic.*[13]

In the previous chapter, I have pointed out the importance of feelings and emotions that reminiscence may evoke in the speaker. When I was conducting interviews among Russian émigrés in Finland, I noted that my interviewees did not remember the everyday, pleasant, or nostalgic events as well as they remembered the traumatic ones. The traumatic memories culminate in events like the chaos of the October Revolution or the horrors of the Civil War, deeply engraved both in the individual and the collective memory. One crucial, if not acute and long-lasting, trauma was the feeling that they had lived in vain, that the Revolution had "swept away" their life's chances. This trauma was like an everyday presence of a psychic handicap. My own father used to repeat to me: *Remember, my daughter, you are studying for* ***two*** *generations.*

Finnish studies in oral history provide countless examples from the traumatic period of the Finnish Civil War of 1918, of which people remember or forget certain events or choose not to talk about them. Oral history narratives and folklore of both the Whites and the Reds reveal the preservation of memories that can be explained by the emotionality of the experiences associated with the terror of the year 1918. The mental healing process from traumatic memories takes decades and affects several generations.[14]

A self-sufficient household saved many a former villa owner
on the Karelian Isthmus in the 1920s – 1930s.
A Russian émigré family in Ollila (1926).

In many of my interviews, I have noted the total unwillingness to discuss such traumatic events as wars or violent death in general. The interviewees – mainly women,

and some of them war-widows – only referred to the traumatic memories by saying, *you know it from history, don't you*, or they frankly told me, *I don't want to speak about it* or *turn off the recorder, and I'll tell you*. It was, for instance, almost impossible to get recorded oral evidence about the random executions of Russians in Viborg in 1918.[15] There was one exception, a lady born in 1903, who was not an eyewitness herself, but who transmitted her sister's experience of the Viborg events:

> *In Vyborg during the Civil War when the Whites came in 1918, the Orthodox priest with his nephews went with flowers in hand to greet them. They were arrested. Anybody who wore a uniform was arrested. Those who were arrested before 4 p.m. were shot. Thus Mrs Hrabrov's father and mother were killed. My sister's fiancé, who worked at the (Vyborg) telegraph and wore a civil servant's uniform, was imprisoned at Kolikkoinmäki, but he was not shot because of some delay. An unknown woman came and said that Ivanov (the fiancé), should be released because he had been their 'nachalnik' (boss). He was released. The deacon Akimov and the proto-deacon Pavinskii were also arrested. My sister went there with a Finnish servant, she saw the bodies of those executed. They kept them in the Sorvali church. They were not given coffins, the dead were buried in Sorvali on a wooden plank just wrapped in sheets.*[16]

When an interviewee recalls wartime traumas from a child's perspective, his narration may contain keen observations, which, in a way, dispel the horror of the remembered events. A woman interviewee from one of the Pskov villages (born 1929) recalls World War II events on the local level, such as the devastation of the village by the Germans. She gives a very concrete and down-to-earth account. It is worth noting that the story told in 1997 by a peasant woman does not follow the official Soviet grand narrative, according to which all Germans were evil.

> *When the Germans came (to the village of Ivakhnovo), they burned everything down. But they did not touch us. They wouldn't even burn the village, but our soldiers stayed here at the crossroads for a rest, so we brought them some food, those of us who could afford to. The other ones (the Germans) saw from Kurokhnovo (a nearby village across the river Verzha) that there were enemy soldiers there and they immediately… We had a big house with this big windows, it was still under construction, the stove was not yet bricked up since the mason had been recruited into the army. So, we sit there dining. A German! But, I must say, he was good enough to knock on the window and warn: Woman, you, run away! And at the very moment: zzhhh, zhh! The fire was started! There was shooting, two men were killed. We ran where we could. We managed to take the cow from the shelter, but the pig was trapped and grilled by the fire. The next morning we came back, peeled the skin off and ate the pig. [..] Then [when the whole village was burned down] we moved to the cemetery. We dug trenches and lived there in the trenches, later people moved off one by one when the frost came.*[17]

Personal reminiscing about historical crises is mostly therapeutic. However, processing the recounted historical past is firmly linked to the narrator's age at the time of the personal experience. An example of this comes from the Karelian Isthmus where I was conducting fieldwork in the allotment gardens in summer 2003. Our intention was to find out how Russians remember the crisis years of 1993 and 1998 and the economic collapse after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Did their gardening help

the household economy or not? There appeared to be no difference between the recent crises in people's reminiscence talk. The most important difference was not between the two historically and economically different crises of the 1990s, but between the different generations' recalling of them and the way people of different age proportioned the difficulties of the 1990s to other hardships in their lives. Those whom the crises had pushed aside from active working life, brought up the serious trauma caused by the economic crash, whereas a pensioner who had experienced the Leningrad siege compared the crises to the siege, her life's biggest trauma, and belittled the post-Soviet 'minor crises' as she called them.

> *Wartime was really hard. We were quickly evacuated. It was a terribly cold winter, -52° C, and we had no clothes, no footwear. Oh, those years, nineteen forty-one, forty-two, were really harsh. [..] It was only in forty-six that I was allowed to return to Leningrad. We settled down at my mother's place. You know, the flat was in the basement, and only 28 square meters big. We were some ten people living there together: grandfather, mother, brother and sister, and three more persons. It was awful.*[18]

In the interviews conducted among émigré Russians in Finland, the life-long emotional trauma discussed above, the loss of their homeland, property, status and future, came up on many occasions. Crossing the new Finnish-Soviet border was also seen as a dramatic test of survival in personal reminiscences about historical crises.[19] Many of the interviewees recall how frightening it was, for instance, to experience the break-up of the family with one part of the family staying in Russia and the other in Finland.

> *Eight months, yes, I think that's how long it was, eight months we sat at the dacha (on the Karelian Isthmus) without 'mama'. And it seemed father was going through some kind of spiritual breakdown. He couldn't do anything. It was a matter of pride, as well. How hungry we were! Our bellies swelled, our faces were no more than a nose and enormous eyes. Those hard times must have made me tough; now I've lived so long. Well, when mama' came, everything was put right and we started to live well. We got a cow, planted a vegetable garden. [..]*
>
> *And this is how it was: 'mama' went to Petersburg (Petrograd) to take care of some things; our eldest brother was studying there. He had to stay, you see, he was finishing his last year at the non-classical school. Mother arranged for him to live with our laundress Annushka. But then they up and closed the border, and she was stranded there. She had her passport, but she didn't have the required permit to leave the country. She stood there, crying at the border. And then some man in a uniform came up to her, and – what do you know? He used to work for father. He asked: Why are you crying? So 'mama' told him everything. And he said: Give me your passport, and come back next week together with your son. Only, when I walk past, pretend you don't know me.*
>
> *And then, mother said: I crossed the bridge (of Rajajoki), got into the train, and sat there, with my head down, and just kept sitting, and then he walked past and I couldn't lift my eyes. I stared at the floor, shaking all over. And that's how they came. We were so happy!*[20]

There was no great distinction between the men and women's recollection of the major traumas, although women preferred more often not to talk about painful memories and they used more emotional expressions, whereas men emphasized the action and the

rapidity of the events. In the following fragment, a male interviewee's account brings forth the dramatic and the dynamic in the narrative. His language is fragmented, it follows a staccato rhythm, and he gets out of breath when he transports himself into a situation from the past.

> *Well, I'll tell you briefly how my father lost his money. So, my dad was a merchant. He had Russian money, roubles. Each of the children had twenty thousand roubles deposited in the bank, for their future studies, yes. [..] He had money in the banks in Vyborg and in Petrograd. Two hundred thousand, in those days it was a lot of money. And when doing business he got gold roubles, and kept and collected them. Then (the border was closed) and dad decided to emigrate. He prepared big suitcases, you know like they used to have in the old days, big leather suitcases, which were sent to my mom's sister. Then he sent precious objects. Then, we-ee-ll [..] dad exchanged all the gold roubles for banknotes. Oh! He figured that since we had to flee and the kids were small, the roubles could get lost, but taking banknotes they would have money for a start. The border was closed. Before it closed, the rouble cost three a half marks [..] but after closing, the rouble started to lose value: two marks, one mark, some merchants still accepted roubles, this one accepted, the other one did not accept them anymore. In a short time he was broke.*[21]

Nostalgic memories

Nostalgic and sentimental memories, which are frequently related to traumas and crises, are also likely to stand apart in memorized data. In my interviews of Russian émigrés generating cohort memories it was very important for the narrators to describe nostalgic collective gatherings like charity bazaars, performances of the Russian amateur theatre, ballet evenings, concerts of the Russian choir and balalaika orchestra, or art exhibitions. There was hardly a single negative word of criticism said or written about these community-building events, and the interviewees considered them to be the highlights of their otherwise dull émigré life.

These memories are evoked by the childhood home, school years, summer memories, and dreams of youth. In my material on nostalgic reminiscing there were interviews in which the narrator described not the things that he or she had left behind, but things that had never happened, like lost possibilities and opportunities. Many émigrés lived all their lives in the conditional mood: 'if things had happened differently'. Thus the narrator followed a utopian path in the past and tried to rebuild his or her life 'as if' the historical crisis had never happened. The nostalgic narrator most willingly evoked the events of the past with an imaginary fairy tale aura. And it is true that nostalgia has a utopian element in it.[22]

Per-Arne Bodin claims that what is important to remember in today's Russia is reconstructed through *counter-memory dynamics*[23]. Svetlana Boym calls it *reflective nostalgia*[24]. During the Soviet period, oblivion of the national history was an important propaganda tool for those who were in power; even an individual's reminiscing was strictly controlled. One could recall things from the past, but personal remembering in the USSR was manipulated, whereas émigrés living in the West were – more or less – free in their memories and their imagined dream world built up by a *restorative nostalgia*.

An old Pskovian woman lamenting at her mother's grave
in Ivakhnovo in the summer summer of 1997.

A Russian émigré woman in Finland recalled the summers in Terijoki on the Karelian Isthmus in the 1930s. Her nostalgic narrative was strongly emotive. When telling about her village she described it by repeating expressions like 'very, very, very much', 'exceptional', 'lovely', 'most beautiful', 'delightful', etc. She, too, invoked the past, but her restorative reminiscing was all about getting 'tuned into the spirit'. Her reminiscence talk leapt from one topic to another and was logically inconsistent; sometimes there was even no relation between cause and effect.

> *Life in Terijoki was very animated, there were very many dacha dwellers, very, very, very many. And the village was something really special, even in wintertime it was special, there were six thousand inhabitants, a wonderful, most beautiful Russian Orthodox church, and also a very beautiful Finnish church. There was a village cinema, very many shops, three bakeries, where one could buy delicious cakes. There was the Finnish [shopkeeper] Kaisa, and then the enterprising Russian émigrés – you see, all émigrés did not lie [...] on their sofas sighing "when we'll get back" or something like that – there were people like the Solntseffs, who had three daughters. One of them, the eldest, graduated from a Finnish secondary school. But the youngest [studied] in the Russian secondary school. They had wonderful cakes. When I visited them, they treated me kindly, and I could eat up to six cakes! So, you see, there were enterprising people there.*[25]

Conclusion

To summarise, I have inserted fairly extensive quotations to underline the qualitative differences of the processing used in reminiscence talk. Referring to my own experience in the field I have tried to make reminiscence talk visible *in statu nascendi*, i.e. to reflect the 'raw material' of oral history examined from the individual, the speaking subject's point of view. However, all three cases to which I refer in this article – a minority group, a village community, a summer dwellers' community – are also most typical

examples of 'community text' and of collective memory. Examined from the community's point of view, the process of making individuals recall has been very different in all three cases.

In the cases of Russian diaspora in Finland and the Pskov Province villages there were some big question marks hanging in the air between the interviewer and the interviewees: Why does she want us to remember? Why now? Why she? Who is she? These implicit questions were a kind of invisible barrier in the discourse.

In the case of the Russian diaspora in Finland, the political context represented a major obstacle: since 1917, the community had been ideologically split into two opposite camps. Especially in the late 1940s and 1950s, the years after the war, this break-up became acute. Silent information circulated within the diaspora and the people knew – or thought they knew – each other's backgrounds, and who was pro- or anti-Soviet. Another obstacle was the fact that, for seven decades, members of this community had kept a low profile in Finland knowing that they were not welcome. A third obstacle was the fact that this community was not only split but also very heterogeneous, divided into smaller groups according to the members' provenience, ethnic or confessional background. It is hard to get interviewees from this kind of split, 'silent', and traumatized minority to talk about the events they would rather forget. The easiest interviewees among the diaspora of Russians in Finland were the artists or persons with a performers' background, and women active in charity.[26]

It was also rather difficult to get into natural contact with the local inhabitants of the Pskov villages, even with the help of mediators, a couple of colleagues from St. Petersburg who had been regular summer dwellers there since 1993. As in the diaspora, the mistrust towards the interviewer raised the question: 'Why? What's so interesting about us?' In these forgotten villages? Men especially were suspicious and we heard one man mutter: 'Shpiony!' [Spies!] But the more often we came back and the better we got to know the inhabitants, the easier it was to carry on small-talk with them about everyday matters, to help them by sometimes offering a ride to town, etc. Little by little, they became more confident and began to understand that the villages had an unwritten history of several hundred years, but that now this history had come to an end. Finally, women first, the denizens of the villages opened themselves up to the interviewer and in the end we almost became a part of the village community.[27] In the case of the Peri *dachniks*, however, no such hidden questions were perceived. These people were well aware of the disappearing way of life they represented; they were willing and interested in recollecting and telling their memories.

In spite of the vast topical and individual range of my interviews, there was also something that I could refer to as a common denominator and a basis for my concluding analysis: once the interviewee acquired a taste for telling his personal reminiscences, once he/she was "in", he/she became The Narrator and, consequently, the protagonist of the story. Unconsciously the interviewees structured their accounts around themselves, selected and arranged the elements to make themselves the heroes of their stories, no matter how small their actual role had been. The social nature of the interview worked for that and brought out, little by little, the profiles of the narrator's identity, the family's identity, and the identity and the spirit of the community.

Today's oral history research has approached the problems and sore spots of the 1980s and 1990s with much greater ease than before. The method formerly used by

folklorists, ethnographers and historians has now been adopted by scholars from fields such as social sciences, psychology, gerontology, and literature studies. Today a clear disciplinary distinction is made in the use of oral narrative: it can be used to exercise the memory, and to build up an identity, or it can be used as data for specific research purposes. If the reminiscing person 'exercises' his/her memory, a gerontologist does not care whether the person believes in the truthfulness of the narrative or not. But if a reminiscing person from the Karelian Isthmus takes a burnt rock for a part of the Mannerheim Line, a geologist or a military historian familiar with the landscape and history can remain quiet and use some other facts relevant to his research, such as narratives depicting the chaotic atmosphere during the evacuation or the hasty exodus. From the point of view of cultural studies, however, the numerous and more or less stereotypical stories reminiscing about Mannerheim or Lenin, (e.g. *Lenin on the Isthmus drinking incognito at a well – only the narrator recognizes him and tells the story*) reveal the local mythology of the story-telling tradition on a collective level.

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[1] This article is based on the paper presented at the National History Researchers' Seminar, Joensuu, Finland, 28–29 October 2004 and has been slightly reworked after being published in electronic form. (See: http://www.elore.fi/arkisto/1_06/bas1_06.pdf)

[2] Ricoeur P. *The Reality of the Historical Past*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1984. – p. 6.

[3] Nora P. Between Memory and History, in: Schwartz V. R., J. M. Przyblyski (eds). *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader*. New York and London: Routledge, 2004. pp. 235–237. – p. 235.

[4] Ibid. – p. 236.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Honko L. Pakenevan tekstin metsästys, in: Viljanen A. M. & M. Lahti (eds.). *Kaukaa haettua. Kirjoituksia antropologisesta kenttätyöstä*. Helsinki: Suomen Antropologinen Seura, 1997. pp. 248–267. – pp. 253–256.

[7] Ricoeur P. *The Reality of the Historical Past*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1984. – p. 8; italics mine.

[8] Ibid. – p. 124; italics mine.

[9] For instance, some of my interviewees wanted to listen to the recordings and asked me to delete some passages.

[10] 16, RLF recordings.

[11] Liljeström M. *Useful Selves. Russian Women's Autobiographical Texts from the Postwar Period*. Helsinki: Kikimora Publications, 2004. – p. 19.

[12] McNally R. J. *Remembering Trauma*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003. – pp. 113–114; cf. Peltonen U.-M. *Punakapinan muistot. Tutkimus työväen muistelukerronnan muotoutumisesta vuoden 1918 jälkeen*. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Toimituksia 657. Helsinki: SKS, 1996. – p. 27.

[13] Brodsky J. *Less than One. Selected Essays*. New York: Farrar. Straus. Giroux, 1988. – pp. 460–461.

[14] In the article *Memories of Terror or Terrorizing Memories?*, which examines Soviet censorship and control under the Thaw period, the author Polly Jones claims that *the anxiety about memory in culture of the 1960s stemmed from the fact that the commemoration of purge victims was very different, and potentially much more hazardous, enterprise than the celebration of the heroic victims of the revolution or Civil War*. The social ostracism of the Stalin period of the so called *enemies of the people* ('vragi naroda') – who were mostly relatives or friends of arrested persons – was very hard and affected several generations. Jones P. Memories of Terror or Terrorizing Memories? Terror, Trauma and Survival in Soviet Culture of the Thaw. / *Slavic and East-European Review* Vol. 86/7, (April, 2008). Pp. 346–371. – p. 370.

[15] Cf. Fingerroos O. *Haudatut muistot. Rituaalisen kuoleman merkitykset Kannaksen muistitiedossa*. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Toimituksia 985. Helsinki: SKS, 2004. – pp. 282–338.
[16] 123, 1 B, RLF recordings.
[17] Ivakhnovo recordings, 5/1997.
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[25] 88, 6. RLF recordings.
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Bente Aamotsbakken

PLAY WITH GENRES IN THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY NORWEGIAN LITERATURE: EXAMPLES FROM NORWEGIAN LITERATURE

Summary

This article discusses some examples of Norwegian literature from the last two decades in which experimentation with genres has been a distinctive mark. Mixture of fiction and non-fiction is clearly seen in books written by Kjartan Fløgstad, Edvard Hoem and others. Also the style of writing on a micro level reveals a willingness to try out alternatives. Jon Fosse's novels exemplify this trend. Old genres are crossed with new, and novels by, e.g. Roy Jacobsen, reveal a play with the ancient saga literature written in a modern frame. The concept of intertextuality is essential in almost all kind of fiction writing, and intertexual features are openly treated in a ludic manner or they appear more concealed in the texts. Experimentation and originality are found in prose by Inghill Johansen, an author who writes in a meta-reflective manner by trying to empty the language of all possible meaning.

Key-words: experimentation, intertextuality, play with genres, crossing of genres, mixture

*

The ludic attitude

In Norway playing with genres has not greatly affected fiction in the last century, while it is a rather common trend in Western literature. The reasons for this are complex and rather obvious at the same time. One reason lies in the fact that novel as a rather young genre has been one of the most successful when it comes to spreading, experimentations, and sale potential. One may argue that commercial aspects are irrelevant in a setting of literary quality, yet they should be considered when discussing novel. The so-called long genre as novelistic literature is often referred to, makes the reader relax and rest when reading the text. Novels are spread through special commercial bookselling clubs in addition to the extensive sale in bookshops. Also the fact that many novels are rapidly printed in paperback version makes their spreading faster. This is rarely the case with poems if we make a comparison.

If we look into different contributions in the field of literary science produced to shed light upon the novelistic genre and its development, there is a very interesting and varied choice. The so-called poststructuralist viewpoints and theoretical reflections may be of help to gather some of the tendencies, but even in this field there is no clear line. Lars Ole Sauerberg in his introductory survey called *Litteraturvidenskaben siden nykritikken* (Literary Science since the New Criticism, 2000) refers to poststructuralism in

the chapter *Litteraturens mange interessenter* (The Numerous Adherents of Literature) pointing to the fields of reception theories, deconstruction, discourse theories, New Historicism, cultural studies, gender studies, post-colonial studies, and linguistic studies. This variety stresses the fact that the concept of poststructuralism seems to function as a kind of umbrella for a number of scientific fields that hardly match each other at all. I have criticised this concept in an article written two years ago[1]. The only usefulness of the concept, just not to neglect it totally, could be the very general fact that many post-structuralist theories underline their acceptance of fragmentation, breaks, and disorder instead of supporting the attempt of harmonization and reaching a consensus.

The Norwegian professor of literary science, Per Thomas Andersen, discusses in his book *Tankevaser* (Clusters of Thought, 2003) tendencies to focus on identity constructions through narrative practices as a characteristic feature of literature published in the very last decade of the 20th century. He points to the importance of Mark Turner's work *The Literary Mind. The Origins of Thought and Language* (1996), and by doing this he stresses the close relation between linguistic studies, cognitive science, and literary science. Andersen argues as follows:

> *All kunst, også skjønnlitterære verk, har sin egentlige verdi i det særpregede, i kvaliteter som i bunn og grunn er vanskelige å generalisere. For litteraturens vedkommende er disse kvalitetene per definisjon av språklig art. Kanskje burde beskjeftigelsen med litteratur primært rette seg mot de spesifikke strukturene som ikke lar seg generalisere eller redusere til andre strukturer.*[2]
>
> [Every field of art, also fiction, has its specific value implied in its features, i.e. in qualities that are truly difficult to generalize. For literature these qualities are by definition linguistic. The dealings with literature should perhaps primarily aim at these specific structures which are impossible to generalize or reduce to other structures.][3]

This implies a rather reductive way of dealing with literature, but Andersen's viewpoint nevertheless emphasizes the need to be selective in the study of literature.

I have chosen one perspective: the play with genres, which also is a very broad concept. However, some exemplifications from Norwegian novelistic literature of recent decades should demonstrate some characteristic features in this respect. The question must consequently be raised with relation to what genres are in play or at stake.

Genres of interest

Without renewal and experimentation, the novelistic genre would have been dead and buried a long time ago. Every genre is dependent of expansion and development. We can take a quick look at the poetic genre to get confirmation of such a view. If novelistic literature should reach point zero and stay there, it would just mean that it would correspond to Umberto Eco's concept of the 'closed texts', texts that belong to a leisure context with no obvious obstacles for the reader, easy to read and easy to forget. In order to survive and remain interesting, novels consequently have to be written in ways that break with the established patterns and understandings of the characteristics of a novel.

In recent decades we have witnessed an obvious tendency to move between the established categories on each side of the line of division between non-fiction and fiction

in Norwegian literature. The concept of literary non-fiction has therefore been launched. Examples of such a cross-over attempt are found in literature published by well-known novelistic authors like Kjartan Fløgstad, Dag Solstad, Edvard Hoem, Jan Kjærstad, Jon Fosse, and Inghill Johansen.

These authors have in different ways crossed the more or less imaginary borders between fictional and non-fictional writing. Kjartan Fløgstad has done this in his exceptional book called *Hotel Tropical* (2003), a book which he based on a world wide travel paid by the publishing house to nearly 100 hotels of the colonial past. The book consists of fragments related to the hotels and staying in them by the modern or should we say post-modern author Fløgstad in the former colonies in South America, Asia, and Africa. Also shortcuts to the Middle East, like Syria, and the Mediterranean coast (Marseille) are included. This book project is fascinating if we regard it as a literary, deconstructive adventure. Fløgstad, on the one hand, deconstructs various genres, such as autobiography, biography, guidebooks for travellers, short story, memoirs and others, and, on the other hand, constructs a supposedly new genre: the literary traveller's guide to the colonial past. He has created a meta-oriented text by placing himself both in the text and in the textual context, for instance by photographs showing his whereabouts in some of the hotels, and he reveals his project by saying this:

> *Å reisa – i rommet – er å friska opp tidssansen, for å sitera Thomas Mann i Trollfjellet, etter minnet. Å bu – på hotellrommet – har same verknad. Slik blir dei gamle trope-hotella metafor for europeisk kolonialisme og ekspansjon, gjerne i skjeringspunktet mellom fordums glans og dagens forfall, eller mellom dagens glans og fordums forfall.*[4]
>
> [To travel – in space – means to refresh the sense of time, to quote Thomas Mann's novel *Der Zauberberg*, by memory. To live – in the hotel room – has a similar effect. In this way the old tropical hotels become a metaphor for European colonialism and expansion in the conjunction between the former glamour and the present decline.]

In this context it is relevant to point to Stuart Hall's research on post-colonialism, e.g. the article *When was the 'Post-Colonial'? Thinking at the Limit*[5]. This reference concerns another problematic point related to the field of literary science, i.e. another concept with the prefix 'post', which indicates a resistance to or a distance from the tendencies, movements, and trends of the past.

Mixing of genres does not solely belong to the 20th century, but in this century it has become evident that the novelistic genre needed refreshment and renewal. This obviously has to do with the development of the media world. A printed book has to compete and in a way conquer the digital media, television, and sound media, and a strategy to overcome such a challenge must be found in experimental text that the potential reader experiences as new and awarding. The tendency of sampling in the field of experimental music may be mentioned as a slight comparison.

In Norway, the author Jon Fosse has been compared to the great Henrik Ibsen. This has to do with Fosse's recognition as a great playwright. Fosse's dramas are staged at famous theatres in Europe and throughout the world, but he has attracted attention also as an author of novels. Fosse's characteristics as an author of novels and short stories lies in his extraordinary use of a repetitive and resonant language, a language which is

poetic and rhythmic, but also to a certain extent monotonous. A quotation from Fosse novel *Flaskesamlaren* (The Bottle Collector, 1991) can give a sample of this:

> *Han set seg litt nærmare henne, og han tenkjer, sit nesten heilt inntil henne, no, tenkjer han, og ho tenkjer, no, sit nesten heilt nær kvarandre, no, kan nesten kjenne varmen hans, no, tenkjer ho, og han tenkjer, no, må legge armen sin rundt henne, eller noko, gjere det, ikkje berre sitje slik, kan bli pinleg, det, gjere noko, tenkjer han, og ho tenkjer, er hans tur, no, må skje noko, må gjere noko, ikkje berre sitje slik. Han trekker overkroppen litt tilbake, ser mot henne, og han tenkjer, skal legge armen sin rundt henne, no, skal gjere det, tenkjer han, og så løftar han armen sin, legg armen rundt henne, og han tenkjer, er alt gjort no, tenkjer han, og ho tenkjer, han har alt gjort det. Armen hans ligg rundt henne. Han sit og held armen sin rundt skuldrene hennar. Han ser framfor seg. Ho lener seg inntil han. Ho ser ned. Han ser rett fram.*[6]

> [He places himself closer to her, and he thinks, almost touching her, now, he thinks, and she thinks, now, we are sitting very close, now, almost able to feel his warmth, now, she thinks, and he thinks, now, must place my arm around her, or something, do it, not just sit like this, could be embarrassing, it could, do something, not just sit like this. He leans backwards, looks at her, and he thinks, place my arm around her, now, must do it, he thinks, and then he lifts his arm, places the arm around her, and he thinks, it is done now, he thinks, and she thinks, he has already done it. His arm is placed around her. He is sitting with his arm around her shoulders. He stares straight ahead. She leans towards him. She looks down. He stares straight ahead.]

This scene is one of many similar descriptions of the protagonist's approach to other persons, and the whole novel is characterized by the numerous repetitions of parallel linguistic expressions with just minor changes. The most well-known novel by Jon Fosse is probably *Naustet* (The Boatshed) written in 1989, a novel which shows a withdrawn and shy protagonist sitting alone in a distant boatshed hardly going out and socializing with other human beings. The atmosphere becomes growingly obscure and bleak when the reader gets deeper and deeper into the contents of the novel. It could be argued that Jon Fosse's genre experiment is a linguistic project, which combines the expressions of poetry with utterances belonging to everyday life and rather monotonous occupations and rituals. This way of writing brings into mind the relations in Mark Turner's title *The Literary Mind. The Origins of Thought and Language* mentioned earlier. Turner's point is, among other aspects, the cognitive experience that our mind is occupied with constructing stories or narratives continuously in order to cope with the complex surroundings and daily impressions.

Quite a different way of experimenting and playing with genres is found in the novels by Edvard Hoem, Jan Kjærstad, and Roy Jacobsen. These authors are experimentalists, but in a more traditional way, so to say. The concept of intertextuality has been drawn upon by me and a number of other scholars to analyze the novels by these authors[7]. A common trend for these three authors is to play with biographical genres in combination with epical genres like novel, short story, and saga. Roy Jacobsen has combined in his novel *Frost* (2003) the genres of saga literature, modern novelistic literature, fairy tales, parables, etc. This mixture is revealed in the opening paragraph of the novel:

> *– Hvem er du? utbrøt faren og så ned på den nyfødte sønnen som ennå ikke hadde fått blodet tørket av det oppsvulmede fjeset, ikke fordi det her åpenbarte seg et uhyre, eller fordi det var et vanlig munnhell han pleide å møte sine barn med; ei heller skjulte det seg en forutanelse i utropet, om at denne sønnen skulle komme til å bli husket tusen år inn i fremtiden, kanskje så lenge det finnes mennesker som kan lese; ordene falt bare ut av ham, og de skulle bli husket og gjenfortalt gjennom hele guttens barndom, som en fortelling, eller et omen, om det da er mulig å skille det ene fra det andre:*
>
> *– Hvem er du?*[8]

> [– Who are you? The father exclaimed when looking at his newborn son, who still hadn't got the blood wiped off his swollen face, not because a monster appeared, or because this was a normal expression which he used to his children; nor was a perception hidden in the exclamation, that this son should be the one to be remembered a thousand years to come, perhaps for so long as people are able to read; the words just came tumbling out of him, and they were to be remembered and reminded of through the boy's childhood, like a story or an omen if it is possible to separate the one from the other.
>
> – Who are you?]

The opening has reminiscences of the in-medias-res-opening common for short stories and novels, but its content provides hints to sagas as they focus on the importance of family relations and common narratives that keep generations together. The fragments additionally reveal a hidden crime-like enigma that finds no solution in the text. The novel closes with almost the same question, and the reader is left to complete the novel. This way of constructing novels is nothing new, but the relation to the old saga used by Jacobsen nevertheless demonstrates the use of a circular compositional strategy that appears as fresh and new.

Also Jan Kjærstad's trilogy *Forføreren* (The Seducer, 1993), *Erobreren* (The Conquerer, 1996), and *Oppdageren* (The Explorer, 1999) should be mentioned. These novels are based on many novelistic concepts, like crime novel, biographical novel, *Bildungsroman*, as well as fairy tale and short story. The trilogy can be read also as a number of separate short stories with a protagonist functioning as a kind of dramatic glue in the narratives. The plot connected to an unsolved crime, a murder, remains unsolved throughout the reading, and in this way the concept leads to a similar plot set up by Dag Solstad in one of his novels, i.e. *Professor Andersens natt* (Professor Andersen's Night, 1996). However, this novel by Dag Solstad, which has not been given so much attention as the one about Elias Rukla, *Genanse og verdighet* (Shyness and Dignity) written a couple of years earlier, is, in our view, a novel that deserves closer attention. The author Linn Ullmann reflects in the review on this book in the following way:

> *Det som er så merkverdig med 'Professor Andersens natt' er at den ut fra et svært enkelt litterært grep utvikler seg og vokser, slik at den etter hvert, nesten uten at leseren er forberedt, handler om helt grunnleggende menneskelige vilkår. Om tidsånden som trollbinder oss: At mennesket sitter fast i sin tid, eller at tida sitter fast i mennesket, slik at den forbrytelsen professor Andersen er vitne til aldri kan omgjøres, og at hans egen unnlatelsessynd aldri kan gjøres godt igjen. Slik er det. Men det er noe mer. Romanen stiller spørsmålet: Er det noe som er høyere og dypere enn tidsånden, det vil si noe annet enn det som vekker samtidas unisone begeistring eller forskrekkelse?*[9]

> [What is remarkable about 'Professor Andersen's night' is that from a rather simple literary concept it develops and grows in a way that it, gradually, without preparing the reader, deals with basic human conditions. It deals with the spirit of time that fascinates us: That man is trapped in time, or that time is trapped in man, so that the crime witnessed by Professor Andersen can never be undone and that his own failure can never be made good again. That is the way it is. But there is more to it. The novel poses the question: Is there something that is higher and deeper than the spirit of time, something else than what rouses the unison enthusiasm or fear in our contemporaries?]

Ullmann's book review on Solstad's novel brings out a continuous and recurrent theme in recent Norwegian literature. It is related to the spirit of time reflected in post-structuralist acceptance of parallel elements with no closer connection, mixtures, and cross-cultural expressions. This tendency implies a levelling of cultural expressions that constitutes a closer link between the sophisticated and more popular facets of culture.

Edvard Hoem's writing represents the tendency to mix popular culture with more sophisticated cultural expressions. Hoem is a well-known author of novels, dramas, poems, and also biographies. In addition, he has been working as a translator of Shakespearean literature. In his novels he is intertextually oriented as some of his texts are perceived as constructed. This tendency certainly concerns not only Hoem; it appears in many modern authors' works. One of Hoem's most interesting and important experimental novels *Heimlandet Barndom* (The Homeland Childhood, 1985) reveals a mixture of autobiographical writing combined with the use of an unreliable narrator, numerous biblical references, and an extensive play with genres like *Bildungsroman*, pastoral, and pastiche. Above all the novel is a meta-text, that can be seen in the following passage:

> *I tilværets yttarste mørker er det eitt eller anna som ikkje er som det skal vera, og vi leitar for å finne ei hending vi kan feste det til. Framfor meg, i spegelen sit forfattaren Edvard Hoem og avsluttar boka si i omsnudd skrift.*[10]

> [In the utmost darkness of our existence there is something that is not right, and we are looking for an event to which we can relate it. In front of me, in the mirror, sits the author, Edvard Hoem, and ends his book in writing upside down.]

Inghill Johansen is one of the female authors who deserve mention along with the previously regarded male authors; she was short-listed for an important literary prize at the beginning of this century and her texts have inspired other colleagues. Johansen's books are very different from those referred to above. They are thin and published in a divergent format. They look like children's books, and they are mostly not supplied with a subtitle. Consequently, it is hard to categorize them as novels. Her most well-known book is called *Klage* (Complaint, 2001), and it consists of a number of fragments held together by the relation to a common place – a graveyard. The fragments are mostly letters written by different persons with a close or a more distant relation to the graveyard. There is no protagonist in the book, but a number of voices uttering 'I'. However, the voices are all concerned with the end of life and rituals of death and burials. One voice belongs to a woman caring for her husband's grave, and another is the voice of the vicar. In Johansen's authorship which entails only three books, we can sense a coherent line from the first book called *Hjertehvitt* (The White of the Heart, 1991), through the next one titled *Suge* (Suck, 1996), till the mentioned book about the graveyard rituals.

Her writing is marked by meta-reflections and the use of poetic language in an almost contradictory manner. This means that her project seems to be to empty the language of all possible meaning. Here is one example from a passage in the first book, which has the subtitle 'novel':

> *Siden har jeg tenkt på hvordan dette kom til å bli min historie.*
> *Hvordan ordene ble mine, hvordan historien ble min.*
> *Et sted skiftet den retning, vrengte seg og ble, min.*
> *[..]*
> *Siden har jeg tenkt at alt er bevegelse.*
> *Til eller fra. Alt i dette ene. Også denne historien.*
> *Også dette.*[11]
>
> [Since then I have thought about how this became my story.
> How the words became mine, how the story became mine.
> At one point it changed course, was turned inside out and became mine.
> [..]
> Since then I have thought that everything is movement.
> To and from. Everything contained in it. Also this story.
> Also this.]

This meta-reflection is characteristic of Johansen's two other books as well. She mixes genres in quite a different way as compared to the writing of the above mentioned authors. Her project is different, characterized by slow writing (only three books in ten years), and her books constitute a contradiction with regard to voluminous novels like the ones published by Jan Kjęrstad, Lars Saabye Christensen, Roy Jacobsen and others.

Concluding remarks

We have provided examples of novelistic literature published in Norway in recent decades and pointed to the tendencies in the field of literary science. Other aspects could have been selected as there are numerous samples of genre experimentations also in the 1950s and 1960s, before the period of social realism that is characteristic of the 1970s. This epoch ended in a literature that in a way was emptied of meaning. In other words, the social realistic experiment was treated as literature of no relevance to the ordinary reading public. This is a tendency that Dag Solstad has dealt with in his novel *Gymnaslærer Pedersen* (College Teacher Pedersen), an abbreviation for a much longer title, a novel that has been transmediated to the film screen, a genre better known to many groups of the audience today. However, Solstad shows in this novel how a political movement ends in disaster, death and emptiness, and the novel also reflects upon a similar tendency related to the socialist literary project. The end of socialist realism opened for a more subject oriented way of writing, which led to the publishing of biographical novels, autobiographical novels, and a number of cross-over literary expressions, some of which have been reflected upon in this article.

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Jørgen Bruhn

THE POST-DERRIDEAN WRITING OF IMRE KERTÉSZ

Summary

With the term 'post-Derridean' art or writing I refer to literary, artistic, or philosophical texts which are either 1) directly inspired by Derrida or 2) texts whose inner meaning and function we, after Derrida, in some sense have gained access to by referring to the philosophical concepts, the style, or the historical effects of the work of the French philosopher. In my article I suggest that the work of Imre Kertész may be exemplary for post-Derridean writing in the second sense of the word.

Furthermore I will argue that the work of Kertész may be considered as an instance of dealing with history that may seem awkwardly and even monstrously alien to 'normal' exchanges with the past but Kertész' writing is actually 'typical' of any literary dialogue with the past.

Key-words: Derrida, Kertész, Blanchot, history, fiction, testimony, holocaust, post-Derridean writing

*

> I do not know whether this text [Blanchot's *À l'instant de ma mort*] belongs, purely and properly and strictly and rigorously speaking, to the space of literature, whether it is fiction or a testimony, and, above all, to what extent it calls these distinctions into question or causes them all to tremble.
>
> Jacques Derrida

We may have come to a point in the intellectual history of the West where it might be possible to consider the possibility of talking about a post-Derridean moment. The term seems justified due to Jacques Derrida's death in 2004, but on the other hand we might consider what kind of *event* the death – and the work – of Derrida marks or even can mark. Following the French philosopher Alain Badiou's definition of an event we are enabled to consider history as an unfinished, un-linear process, where some unique events have the capability not only to change the future but also to cast a light on the past, which, in a certain sense, changes the past. It is in this sense that I wish to consider the possibility of the term as well as the concept of a post-Derridean moment in history as well as a phenomenon such as post-Derridean writing or art.

With the term 'post-Derridean' art or writing I refer to literary, artistic, or philosophical texts which are either 1) directly inspired by Derrida or 2) texts whose inner meaning and function we, after Derrida, in some sense have gained access to by referring to the philosophical concepts, the style, or the historical effects of the work of the French philosopher. In my article I will suggest that the work of the Nobel Prize winner

Imre Kertész may be exemplary for post-Derridean writing in the second sense of the word. And I will argue that the work of Kertész as an instance of dealing with history that may seem awkwardly and even monstrously alien or other to 'normal' exchanges with the past but that it is actually 'typical' of any literary dialogue with the past.

First I will define Kertész as a writer whose texts might be described as post-Derridean in the light of Derrida's encounter with Maurice Blanchot's texts, and I will briefly summarize the content of his short novel *Liquidation*. After this I shall try to develop the idea that the main liquidation inside the novel *Liquidation* consists in abolition of any clear-cut relation between fiction and reality. This leads me to my third section in which I discuss Kertész' particular way of using the technique of *mise en abyme*, which leads me to a section where I intend to show how the testimonial fiction of Kertész might be conceptualised with the aid of Derrida's ideas on what I prefer to call the chiasmic relationship between fiction and testimony. I would like to conclude by proposing that we do not consider Kertész' way of fictionalising what should absolutely not be made fictive as a very special case of twentieth century literature. On the contrary: Derrida, when reading Blanchot, has shown the impossibility of distinguishing between historical testimony and fiction but he does not leave to the side the need for an absolute and un-relativistic concept of historical facts. So, as will be discussed later on, what seems to be a special instance of fiction as testimony and testimony as fiction might be the typical case of literature *in toto*.

Derrida, Blanchot – and Kertész

Jacques Derrida maintained a long personal friendship and philosophical dialogue with Maurice Blanchot. In one of the latest public and published encounters with Blanchot's work, called *Demeure. Fiction and Testimony*[1], Derrida reflects on questions surrounding the cluster of fiction, history, testimony, and truth. In a meandering argumentative movement he deals with these questions from a number of different angles, and he conducts a careful sentence-by-sentence-reading of Blanchot's text *À l'instant de ma mort* (translated as *At the instant of my Death*). *L'instant de ma mort* is a dense autobiographical text, 'enormous', says Derrida despite the fact that it only occupies a handful of pages. It describes how the young Blanchot experienced a kind of quasi-execution during World War II, and how he was miraculously saved at the very last moment.[2]

Demeure. Fiction and Testimony is perhaps Derrida's most exemplary literary reading in his entire oeuvre[3] and following Derrida's text one encounters an illuminating way to approach Derrida's crucial relations with literature. Derrida reads slowly, with an intense existential passion for every turn of the textual phenomena, dividing his reading between what may occur to be subjective cul-de-sacs (but which turns out to be crucial for the over-all argument) and relatively objective statements. Derrida 'touches', almost kinetically, upon every single word of the text, in order to try and assure himself that no opening in the text remains untried. For me the most central lesson of reading Derrida reading Blanchot is the rich and complicated discussion produced by the meeting of the three key terms of fiction, truth, and testimony. When I read Derrida reading Blanchot[4], it strikes me that several of the key notions in this text would illuminate the work of Imre Kertész. I have read Kertész with astonishment and movement because of

the gruesome subject of his entire writing, namely the question of how to survive in the Nazi camps, and how to live with and write about the memories of the camps. But I have also met Kertész' work with a certain dose of desperation due to the fact that I found myself trapped in epistemological questions related to the triangle of truth, fiction, testimony. Questions of singularity, iterability, universality, and the fictional status of truth as compared to the truthful status of fiction also trapped me in reading Kertész' oeuvre consisting of fiction as well as autobiographical and essayistic texts.

The obvious relationship between Blanchot and Kertész is their ground shaking near-death experiences as young men: Blanchot was miraculously saved by the French Résistance, and Kertész survived the unsurvivable, namely the death camps where he had been sent, only fourteen years old. Both seem to live in a very special zone of un-living or un-dying expressed with Derrida's nice pun on *demeurant*, which means staying, as *de-mourant*, as un-dying. They both defy death by living their deaths for the rest of their long lives and they constantly return to these themes in their writings.[5] In Kertész' work, this particular experience returns in ever new constellations, more or less hidden under fictive guises, but nevertheless easily distinguishable: Kertész lives, and so do his major protagonists, with his own paradoxical verb (from the novel *Failure*), as *un-existing*.[6]

The Kertész text that interests me here is called *Liquidation*. Information in the autobiographical notes published as *Someone Else. A Chronicle of the Change* from 1997 indicates that the entire text may have been begun as a stagework (p. 330) which later developed into something else. Yes, *something else*. I shall return to the genre of the text later on, but let me here stress that the core theme of the text consists in the problematic and painful existential relation to reality due the experience of Auschwitz. The protagonist, Köves, translated into 'Kingbitter' in the English translation, is working at a publisher's house during and after Hungary was under the Communist rule. The return of the Western capitalist system means – with one aspect of the title – the liquidation, that is, the closing down, of the formerly publicly funded editorial house.

The real protagonist is, however, the so-called Bee who received his name (the letter B) in Auschwitz, and he is a translator and an author.[7] Suddenly, and surprisingly, Bee commits suicide leaving the survivors – in another sense of the word – to interpret his enigmatic behaviour and his work. Kingbitter wishes to edit and publish the work of Bee, and he strongly believes that there exists a large, all-explaining manuscript which he searches for, probably as a substitute for the lack of existential depth and meaning in his own life:

> *That was why I had to go after his vanished novel. Because it probably contained everything I needed to know, everything that can still be known at all.*[8]

We, the readers, find out that such a manuscript actually did exist but that it was burned by Bee's former wife.

This is, basically, the plot of the book: an existentially coloured story of absence, lack of engagement, 'self-liquidation' (a term used several times in *Kaddish for an Unborn Child*). The radical discouragement produced by experiencing and surviving the Holocaust, the absurd life under communism, and the existential and psychological failure of several of the characters are depicted with grim humour and total lack of naḭve optimism. And the main result is the repeated destruction of a naḭve conception of what is considered to be 'reality'.[9]

Liquidation of reality

The title *Liquidation* refers first of all to the Hungarian post-Communist state liquidating the publishing house where Kingbitter works, and it also refers to liquidating himself. But I would like to suggest that the most important 'liquidation' of the text consists in the destruction of a stable and clear-cut relation between representation (fiction, testimony, experiences) and reality. To the surprisingly passive reaction of Kingbitter (in the book), and to the surprised shock of the reader (of the book), both gradually find out that large parts of the plot of the book are predetermined: or at least they are thoroughly described in the drama manuscript written by B. This metafictive string of the plot begins with Kingbitter coming to the publishing house carrying the deceased B's manuscript which describes the scene that is about to be told! A logical impossibility, in other words. And from that moment on the text lingers between almost essayistic elements, ordinary prose-sections and sections of traditional drama-text consisting only of dialogue and stage directions. The interesting and irritating aspect of this technique is that the a-logical relation between the discursive layers is noticed but remains *un-reflected* by Kingbitter inside the fiction, and for the reader it is therefore very difficult to establish a sound relation between referential context, novelistic prose, dramatic dialogue, and the experiences of the persons inside the fiction. What is supposed to be a subject of the fictive world (a drama written by a fictive person) has suddenly been turned into a prefiguration of central aspects of the text.

This is a sign of a much larger philosophical, epistemological, and ethical question in Kertész' entire oeuvre concerning his *unexperiencable experiences* (to use Derrida's term from *Demeure*). The problem is that Kertész and his barely disguised autobiographical protagonists in all his texts are *witnessing the witness* of the death camps. Kertész' own former self is the object of his later memories and, in the word of a Danish commentator, *as a result of the repeated re-enactments of his [the author's] life, a layer of fiction is placed in between the experiencing subject and the real cruelties* and consequently what is supposed to be the personal, subjective, testimony is turned into the story of another.[10]

Kertész' *mise en abyme*

Kertész' narratological construction in *Liquidation* can be interpreted as an example of the technique called *mise en abyme*. Ever since André Gide defined this technical device, the term and technique have been immensely popular (also before Gide, of course, the technique was widespread), but defining it has proved difficult: I will follow Moshe Ron's definition from 1987: *Any diegetic segment which resembles the work where it occurs, is said to be placed 'en abyme'*[11].

Following this definition, Bee's dramatic work in *Liquidation*, also called *Liquidation*, of course!, is a kind of *mise en abyme* mirroring large parts of the novel *Liquidation* published by Imre Kertész. Perhaps the whole novel, actually. But I cannot make this model fit in the case of Kertész' novel *Liquidation*. In particular because it is difficult to establish the real size of the drama parts of the *mise en abyme* ('Quantity' in Ron's system), which leads to other problems: in Ron's terminology the problem of 'Isolability' and 'Orientation' leads, in the final analysis, to the problem of 'Totality'.[12] In other

words: what is the sign and what is the referent, what is *mise en abyme* and what is mirrored? Kertész has obviously *chosen* not to work with clear-cut boundaries between the represented totality and the representing detail, and therefore the distinction collapses, mainly because it is utterly impossible to establish the diegetic reality plane which the details should try to mirror or represent. Kertész has, with a number of ingenious stylistic techniques blurred the boundaries between writing, truth, and fiction.[13] It is no accident, of course, that the opening quotation of the novel is a metafictional quote from Samuel Beckett's *Molloy*, where fiction and truth are ironically discussed:

> *Then I went back into the house and wrote, It is midnight. The rain is beating on the windows. It was not midnight. It was not raining.*

Mise en abyme can be a dangerous narratological tool because it can mix different levels of representation in a complicated way, and the technique should be used with an utmost care if it is not to be turned against the author who uses it in unpremeditated ways. But as I started out saying, I think that in Kertész' case the *mise en abyme* is actively and deliberately used in order to seriously *destabilize* the relation between reality and fiction. This, however, leads me to a subsequent question: why would he be interested in doing that? Because, I will argue, reality can only be grasped by ways of narratological and poetological forms that are always already caught in their very own spaces *in-between* reality and fiction.

Fictional testimony and testimonial fiction

But this should not make us think that Kertesz – or Blanchot or Derrida – wants us to doubt the existence of a reality outside the labyrinths of language and poetological forms. On the contrary, it is the complicated and violent result of real experiences that necessitates these poetological forms. In the case of Kertész, these are the experiences during World War II that have made him, to use one of his favourite expressions, a man *without his own fate*, a man who lives on in a strange and mysterious dreamworld. A 'survivor' rather than really living, born, as he says in *Kaddish for an Unborn Child*, to live his life in hotel rooms, homeless, without ownership to anything beside his books and his own life-energy which forces him to work incessantly. In a sense Kertész and his protagonists have failed to live up to their fate, to get killed when they were the target of fate in the camps, and therefore live on as involuntary witnesses of the inexplicable mystery of living on while being, in a sense, already dead.

Consequently, Kertész has chosen a deliberately complicated way of giving testimony to the horrors of history, and his method consists in mixing the elegant artistry of *mise en abyme* with the crude biographical facts of his own life. He is – to put it yet another way – well aware of the impossibility of giving direct testimony, which leads me back to Derrida reading Blanchot.

Derrida's text on Blanchot is basically a text on the relation between fiction and testimony, two terms that Derrida chooses to interrelate in a chiasmic relation, one of his numerous 'double binds'. Testimony necessitates the possibility of fiction, of lie, otherwise the testimony turns into simple facts. And the crucial act of testimony therefore consists in witnessing the witness: to tell what the 'I' that once was, actually saw. To witness in the present what the witness saw in the past is a strictly subjective endeavour.

No one can take the place of a witness, a witness cannot have an alibi in life[14], and an extreme singularity is thus connected to the (speech) act of witnessing. But even if testimony has an *a prioric* element of possible fictivity built into it, fiction is, on the other hand, never purely fictive, i.e. without relation to reality. Any fictive speech act (for instance bearing witness to something) must rely on a certain amount of recognisability and iterability; and all fiction runs the risk of being interpreted as a sign of something else, something that is not confined to the limits of fiction. Fiction is always, in some sense or other, related to reality.[15] And this means, according to a Derridean point of view, that testimony relies on the fictive possibility in the same way that fiction can always be read as a testimony. One might put it another way: Derrida works with a juridical definition of fiction and a fictional definition of law. And to read Blanchot and Kertész is to try and stay, *demeure*, in the zone *between* fiction and testimony.

In conclusion

If the work of Kertész should be summarized in one sentence, I think it should be this: *there is no post-Auschwitz moment in history*. It sounds plain and simple, perhaps, but it has immense reverberations across numerous fields of history, culture, and politics. And – I believe it is a crucial lesson in contemporary Western discourse and practice around the so-called 'war on terror' which tends to relegate the idea of evil to an Islamism being conveniently placed *outside* the heartland of western thought and values. Kertész might be said to destabilize the dangerously simple 'us and them' relation when he insists in his fiction and biographical writing that Auschwitz is an unusual but nevertheless typical fact of western thought and ideology, rather than a mere exception due to evil individuals in one single, more or less evil nation at a particular moment in history. We can all turn into victims, but even more provocatively, he stresses that we can just as easily turn into executioners. And therefore the perhaps most substantial philosophical statement in his work is that the inexplicable is not the evil, but the good.[16] His way of debating this issue in the novel *Failure* is among the most shocking and horrifying insights of contemporary thought.

I started out suggesting a few possible interpretations of the term 'post-Derridean writing', one of which I used as a majestic tool to approach Kertész' work. But perhaps we should learn from Kertész and consequently altogether deny the possibility of any post-Derridean moment in history. The lessons of Derrida cannot be forgotten, and one of Derrida's most central endeavours has been to deconstruct and rewrite the relation between fiction, truth, and testimony. Imre Kertész' entire work, like Blanchot's short novella, expresses what Derrida called *testimonial exemplarity*, and consequently Blanchot's as well as Kertész' texts bear *witness to a universalizable singularity*.[17]

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[1] *The Instant of My Death* by Maurice Blanchot and Derrida's *Demeure. Fiction and Testimony* are published in one volume, translated by Elisabeth Rottenberg, Stanford University Press, Stanford California 2000. Blanchot's text was published in French in 1994, Derrida's was called *Demeure: Maurice Blanchot*, publisbed in 1998.

[2] Blanchot relates in a personal letter, reluctantly referred to by Derrida (avowedly Derrida here uses personal biographical material in his writings for the very first time in his career!), that this

experience has been crucial for his entire adult life. In other words, Derrida bears testimony to the fact that he has received the letter, quoted on p. 52. But quoting a personal letter still enforces the truth-claim of Derrida as a witness, so to speak.

[3] Derek Attridge's anthology of Derrida's central texts on literature (and an interesting interview) in *Acts of Literature*. Routledge (New York 1992) is still very useful.

[4] A suggestion made to me by a colleague at Växjö University Vasilis Papageorgiou, by the way.

[5] In *Kaddish for an Unborn Child* Kertész' repeated metaphor for this undying is the idea that his pen is like a shovel digging a grave in the air (with reference to Paul Celan's *Todesfuge*).

[6] There is however a crucial difference between the two testimonies: while Blanchot's testimony regards a personal experience which might be generalized to a certain extent to all human beings (a feeling of existential immorality, a generalized vanquish of death, perhaps), Kertész has a moral obligation to *testify* to a historical atrocity that the dead millions of the camps cannot bring forth.

[7] And he is a so-called 'life artist': which in this particular context means living under the regime without pathos, without engagement, and without hope. Bee shares many traits with the narrator and protagonist of the autobiographical *Kaddish for an Unborn Child*, by the way, and thus functions as Kertész' autobiographical image of himself as middle aged after his description of his youth in *Fatelessness* (the title is also translated as *Fateless* but the most precise title would be *The Man without a Fate*) and his later years in *Failure*.

[8] Kertész I. *Liquidation. A Novel.* Translated by Tim Wilkinson. New York: Vintage International, 2005. – p. 26.

[9] See the opening scene in *Liquidation* where we learn that for Köves/Kingbitter reality had not only been a problematic 'concept' but even a problematic "condition" of his entire life: *Nowadays – a late year of the passing millennium, in the early spring of, let us say, 1999, on a sunny morning at that – reality had become a problematic concept for Kingbitter, but, more serious still, a problematic 'state'*. Kertész I. *Liquidation. A Novel.* Translated by Tim Wilkinson. New York: Vintage International, 2005. – p. 3.

[10] Lassen M. *Mųdet med det totalitęre* [Meeting Totalitarianism]. København: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2006. – p. 42. My translation from Danish.

[11] Ron M. The restricted Abyss: Nine problems in the Theory of Mise en Abyme, in: *Poetics Today* Vol. 8. No. 2 (1987). – p. 436. This short definition which is the result of a thorough discussion of Lucien Dällenbach's *The Mirror in the Text*. The University of Chicago Press, (or. 1977), Chicago and Cambridge 1989, is further developed, but the quoted part is the crucial definition.

[12] In other words: how large is the *mise en abyme*, can it be rationally isolated so that an evident orientation can be established in order to draw a clear relation between a limited segment of *mise en abyme* and the whole work.

[13] According to Moshe Ron, *mise en abyme* has this general function: *In more general terms, 'mise en abyme' always ironically subverts the representational intent of the narrative text, disrupting where the text aspires to integration, integrating where the text is deliberately fragmentary*. (Ron M. The restricted Abyss: Nine problems in the Theory of Mise en Abyme, in: *Poetics Today* Vol. 8. No. 2 (1987). – p. 434). Here, however, I cannot agree. *Mise en abyme* is only an ironical, subversive stylistic move in certain cases, and I believe that it is possible to find numerous examples in literary history where *mise en abyme* is used in order to create a sense of larger meaning, of aesthetic pleasure and wholeness, or as a way to convey meaning to both readers/spectators and, possibly, fictional characters. An example of the last tendency would be the inserted play-in-the-play in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

[14] This is an important concept in M.M. Bakhtin's early philosophical texts, in particular in *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*. Translated by Vadim Liapunov. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993 (the text was probably written around 1918).

[15] In Bakhtin's early philosophical treatise *The Problem of Content, Material and Form in Verbal Art*, written around 1924, a powerful, if also very abstract argument, is developed in order to prove an unbreakable tie between ethics, epistemology, and aesthetics, and one part of the arguments relies heavily on an *a prioric* relation between any 'fictive' / aesthetic utterance and reality. See the translation in *Art and Answerability. Early Philosophical Essays*. Austin: Texas University Press, 1990.

[16] This is the crucial point in *Kaddish for an Unborn Child* and he states the same claim in an interview with Julian Evans in *The Guardian* in 2006. http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2006/apr/22/featuresreviews.guardianreview7

[17] Derrida J *Demeure. Fiction and Testimony*. Translated by Elisabeth Rottenberg. Stanford California: Stanford University Press, 2000. – p. 94.

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DIVERSITY OF GENRE AND CONTENT OF MEMORIES IN THE SPACE OF 20TH CENTURY BALTIC CULTURE

Maija Burima

MEMORY NARRATIVE WAVES IN THE 20TH CENTURY LATVIAN LITERATURE

Summary

Memory narratives of the 20th century Latvian writers are closely related to the culminating points of contemporary culture and historical events revealing certain fluctuations in their development process.

Narratives that represent historicism in the early 20th century appeared in relation to revolutionary activities of the people in 1905 and the following persecution of revolutionaries by punitive expeditions. These events are depicted by Jānis Akuraters (1876 – 1937) in his memory sketch 'Dienu atspīdumi. Atmiņu grāmata' (Reflections on Days. A Book of Memories, 1924) and Antons Austriņš (1884 – 1934) in his memory narrative 'Garā jūdze. Romāns – hronika' (The Long Mile. Novel – Chronicle, 1936) with the time distance of approximately two decades. The considerable time distance between the actual events and their depiction gives rise to subjective connotations in narrative that account for the differences between documentary literature and memory narratives (in works by J. Akuraters and A. Austriņš this difference is manifested as an overwhelming predominance of the mentioned locations of events over the mentions of historical time). It also provides for interpreting these works as autobiographical narratives instead of historico-cultural ones. Even more subjective strategies of text formation are manifested in the edition of Latvian writers' autobiographies by Kārlis Egle (1887 – 1974) in three parts (1923 – 1924) that in fact represent a diverse range of narratives united just by the topic of memories or remembering as the strategy of text formation.

Another significant wave of memory narratives is related to childhood memory depictions by Latvian writers where the topic of memories foregrounds the time-space of childhood. The appearance of such novels is related to the recent formation of the statehood of Latvia (as well as other Baltic countries). Childhood memories create metaphorical associations with a new, rapidly developing and emerging country. These novels were organically bonded with the contemporary standpoints of the culture policy.

The third wave of memory narratives in Latvia was related to the consequences of Latvian occupation (1940) and World War II in Latvian citizens' lives: emigration to the West, deportation to Siberia, life in Soviet Latvia. This experience that was represented in autobiographical and documentary literature was basically created with a considerable time distance – only after the reconstruction of independence of Latvia in 1991.

In parallel with the memory narratives rooted in the historical material, at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries in Latvian literary space memory was represented as a psychological phenomenon where the historical background loses its decisive role, while the formation of individual experience at different life stages and diverse communicative situations gains major importance.

Key-words: memory narrative waves, remembering as a strategy of text formation, memory sketches, memory narratives representing historicism, narratives representing memory as a psychological phenomenon

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In the history of Latvian literature, memory narratives are not an occasional phenomenon but, with few exceptions, they are closely intertwined with the turning points of the national history, politics, and culture. In order to sketch out the most distinct waves of memory narratives in Latvian literature, we will study the texts of fiction that have been formed by means of the strategy of foregrounding memories, reconstructing (remembering) or deconstructing (rewriting) the historical events. According to the kind of literary text and the narrator's strategy, memory may be the base of the plot or an image, theme, or motif. Memory mechanisms are actually present in all texts that might be considered as 'ego literature', in which the text is created according to the narrator's striving to describe his or her personal experience, emphasizing a certain aspect:

- a particular period or event of one's life;
- a historical event and one's place, role, feelings in it;
- from one's own perspective to describe other persons' experience in the above mentioned contexts characterizing one's contact with the described person and marking one's evaluation of it.

As concerns memory narratives, the field of literary texts must be extended with respect to the texts of such genres and qualities that are not always organically associated with pure fiction (diaries, notes, letters, etc.). Depending on the type of information, literary scholar Yuriy Lotman divides texts with the presence of memory in informative and creative memory texts. **Informative memory** contains the factual, scientific, and technological information that due to its precise character may be called archivalries (the precise historical evidence sustained in the memory texts)[1]. The informative memory complies with the rules of chronology and is oriented towards the result. **Creative memory** texts are called by Lotman 'the art memory'. This kind of memory is potentially present in all texts. Unlike the informative memory, the creative memory of the chronicle orientation forms a huge montage[2].

Memory narratives by Latvian writers entail texts inspired by both kinds of memory and rather often they are synthesized. The dominant of either one or another kind of memory is determined by the event reconstructed in memories. If it is associated with a particular historical event, the informative memory is foregrounded in its formation, whereas in case of events or periods of a personal biography, the creative memory text is formed.

In the historical perspective, several waves of narratives created by the principle of memory reconstruction may be singled out in the Latvian literary space. We will sketch them out indicating the major reasons for their appearance.

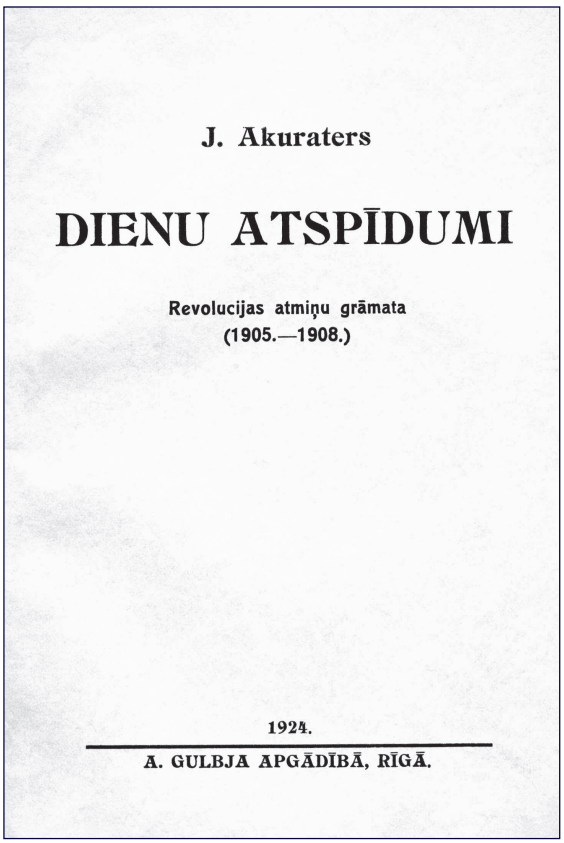
I. One of these waves is related to the generation of writers who entered literature at the beginning of the 20th century. They were carried away by the early modernist experiments that were at their initial stage in Latvia at that time. Their aesthetic radicalism aroused their social radicalism. They actively reacted to the events of 1905 in Russian

Empire, the so-called revolution of the people of 1905 that broke out fighting for the interests of workers and peasants. The revolution was suppressed and many of the literary figures who had participated in it were brought to trial; they were either imprisoned or fled from repeated arrests as refugees to the Nordic countries or Russia.

This period for many young writers was associated with hard experiences that had densely accumulated in their memory. After the foundation of the independent state of Latvia in 1918, many of the participants of those events wrote autobiographical narratives reconstructing the past events and complementing them by the experience of World War I. The major strategy of these narratives is relating the past in a possibly precise manner mentioning the names of people who took part in those events, the locations of the events, providing their evaluation and emotional attitude. Therefore these narratives are saturated with the informative material: place names, person names, so that the content of the creative narrative would be as close as possible to the informative account of events, simultaneously fusing the interpretation of the events with a great portion of personal impression and attitude.

Two significant expressions of this kind of narratives may be singled out.

Jānis Akuraters *Dienu atspīdumi. Atmiņu grāmata* (Reflections of Days. A Book of Memories)


J. Akuraters

DIENU ATSPĪDUMI

Revolucijas atmiņu grāmata
(1905.—1908.)

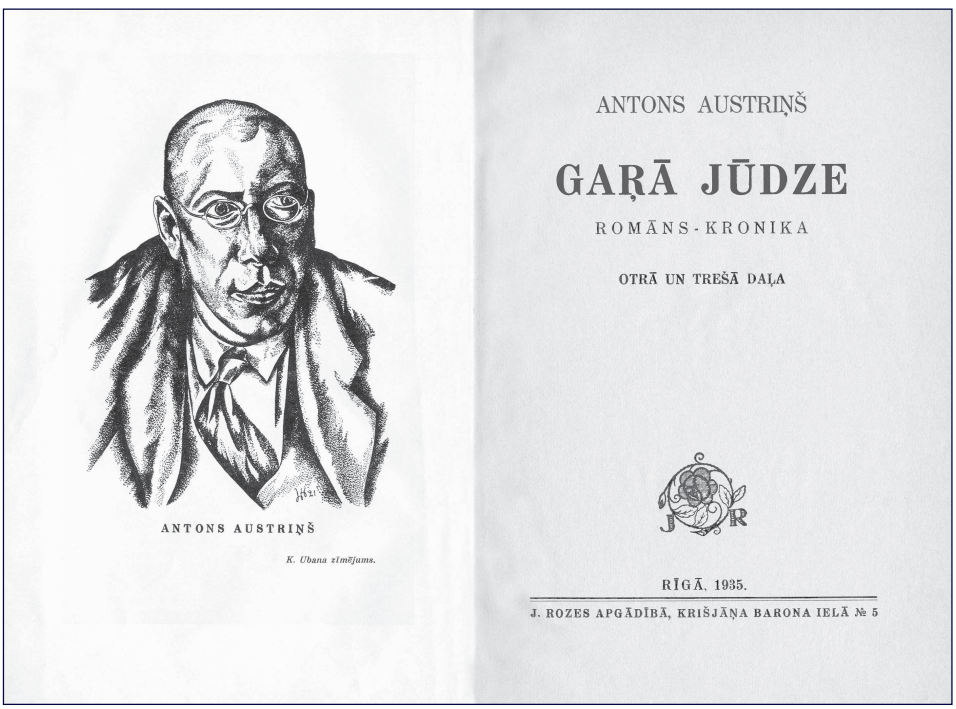
1924.

A. GULBJA APGĀDĪBĀ, RĪGĀ.

(its first version was produced in February, 1917, but it was published with additions in 1924)

Places mentioned in the autobiography	The time period reflected in the autobiography, 1905 – 1908
Latvia Riga Grīziņkalns Riga Central prison	Autobiographies begin with the suppression of the participants of the January rebellion of 1905 in Riga
Pskov	
Finland: Kuokol, Helsingfors	J. Akuraters emigrated to Finland in August, 1907
Sweden	January, 1908 (without date indication – *at Russian Christmas*)
Norway: Christiania *I hold Christiania in dear memory as the abode of émigré sorrow and liberty. The light fjord, mountains, loneliness, hunger, hopes, poetry, nature – this is the content of this time.*[3]	Without date indication
Latvia	Returns to Riga in 1908
The following populated places of Latvia are mentioned: Koknese, Kurzeme, Krustpils	

Antons Austriņš' autobiographical novel chronicle *Garā jūdze* (The Long Mile, 1926 – 1936)[4]



Places mentioned in the autobiography	**The time period reflected in the autobiography, 1905 – indefinite**
Riga	The Long Mile. Novel-chronicle. Part one. [Starts in 1905.]
The native place *Pūpoļi* (the writer's native house *Kaikaši*)	
St. Petersburg *the public library had become a meeting place for émigrés*[5] *In St. Petersburg, Aizbetnieks felt himself rather lonely*[6] Extensive topography of St. Petersburg (streets, square, etc.)	
Riga	
Imprisonment in diverse prisons in Riga, Ventspils, Kuldīga	
Riga	
Helsinki	
St. Petersburg *felt himself at home*:[7]	At the time of *Meteņi* (Latvian folk festivity before the Lent)
Riga	
Pūpuļi	
Riga	End of July
Moscow	
St. Petersburg	In autumn
Novgorod	In winter
Jūrmala	
Cēsis	
Aiztaune	At the time of Jāņi (Latvian folk festivity of the summer solstice)
Majori	
Riga	
Latgale	
Rēzekne	
Varnovīca	A month
Krāslava	
St. Petersburg	
Salnēni	At Christmas, in spring
Maliena	
Valka	

Both autobiographical narratives are united by the initial point of the narrative – the revolt of 1905, authors' active engagement in it, repressions, emigration, and search of refuge. The interpretation of the chronological time, however, differs. For Jānis Akuraters it is more precise, though sometimes it is impossible to state the time of the event, whereas Antons Austriņš' narrator Aizbetnieks – the author's prototype – relates the events in a very approximate context. Without knowing the biography of Austriņš,

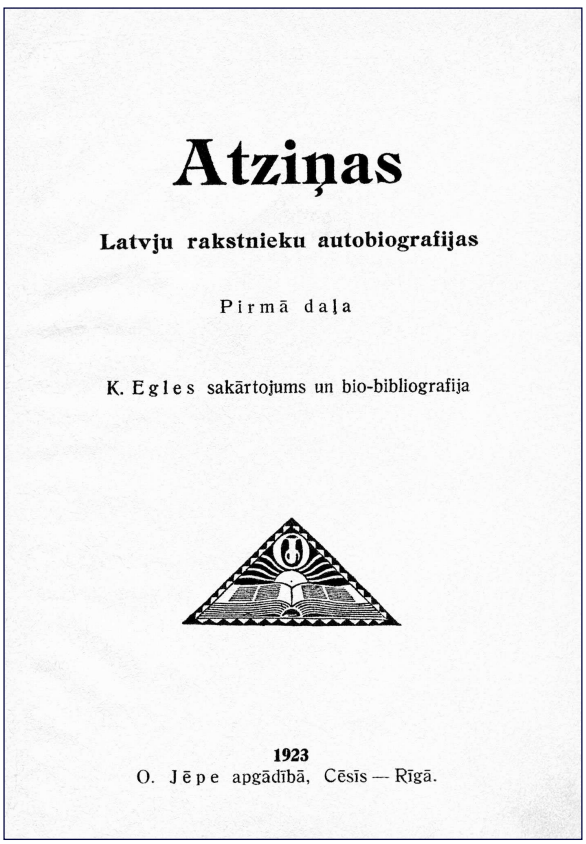
even the year when the events take place is unclear. Even when a year had passed since the events of 1905 that were so important for both writers, they still considered themselves as belonging to that time. It was an important point of reference in their personality development. Austriņš writes that Aizbetnieks was a man of the year 1905[8]. In his autobiographical novel *The Long Mile*, the situation of an émigré prevents Aizbetnieks from creating a stable life position and he goes on wandering as a vagabond.

The places mentioned in both memory narratives are related to the writers' forced or voluntary movement in space. However, depending on the subjective perception, each space gains specific associative landmarks, e.g. Christiania for Akuraters or St. Petersburg for Austriņš.

Austriņš' narrative differs from that of Akuraters by refocusing from 'ego' depiction to anthropological description of the everyday life and people of the visited places.

It must be added that all the regarded narratives appeared or were begun in the first decade after the foundation of the independent Latvian state and their connotations directly or indirectly entail retrospection into the hard, dramatic past with its battles, revolts as the way toward the acquired stable statehood.

Apart from the above-mentioned memory narratives, the tradition of autobiographical literature was foregrounded and consolidated by the impressive project by the literary historian Kārlis Egle who in the early 1920s produced the collection of Latvian writers' autobiographies with the title *Atziņas. Latvju rakstnieku autobiogrāfijas* (Reflections. Latvian Writers' Autobiographies), supplying it with bibliography entailing other



Atziņas

Latvju rakstnieku autobiografijas

Pirmā daļa

K. Egles sakārtojums un bio-bibliografija

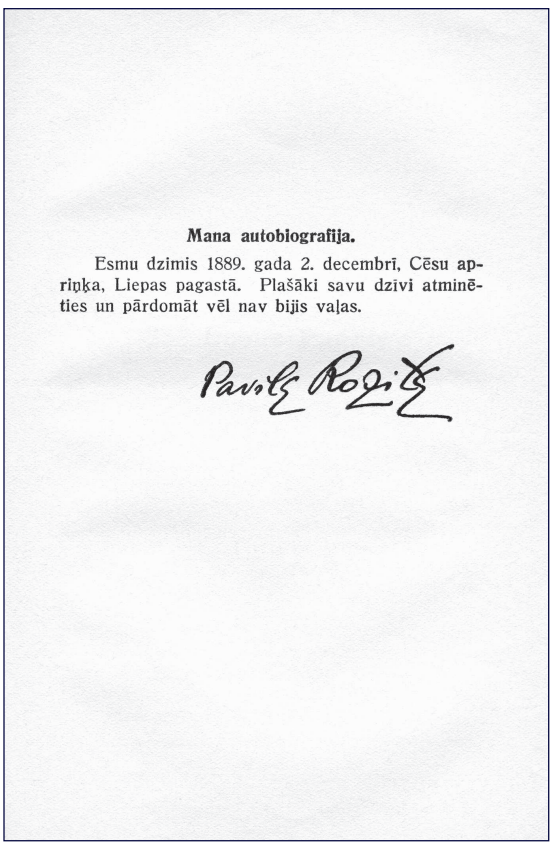
1923

O. Jēpe apgādībā, Cēsīs — Rīgā.

sources on the writers whose autobiographies were placed in the collection. This approach is indicated by the original name of the genre of the collection given by Kārlis Egle – bio-bibliography, emphasizing the synthesis of the objective and subjective material in the collection:

1. *Atziņas. Latviešu rakstnieku autobiogrāfijas. Pirmā daļa*. Kārļa Egles sakārtojums un bio-bibliogrāfija Cēsīs: O. Jēpes apgādībā, 1923.
2. *Atziņas. Latviešu rakstnieku autobiogrāfijas. Otrā daļa*. Kārļa Egles sakārtojums un bio-bibliogrāfija. Cēsīs–Rīgā: O. Jēpes apgādībā, 1924.
3. *Atziņas. Latviešu rakstnieku autobiogrāfijas. Trešā daļa*. Kārļa Egles sakārtojums un bio-bibliogrāfija. Cēsīs – Rīgā: O. Jēpes izdevniecība, 1924.

The sources indicated in K. Egle's collection make it possible to gain information as to other reviews even on the writers who had chosen a rather laconic way of self-representation like Pāvils Rozītis.



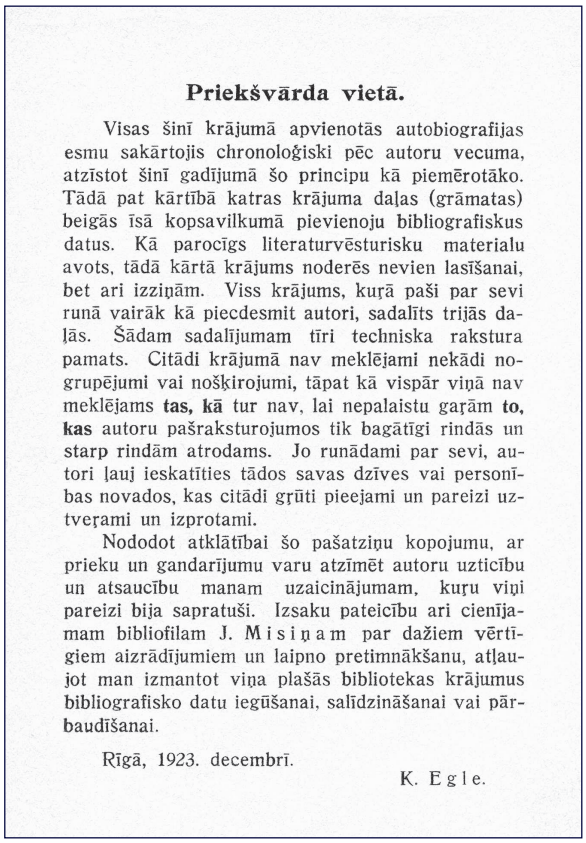
Mana autobiografija.

Esmu dzimis 1889. gada 2. decembrī, Cēsu apriņķa, Liepas pagastā. Plašāki savu dzīvi atmiņēties un pārdomāt vēl nav bijis vaļas.

Pavils Rozītis

More than fifty authors' autobiographies are represented in the collection – that was the majority of writers working in the Latvian literature at that time. This collection of Latvian writers' autobiographies produces the evidence as to the diversity of the writers' understanding of autobiographical literature. This diversity has been accepted and sustained by the producer of the collection indicating that there are no groupings or divisions in the collection and in general nothing that would interfere with the self-characterization of the authors and the rich material found between the lines of their

texts, as speaking about themselves the authors provide an insight into those spheres of their lives or personalities that are otherwise hard to access and adequately perceive and understand[9].



Priekšvārda vietā.

Visas šinī krājumā apvienotās autobiografijas esmu sakārtojis chronoloģiski pēc autoru vecuma, atzīstot šinī gadījumā šo principu kā piemērotāko. Tādā pat kārtībā katras krājuma daļas (grāmatas) beigās īsā kopsavilkumā pievienoju bibliografiskus datus. Kā parocīgs literaturvēsturisku materialu avots, tādā kārtā krājums noderēs nevien lasīšanai, bet ari izziņām. Viss krājums, kuŗā paši par sevi runā vairāk kā piecdesmit autori, sadalīts trijās daļās. Šādam sadalījumam tīri techniska rakstura pamats. Citādi krājumā nav meklējami nekādi nogrupējumi vai nošķirojumi, tāpat kā vispār viņā nav meklējams **tas, kā** tur nav, lai nepalaistu gaŗām **to, kas** autoru pašraksturojumos tik bagātīgi rindās un starp rindām atrodams. Jo runādami par sevi, autori ļauj ieskatīties tādos savas dzīves vai personības novados, kas citādi grūti pieejami un pareizi uztveŗami un izprotami.

Nododot atklātībai šo pašatziņu kopojumu, ar prieku un gandarījumu varu atzīmēt autoru uzticību un atsaucību manam uzaicinājumam, kuŗu viņi pareizi bija sapratuši. Izsaku pateicību ari cienījamam bibliofilam J. Misiņam par dažiem vērtīgiem aizrādījumiem un laipno pretimnākšanu, atļaujot man izmantot viņa plašās bibliotekas krājumus bibliografisko datu iegūšanai, salīdzināšanai vai pārbaudīšanai.

Rīgā, 1923. decembrī.

K. Egle.

The autobiographical narratives of the collection may be structured according to their quantitative and content features:

- One group of writers have provided short, original sketches or impressions about themselves that were often expressed in just few sentences, thus showing their reluctance of self-revelation.
- Another tendency reveals a detailed explication of the author's biography and creative strivings.
- There are also narratives in the collection that sketch out the writers; autobiography in a particular historico-cultural context as a small detail within the work of huge mechanisms. A distinct example of this is memory sketch by Kārlis Krūza[10].

In further developments of the Latvian writers' autobiographical narrative expression, the above-mentioned tendencies get even closer intertwined forming more detailed manifestations of the autobiographical narrative.

II. The next significant wave of memory narratives in Latvian literature is related to the depictions of childhood memories that constitute a widespread memory literature

genre of the 20th century Latvian literature. Memory depictions most often acquire the form of a story or novel with child as a narrator who goes through the past events in memory.

Major contribution to the formation of the childhood narratives has been made by Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš with his short prose collections *Baltā grāmata* (The White Book) and *Zaļā grāmata* (The Green Book). He has produced memory narratives of different thematic as well. *The White Book* entails a hundred memory narratives reflecting J. Jaunsudrabiņš' childhood. Though the writer produced them from 1910 to 1914, the collection with his own illustrations was published only in 1927 in volume 2 of the complete works by Jaunsudrabiņš. The narratives are organized so that the memories by little Jancis (the main character's name is the diminutive form of the author's name) are depicted along with the year of Latvian peasant life of the second half of the 19th century. Jaunsudrabiņš' memory depictions, apart from foregrounding memory poetics, have an ethnographical significance as they reflect peasant work on the country estate of Nereta region throughout the whole year.

The manner of Jaunsudrabiņš' childhood narratives may be compared to the Estonian writer Friedebert Tuglas' memory narrative *Väike Illimar* (Little Illimar) that was published in Estonia in 1937 and fit so well in the Latvian literary process that it was immediately translated into Latvian as a sign of the close proximity of Latvian literature with the tendencies of Estonian *belles letters*.

Though F. Tuglas' memory narrative *Little Illimar* was an organic part of the 20th century *interbellum* period Baltic writers' childhood memory narrative tradition, the specificity of the Estonian writer's work is marked by the diversification of memory poetics by describing varied memory mechanisms, emphasizing dream time (nightmare as its variation) and depicting the relations of the author – narrator – main character blurring boundaries among them, making them exchange places, etc.

The writer already at the beginning of the 20th century was carried away by the studies and experiments of modernist literature; therefore he applied psychology studies even to such a specific genre as childhood memory depiction that is not directly associated with modernist literature. Tuglas' work focuses on reflecting child's psychological sensations and traumatic experiences (fear, shame, offence, embarrassment, loneliness) much more in comparison to other writers' childhood depictions.

There are many 'literary provocations' in the text: at the beginning the author (F. Tuglas) 'meets' his prototype (Illimar); the image of memory is foregrounded in the narrative several times in unexpected episodes. The seeming affect of verisimilitude is reduced also by the detailed descriptions of objects and spaces provided by Tuglas that reveal the author's striving for substituting the 'blank spots' of memory for the literary creation. These literary strategies are used by the writer in order to indicate two possible ways of reading his text: the direct one – as a retrospection of the most conspicuous episodes of Tuglas' childhood that provides also the depiction of the social environment and cultural landscape of the epoch; the indirect one – child's subjective world perception that foregrounds the features characteristic of his micro and macro world perception. In the model of space it is the opposition 'rural – urban'; in the model of time – the cyclical time perception; in the model of 'individual – society' relations – the significance of mother, father, and brothers as well as the relations between town dwellers and people living in the country-side, communication with neighbours, social outsiders, etc.

Tuglas' narrative fits into the tendencies of Latvian national ideology of that time emphasizing the cult of national values. The late 1920s – 30s in Latvia were associated with a rapid growth of the economic life that made an impact on culture processes as well. The scene of Latvian literature at that time was marked by a number of essential features: the majority of writers felt a part of the contemporary social developments and perceived art as a mouthpiece of ideas; in their works utopian search for the country of happiness had become a kind of symbol pointing not only to socially critical ideas but manifesting the rebellious spirit against everything outgrown, stale, conventional both in life and art[11]. The formation of the authoritarian regime of Kārlis Ulmanis on May 15, 1934, thematically limited the field of literary activities proclaiming as the priorities the reflection of the cult of the leader, zealous nationalism, rural life as the symbol of veritable ethical and positive spirit, optimistic world vision, and patriotism in creative work, choice of translations, theatre repertoire, etc. Characterizing the literary legacy and relations with his epoch of Voldemārs Zonbergs-Sauleskalns, the literary scholar Benedikts Kalnačs has marked certain literary themes that became especially topical after the formation of Ulmanis' authoritarian regime in 1934: devotion to the land (country-side), facilitation of national pride, praise of the past[12]. Child as the symbol of the future of the nation was especially promoted within the scope of literary characters in the 1920 – 30s.

III. The time after World War II marked the existence of Latvian literature in two ideologically and territorially separate spaces. In 1944 the majority of Baltic intelligentsia emigrated to different continents whereas the actual territory of Latvia was under the occupation of the Soviet Union. Latvian writers worked in both spaces. The testimonial of memory reconstruction is attributed also to the numerous works created in emigration that were related to the Latvian history.

The works created in emigration basically sustain the history of the first Latvian independent state opposing the strivings of the Soviet ideology to produce a new-fangled and fabricated version of Latvian history. The thematic of memory in fiction is associated with the motif of loss: lost homeland, lost home, relatives, dear things, and other motifs. Almost each émigré writer has produced at least one memory narrative in different literary kinds and genres, therefore this process of memory depiction may be called collective memory that functions as a sign of recognition uniting the numerous Latvian émigrés scattered around the world. Formation of common memory was determined by similar conditions, historical and spatial situation but the individual features of each narrator are produced by his or her personal memory story: the multitude of narrative branches of the story created under the influence of the turning point of history.

In the space of the occupied Latvia, the creation of memory narratives was limited because of their possible relation with ideologically inadequate memories concerning the period before the Soviet occupation about the reflection of which censorship was especially particular in order not to facilitate positive or idealized depiction of the time, persons, and events of the independent Latvian state.

IV. A distinct wave of memoir literature appeared after regaining of independence in Latvia in 1991. Several thematic lines may be singled out in the contemporary Latvian creative and informative memory narratives:

- The experience of émigré Latvians during exile;
- Memories of deportations to the Siberia;
- Depiction of the events, collective and individual experiences suppressed in the Soviet years or rewriting the official Soviet history from the standpoint of the individual experience.

Along with the above-mentioned politicized thematic directions of memory narratives, the memory thematic in recent Latvian literature is enriched by the motif of childhood and adolescence typical of the first half of the 20th century. However, the strategy of these narratives is completely different. It is no longer the linear narrative focusing on the child's micro-world. In the recent literature, the authors apologize for burdening the reader with their childhood memory story because they could not be interesting for the modern individuals (this is pointed out by Agnese Krivade concerning her collection of poems *Bērnība* (Childhood)[13]). A. Krivade in her poetry turns to reconstructing the child's psychological sensations, experiences, and traumas (shame, fear, guilt feelings, etc.). A similar strategy is used in Pauls Bankovskis' collection of stories *Skola* (School)[14].

Conclusions

The survey of the major periods of autobiographical literature shows that they are closely related to the processes in Latvian and world politics or, more precisely, to the reaction or counter-reaction to them. In the case of particularly aggressive, violent political impact on people's lives, memory narratives rewrite the collective history by providing individual testimony of the official interpretation of history. These narratives emphasize the code of the ideological, national, and state motifs. In beneficial historical periods, memory narratives are more focused on the part of sustaining the individual experience that characterizes the personality formation. These narratives emphasize the psychological, family, and personality code.

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[2] Лотман Ю. Память в культорологическом освещении, in: *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach*. Bd. 16, 1895. – c. 5–9.
[3] Akuraters J. *Dienu atspīdumi*. Rīga: A. Gulbja apgādībā, 1924. – 115. lpp.
[4] Austriņš A. *Garā jūdze. Romāns – kronika. Pirmā daļa.* [Sākas piektā gadā.]. Rīga: J. Rozes apgādībā, 1926.
[5] Ibid. – 43. lpp.
[6] Ibid. – 42. lpp.
[7] Ibid. – 177. lpp.
[8] Austriņš A. *Garā jūdze. Romāns – kronika. Otrā un trešā daļa.* Rīga: J. Rozes apgādībā, 1935. – 5. lpp.
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[10] Krūza K. Dzīvs velki., in: *Atziņas III*. Cēsis un Rīga: O. Jēpes izdevniecība, 1924. – 162. lpp.
[11] Smilktiņa B. Pozitīvisms – uzskatu un viedokļu sadursmē, in: *Latviešu rakstnieku portreti. Pozitīvisti*. Rīga: Zinātne, 2002. – 12. lpp.

[12] Kalnačs B. Voldemārs Zonbergs-Sauleskalns, in: Hausmanis V., B. Kalnačs. *Latviešu drāma. 20. gadsimta pirmā puse*. Rīga: Zinātne, 2004. – 417. lpp.
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Ilze Kačāne

REMEMBERED CHILDHOODS IN LATVIAN LITERATURE OF THE 1920s AND 1930s

Summary

The paper focuses on the category of memory in Latvian autobiographical childhood memory narratives after the foundation of the Republic of Latvia, i.e. in the 1920s and 1930s. Using a comparative approach the poetics of childhood memories is analyzed in Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš's 'Baltā grāmata' (The White Book), Ernests Birznieks-Upītis's trilogy 'Pastariņa dienasgrāmata' (Pastariņš' Diary), Anna Brigadere's trilogy 'Dievs. Daba. Darbs' (God. Nature. Work). In creating fragmentary memory narratives and depicting individual's identity Latvian writers mark their works not only with the subjective world perception, peculiar interpretation of childhood recollections, and creativity, but due to informative memory also with historico-cultural vision of the epoch to single out nation's identity code.

Remembered childhoods in Latvian literature of the 1920s and 1930s are: the means of searching one's individual and national identity; the historical and epoch-making evidence, panoramic overview of Latvian history, ethnography and culture; the description of a child's and, in broader perspective, human's personality development; the review of persistent ethical values important for the epoch.

Key-words: autobiographical writing, childhood recollections, subjective memory, individual's identity, nation's identity

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At the beginning of the 20th century, the subjective experience and individual worldview become one of the topicalities in Latvian culture and literature. Several Latvian writers turn to descriptions of the inner world and emotional experience hidden in human's consciousness in the context of both the current historic events (the revolution of 1905, emigration, World War I) and the trials of the past. Within the context of Latvian literature, the memoirs of childhood and youth are a striking stratum of autobiographical writing (diaries, letters, stories, narratives, sketches).

After the proclamation of Latvian independence in 1918 and especially in the 1920s, the category of memory became the cornerstone for defining the nation's identity. In a newly established model of the world, the visions of the present and the future are constructed via the experience and knowledge of the nation's past:

> *Memory opens up the possibility to repeatedly live through the past events, but dreams offer the opportunity to travel through the stages of time triad 'the past – present – future' in the succession desirable for an individual's consciousness or subconsciousness.*[1]

Remembered childhoods in the 1920s and 1930s in Latvia, i.e., in the *interbellum* period, depict not only an individual's subjective experience and a multicoloured palette of inner feelings, but also the spiritual and cultural values of one's nation and the direction of their restoration, strengthening, and maintenance, since the way towards the spiritual rebirth leads through the past. Thus, autoreferential 'I' or the identity and factological precision of the author and the depicted character, which are significant features of autobiographical narrative, concern not only Latvian writers' wish to understand their individual past, but the aspiration of the whole nation to clarify the memories of the nation, to investigate and to conceive its history as well as to define the nation's identity.

As regards memories of childhood in Latvian literature in the time period from the beginning of the 20th century till 1940, one should differentiate between the primary texts where the author creates and retains as far as possible the emotional ties with his main character offering a rather precisely constructed report on childhood, and the secondary (marginal) texts where autobiographical details are only outlined. Among the key-stones of autobiographical prose dedicated to childhood memories one should mention Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš' (1877 – 1962) *Baltā grāmata* (The White Book) a characteristic feature of which is its original visual design – drawings made by the author himself. The book was finished in 1914 but the first narratives *Baltās grāmatas tēlojumi* (The Sketches of the White Book) had been published some years before. The initiated tradition was carried on by Ernests Birznieks-Upītis (1871 – 1960) with the trilogy *Pastariņa dienasgrāmata* (Pastariņš's Diary): *Pastariņš mājā* (Pastariņš at Home, 1922), *Pastariņš skolā* (Pastariņš at School, 1924), and *Pastariņš dzīvē* (Pastariņš in Life, 1924) (the name of the main character *Pastariņš* means 'the lastborn child, the youngest child in the family').

A particular place among autobiographical children's prose is taken by the trilogy *Dievs. Daba. Darbs* (God. Nature. Work) by Anna Brigadere (1861 – 1933) and *Zila debess zelta mākoņos* (Blue Sky with Golden Clouds) by Aspazija, both written at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. Brigadere's autobiographical trilogy (Part 1 *Dievs. Daba. Darbs* (God. Nature. Work, 1926); Part 2 *Skarbos vējos* (In Biting Winds, 1930); Part 3 *Akmeņu sprostā* (In Stone Cage, 1933)) is most often characterized as the Latvian moral code and a storage of valuable verity. Unlike in previously written childhood memory narratives the author pays less importance to detailed descriptions of environment and real objects but delves into little Annele's (the name is the diminutive form from the author – Anna Brigadere's – first name) inner world and reflections.

The construction of childhood memory narratives is reliance upon one's memory – the most important category of autobiographical writing. For this reason, the question of, whether childhood recollections are authentic or fabricated, is very topical. Memory is always subjective, thus creative memory and imagination become significant means for creating literary works. *Years have erased much; memory has added much*[2], in his *White Book* states Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš – the establisher of the so called 'white book' idyllic childhood tradition in literature. Memory forms human's identity and structures the world; it ensures the maintenance of culture. In the childhood sketches of the mentioned writers, the category of memory is accentuated differently: Jaunsudrabiņš and Birznieks-Upītis use the first person narrative. Jaunsudrabiņš in his one hundred sketches in words and lines puts a special emphasis on the idea of remembering (*It is so pleasant to remember*

[..][3], *I remember with pleasure [..]*[4], *I remember [..]*[5]) and the binary opposition *now – then* (***Now*** *however even the misfortune of* ***those times*** *seems as a happiness*[6].). Brigadere exploits the third person narration that allows the author to tell about herself and her life and simultaneously disassociate from her experience expressing it through the prism of a fictional narrator or character.

In the depictions of childhood memories, these authors focus on plenty of colourful scenes of life from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. These works occupy an important place in Latvian classical literature bringing out the rural identity of Latvian nation and its rootedness in rural traditions. A special importance in the world of childhood recollections is attached to the space unit of a house in the countryside and its nearby surroundings. Expanding the spatial borders is favoured by the discovery offered to the child by each day.[7] Significant in these narratives is the motif of a road and movement in space, as it is also very vividly revealed in the opening scene of Brigadere's trilogy titled *Hired Men* – the direct translation of the Latvian title *Gājēji* is associated with walking and people on the road:

> *'What is your father and mother?'*
> *'Hired men (gājēji).'*
> *'Where are they going to?'*
> *'To the other edge of the world.'*
> *'Where is the edge of the other world?'*
> *'Behind the sun, behind the moon, at the other end of the seas.'*[8]

Little Annele's first memories are connected with leaving a farmer's house; hence a course of life, the same as memory, is revealed as a travel in time and space. The travel from one space to another begins on Juris Day or Jurģi (in English known as St. George's Day). In Latvian folklore it is the day of the sun, light, and a symbolic beginning of a new life (the date of Jurģi, i.e. April 23, is not mentioned in the text since in Latvian calendar time perception it is a rooted fact). Jurģi is associated with movement; exactly on this day the lease agreement comes to an end and it is considered as the day of leavers and newcomers. Setting forth on Jurģis day in the first and second part of the trilogy opens a new stage in the girl's life since Annele is on the road that *took her into the world*[9]. The boundaries of a house as a spatial refuge with stable values are crossed, *'the spatial experience' in its own way becomes the practice in life organization*[10]. In Part 3, where the rural space is replaced by the depiction of urban life, for Annele the old and familiar time thread of the yarn of time, unreeled from the spool, has passed, *only memory stays, the shadow and the reflection*[11]. The final part of the book begins with the description of the girl's trip to a city by train as the symbol of industrial development.

Neither Birznieks-Upītis nor Brigadere emphasize the exact time in their works. The flow of time is revealed by the succession of different events relevant in rural life (Juris Day, Whit Sunday, harvest time, All Souls' Day, Christmas, Star Day, Easter, etc.) that are interrupted by writers' fragmentary memories or *broken time threads*[12] about specific people, inner emotional feelings when becoming a shepherd and driving the cattle to pasture for the first time, the first school day, or the first trip to a city. Childhood is not shown as a linear course of life; the principle of the cyclic time becomes the dominant in the harmonious world model. Years are not relevant in childhood memory narratives; the age of the characters is not specially emphasized either. One can only

guess Pastariņš' approximate age just following the titles of the parts and chapters, for instance, when after the happy life at home the adventurous school years follow. The trip to St. Petersburg in its turn is the beginning of a self-dependant life period; after that Pastariņš becomes a teacher and travels to the Caucasus and Persia. In the third book of the trilogy, the portrayal of the main character becomes crucially different. This is manifested not only by the introduction of the address, *Sir Pastariņš*[13], but also by the first reference in the text to the synthesis of the main character and the future writer Birznieks–Upītis. Fragmentary memory and impressions are substituted by a rather fluent narration covering a definite time period of the author's life:

> *[I] spent long winter evenings reading everything that was published in the Latvian language. In my spare time imitating others [I] tried my hand at writing this and that. [I] contributed some pieces also to editorials and later when they were published [I] read them with pleasure. Each time [I] read carefully all the editorial answers searching something that might have referred to me but [I] was also interested in the replies to others. During summertime [I] went to the meetings of the Committee of Studies to listen to the reports on literature but in wintertime – to the social gatherings organized by Jelgava Latvian Society.*[14]

The category of time in Brigadere's trilogy is different. Unlike Birznieks-Upītis' Pastariņš, Annele's life is led by imagination, fancy, and the ability to see everything with invisible eyes. In the first part of Brigadere's trilogy, the thoughts of the main character are quick as lightning, they come and go and return again. As a small girl Annele *knew nothing about time*: *She saw rose-coloured fogs in front of her from where longer and shorter moments emerged as golden steeples; they flashed in wonderful brilliance and sank again in fogs*[15]. Playing with manifold attributes of the surrounding world, most often in solitude, lets the girl get into another reality – into the world of dreams.

Quite the opposite is the time conception in the second part of the trilogy *In Biting Winds* that describes Annele's shepherd days and the first experience at school:

> *[..] time tied its thread to the last signpost and started to unroll from its big clew days and nights, summers and winters, weeks and months, months and years. Sometimes time went by with all its presents as with the wings of a bird, sometimes it slept tardy and motionless in bones as a big sleeper. But whatever it took it never gave back, whomever it drove away that never came back again.*[16]

Thus, the subjective time category is little by little substituted by the irreversible time perception interacting with the death of the next of kin and the sense of duty imposed by life.

> *It seemed to Annele that time was of two kinds: white and black. In times gone by, time had always been white, only seldom with small black freckles; it was in those occasions when she was told off or got a jab for something what the grown-ups called a mischief. [..]But everything was different now. Sometimes the black spots of time lasted longer than just a moment, while or hour.*[17]

The atmosphere of the period and the all-embracing historico-cultural situation are observed in both Birznieks-Upītis and Brigadere's autobiographical trilogies, especially in the final chapters of the books where in comparison to the first glimmer of childhood memories the time space from the individual experience until registering the memories is the shortest. Latvian historical, political, and cultural ties with Germany and Russia

in the trilogy *Pastariņš' Diary* are diverse. The author recurrently uses phrases and words in German and Russian representing the language of some characters and constructing the dialogues. The turn of the epoch in the perception of a child is covered, for instance, in describing the school years when the German dominant at school is suddenly replaced by the Russian (*[..] instead of 'Stundenplan' there was 'Rospisanije urokov' hanging [..]*[18]), German teachers are substituted with Russian educators. Latvian teacher at school who is a follower of Young Latvians[19] and folk songs are original symbols of the national revival of the 19th century uniting Latvians to be conscious of their national roots. Books in Latvian on Latvian history and social life that are secretly carried into the school, as well as communication with the teacher compatriot form and develop a deeper understanding of the epoch and national identity.

E. Birznieks-Upītis:

> *Thus, in a quite short time we got thoroughly acquainted with the history of our nation and the sufferings of the people, the only sympathetic voice that had risen up against all the tyranny in Garlībs Merķelis' writing, we learnt about the beginnings of our literature and the national age. We had all the best books and magazines in our small library, but for safety reasons we also had cheap editions of works by Turgenev, Pushkin, Lermontov. But we did not know the Russian language and because of this there was seldom anybody who read them.*[20]

A. Brigadere:

> (Annele) *heard singing like this for the first time. [..] As if some mystery had been solved, as if the crumbs of memories had been tied together and reconsidered. Where did these crumbs of memories come from? What were they connected with? Olden times of the people, orphans without the sun in the evening, an orphan-girl going along with the sun, a horse wading through the marsh. [..] Never-dying are the longings for the sun, everlasting is the hatred towards the alien oppressors and offenders, eternal the life of the nation. It was let me known by the song, it was felt by my heart.*[21]

Brigadere's autobiographical work provides an outline of the complicated epoch, especially in the portrayal of the protagonist's brother who was a member of the Latvian Society, an active defender of Latvians' rights, and an advocate of Latvian national culture. A song – *wakes up from the grave, a song – the star of the road*[22] – in Brigadere's work is revealed as one of the most important symbols of national revival. A song bonds together *the crumbs of memories* about the olden times of the people and makes it possible to look into eternity.

To conclude, childhood experience and events influenced by subjective world perception are not the sole subject matter of childhood memory narratives. One can feel a clear emphasis on the traditional Latvian patriarchal values that in general form a conception of the ideal time of the past. Memory determines the unity of both an individual and the nation; therefore the loss of the memories of the past by a separate person or, in a wider perspective, by nation means deformation and distortion of individual and national consciousness, history, and tradition. Autobiographical prose in the context of Latvian literature of the 1st half of the 20th century claims to protest against the abstract and impersonal historical studies of humankind and separate countries. Childhood depiction accentuates Latvian spiritual values that determine the existence and development of the nation in close connection with the historical tradition. Accordingly, child-

hood narratives are the texts of creative and informative memory. Rural space dominating in these prose works is associated with the idea of the rebirth of spirituality thus obtaining an obvious positive connotation.

> *The system of childhood semiotic of the Latvian prose of the 1920 – 30s is rooted in the literary tradition that since the late 19th century has foregrounded the category of memory as well as the ascertainment of national code (home, fatherland, work, education) essential for the period of the independent national state in Latvia. This was the 'interbellum' period when, along with social and political events, the development of literature was determined by ethical factors that find their origin in national folklore and idealization of the past.*[23]

Nevertheless, Latvian classical childhood memoirs of the 1st half of the 20th century do not attempt at rewriting the history and reconstructing the national traditions, as it will be observed in post-Soviet autobiographical writing. They mainly form a myth with the aim of marking national identity and singling out the mythologized historical dimension. Though the childhood years are datable, the mythical dimension of childhood is achieved by relieving the text from concreteness. The represented space and time most often acquire special semantics associated with the harmonious world order, e.g. focusing of family life, impressionistic glimpses, and panoramic overview of Latvian history, ethnography, and culture with a special emphasis on traditional Latvian and patriarchal values. Childhood in these texts is represented as a wholesome totality of a human's life, an independent and self-sufficient entity, and not just a step to adult life. Irrespective of the fact that childhood in Latvian autobiographical writing of the 1920s and 1930s depicts a rather poeticized and idyllic world, it is not carefree and easy-going. The harmony with the world is determined by the ethical factors – God, nature, and work. Though each of the small childhood sketches offers a look back into one definite event that is especially important in the reproduction of childhood atmosphere, there is always God overlooking the main character. He, the same as the objective visible world, is easily perceived with the imaginative eyes of a child:

> *You cannot see Him with such eyes. You can see Him, of course, but with different eyes, with the eyes that one sees many, many marvellous things. And He is above all these things. It is either a heavy thunder or a slow breeze; either the hot sun or a caressing shadow; a rye field in the morning dark or a forest where the cuckoo calls sadly. He is there and there, and there, and whenever He wants it. He is in the middle of the heart.*[24]

Thus, the depictions of childhood in Latvian literature of the 1920s and 1930s reveal that memory is a way of holding on to the things you love, the things you are, the things you never want to lose.

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[1] Burima M. Sapnis 20. gadsimta pirmās puses literatūrā (K. Hamsuns – J. Akuraters – F. Tuglass), in: *Literatūra un kultūra: process, mijiedarbība, problēmas. Zinātnisko rakstu krājums VIII.* Daugavpils: Saule, 2006. – 50. lpp.

[2] Jaunsudrabiņš J. *Baltā grāmata.* Rīga: Valters un Rapa, 2005. – 22. lpp. Since the analyzed works have not been translated into the English language, here and henceforth the translations of literary quotations mine – I. K.

[3] Ibid. – 40. lpp.

[4] Ibid. – 22. lpp.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Italics mine – I. K.
[7] See: Rinkeviča R. Tuvais – tālais E. Birznieka-Upīša triloģijā *Pastariņa dienasgrāmata*, in: *Literatūra un kultūra: process, mijiedarbība, problēmas. Debesspuses literatūrā un kultūrā. Zinātnisko rakstu krājums XI*. Daugavpils: Saule, 2008. – 25.–34. lpp. Rinkeviča R. Piedzīvojumu semiotika bērnības tēlojumos latviešu prozā 20. gs. 20. – 30. gados. / *Humanitāro Zinātņu Vēstnesis* Nr. 11, 2007. – 13.–20. lpp.
[8] Brigadere A. *Dievs. Daba. Darbs*. Rīga: Zvaigzne, 1993. – 6. lpp.
[9] Ibid. – 196. lpp.
[10] Bormane D.K. Māja. Mājas dzīves topogrāfijā: ideja un dialogs ar atmiņu, in: *Atmiņa kultūrvēsturiskā kontekstā (2)*. Daugavpils, DU izdevniecība *Saule*, 2002. – 91.–92. lpp.
[11] Brigadere A. *Dievs. Daba. Darbs*. Rīga: Zvaigzne, 1993. – 368. lpp.
[12] Ibid. – 169. lpp.
[13] Sk. Birznieks-Upītis E. *Pastariņa dienasgrāmata*. Rīga: Liesma, 1975. – 269. lpp.
[14] Ibid. – 305. lpp.
[15] Ibid. – 169. lpp.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Birznieks-Upītis E. *Pastariņa dienasgrāmata*. Rīga: Liesma, 1975. – 234. lpp.
[19] Young Latvians – persons belonging to a social movement in Latvia in 1850 – 1870 who struggled for the rights of Latvian people and were striving for the status of Latvian as a civilized and culturally rich nation.
[20] Ibid. – 236. lpp.
[21] Brigadere A. *Dievs. Daba. Darbs*. Rīga: Zvaigzne, 1993. – 454. lpp.
[22] Ibid. – 415. lpp.
[23] Rinkeviča R. General Characteristics of the PhD Thesis, in: *Semiotic of Childhood in Latvian Prose of the 1920 – 30s in the Context of European Literature. Summary of PhD Thesis*. Daugavpils: Saule, 2009. – p. 34.
[24] Brigadere A. *Dievs. Daba. Darbs*. Rīga: Zvaigzne, 1993. – 32.–33. lpp.

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Alīna Romanovska

EGO-VARIATIONS IN ANTONS AUSTRIŅŠ' TEXTS

Summary

Antons Austriņš' writing reveals diverse ego-variations, from individual depictions of his personality traits to exhaustive explication of actual biographical events in the text, from hardly discernible autobiographical inclination to actual autobiography. Features of fiction and ego-literature in A. Austriņš' texts coexist in close interaction, thus creating a unique space for depicting the author's personality and life experience. However, it cannot be denied that depiction of his personal experience is an intrinsic and specific part of Austriņš' texts. Besides, his literary legacy entails both autobiographical stories and a novel based on the real life experience of the writer and a short autobiography 'Radu raksti' (Family Tree) that has the features of literary text. Hence, Austriņš' works provide a distinct example of the synthesis of autobiography and other prose genres (novel, story).

Autobiographical features recur in the whole of Austriņš' creative work – both in his early works, e.g. story 'Kaspars Glūns', stories 'Čaikovska kvartets' (Tschaikovski's Quartet), 'Psihopāts' (Psychopath), etc. and his mature ones, e.g. collections of stories 'Māras zemē' (In the Land of Māra), 'Neievērotie' (The Unnoticed), etc. Besides, the author's inclination towards the autobiographical mode of depiction grows stronger in the course of his writing. Hence, in the early works just individual episodes of his life and experience were included in some of his stories, whereas in the 1920 – 30s autobiographical elements had become very central in his prose, as it is in the novel-chronicle 'Garā jūdze' (The Long Mile).

Key-words: ego-variations, Antons Austriņš, autobiography, narration, autobiographical elements, author, narrator, character

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Depiction of subjective experience and individual world vision became dominant peculiarities of narrative in European literature of the late nineteenth – early twentieth century. Subjective world perception determines both the structure of literary works (chronological succession of events is more and more substituted by fragmentation) and their subject matter (authors are preoccupied with depicting the sphere of emotions and sensations, investigating the hidden layers of human consciousness, etc.). Diverse memoir genres become topical again and in many cases the author, his or her life and experience become the focal centre of writing.

Since the mid-nineteenth century up to the early twentieth century, literature gained more intimacy revealing the human inner world and subjective experience. There was an upsurge of ego-literature; lots of diaries, letters, memoirs, confessions were produced and many of these texts were meant to be read. Diaries and letters were written both as

literary texts and documents at the same time. This contributed to the appearance of literary works that were autobiographically grounded. Elements of autobiography are obvious in the works by almost all writers of the period from mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century, the line of distinction between fiction and memoir becoming very indistinct.

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the popularity of autobiography was enhanced by the ideas of particular literary trends. Hence, the aesthetic conceptions of Russian Symbolists emphasized the demand for merging of art and life based on the idea of the universal synthesis of life and religion, philosophy and art, diverse literary genres, etc. This symbolist conception suggests the openness of the creative process for all people. A special role in the creation of this kind of atmosphere was played by dramatic love intrigues among creative personalities (e.g. the love triangle of Alexander Blok, his wife and Andrei Beliy that was widely known and much commented; the family life of Lidija Zinovjeva-Annibal and Vjacheslav Ivanov, etc.). The participants of these love dramas promoted their relations considering them as symbolic, mythical events that could affect the fate of the whole world. Thus the intimate became public, besides this position of life was extremely popular and widely supported. Hence, the upsurge of autobiography was facilitated by the particular culture situation that undoubtedly affected also the world view of Austriņš.

Austriņš' writing reveals diverse ego-variations, from individual depictions of his personality traits to exhaustive explication of actual biographical events in the text, from hardly discernible autobiographical inclination to actual autobiography. Features of fiction and ego-literature in Austriņš' texts coexist in close interaction, thus creating a unique space for depicting the author's personality and life experience. However, it cannot be denied that depiction of his personal experience is an intrinsic and specific part of Austriņš' texts.

The features of autobiography differ in diverse prose works by Austriņš, e.g. the collection of stories *Puiškāns* (Lad), story *Kaspars Glūns*, novel-chronicle *Garā jūdze* (The Long Mile). Besides, his literary legacy entails both autobiographical stories and a novel based on the real life experience of the writer and a short autobiography *Radu raksti* (Family Tree) that has the features of literary text. Hence, Austriņš' works provide a distinct example of the synthesis of autobiography and other prose genres (novel, story). However, though Austriņš' autobiography *Radu raksti* may be considered as a literary text, there are several specific features that set it apart from his autobiographical stories and the novel.

For a more detailed consideration of the autobiographical elements of Austriņš' works, we will compare the novel-chronicle *The Long Mile* having very distinct autobiographical features to his autobiography *Family Tree*. Two aspects of the presence of autobiographical elements in a literary work are especially important:

1) factual precision;
2) identity of the author, narrator, and character.

Both of these criteria are decisive to define a work as autobiography or declare its adherence to another literary genre with autobiographical elements.

Autobiography as a genre is oriented towards precise representation of the facts of extra-textual reality. One of the major categories of this genre is unanimous correspondence of the narrated events and facts with the author's real life. Twists and turns of

Austriņš' life have been depicted in his autobiography *Radu raksti* with great precision and laconism. E.g. *Pats pirmais dzejniecības mēģinājums iekrīt laikam 1896. gada vasarā, bet turpat nācu pie atziņas, ka visi dzejas temati, kā: mīlestība, nāve, prieki i bēdas jau nepārspējami izsmelti no lielākiem dzejniekiem un tālab veltas pūles*.[1] [The very first attempt at writing poetry probably happened in the summer of 1896; yet I at once came to the conclusion that all topics of poetry, such as love, death, joys and sorrows, have already been exhausted by greater poets and thus it was futile effort.] *Pēc draudzes skolas iestājos Valkas skolotāju seminārā Rīgā, bet pavasari manis nepielaida pie pārcelšanas eksāmeniem, jo direktoram bija nācis zināms, ka es rakstu avīzēs*.[2] [After parish school I entered Valka Teacher Seminar in Riga, but in spring I was not admitted to transfer examinations as the headmaster had learnt about my publications in newspapers.] Austriņš' autobiography may be considered an essential source in studying his life and personality; subjectivity in the depiction of the peculiarities of his personality appears to a very small degree, as the narration is neutral and based on an unpretentious account of his life events.

Autobiographical narration is in the first person and the main character's name is identical to that of the author. These two features along with the factual precision of the narrative indicate that the author, narrator, and character are one and the same person, they have identical life experience and thus equal world perception and identity. The peculiar feature of Austriņš' autobiography is that he makes a point of avoiding a description of his life and personality. The very title of the autobiography (*Family Tree*) suggests that this text will not be focused on the writer's personality that is a specific peculiarity of autobiographical genre. Austriņš himself is first mentioned in the work only in page two, and also in the further narration his life story is alternated with digressions on some significant personalities in his life, e.g. his mother, father, grandparents, Rūdolfs Blaumanis, Hermanis Albats, etc. However, in the final part of his autobiography Austriņš has not been able to avoid a successive account of his life events, but in the last but one paragraph he consistently returns to his family tree. This paragraph is somewhat artificial; the story of his in-laws (mentioning just his wife's grandparents and father) is dissonant with Austriņš' family tree description, it is dry and short unlike the affectionate and extended narration of Austriņš' relatives.

On the whole, the subjective position of Austriņš is present in his autobiography *Family Tree* only in the description of the people who were close to him. This subjectivism is not incidental, it endows the narration with precision and artistic qualities, while on the level of ideas it emphasizes Austriņš' values of sustaining the past, being aware of one's roots, and rebirth of spirituality.

Defining the genre of autobiography, other – more formal – criteria may matter as well, e.g. the author's comments on the genre of a particular text, conditions of writing it, etc. Austriņš wrote his autobiography *Family Tree* at the age of forty upon the order of Kārlis Egle, the compiler of the collection *Atziņas* (Ideas). This seemingly formal fact along with the above- mentioned peculiarities of this work make Austriņš' *Family Tree* a peculiar sample of autobiographical genre in Latvian literature.

The novel-chronicle *The Long Mile* depicts several real events of Austriņš' life described also in his autobiography *Family Tree*, yet this work has a rather different character. The novel-chronicle *The Long Mile* is one of the most interesting autobiographical works by Austriņš. It is the only novel by the writer and he attributed a special

significance to this work because he considered it as the beginning of a new period of his writing. By the end of his life, the only intention of Austriņš that unfortunately was never carried out was to complete this work.

Austriņš intentionally wrote the novel-chronicle *The Long Mile* as a work of fiction. Though it is based on actual facts of the author's life, they are subordinated to the rules of art greatly determined by the genre of novel. The chronological principle of narration is not observed here and it is often rather hard to follow the temporal switches. The formation of the intrigue and the principle of catharsis are important elements of the narrative; for this reason retrospection and prospection are created in the novel. The autobiographical nature of Austriņš' novel concerns not only the account of particular actual events of the author's life but also the reflection of the author's thoughts and feelings embodied in certain characters of the novel (in most cases it is the autobiographical character Aizbetnieks). The novel *The Long Mile* cannot be regarded as a source of information on the author's biography, as the depiction of actual events are alternated by the author's imagination, the real names of persons have been replaced by imagined names (Antons Austriņš – Aizbetnieks, Viktors Eglītis – Loks, Kārlis Jēkabsons – Deisons, etc.). Though the names are possible to restore, the change of the name signifies the transformation of a personality (many names have a symbolical meaning, e.g. Aizbetnieks, Deisons, etc.) and this means that, though almost all the characters of the novel have real prototypes, they have still been drawn basically from the author's imagination.

Autobiographical features recur in the whole of Austriņš' creative work – both in his early works, e.g. story *Kaspars Glūns*, stories *Čaikovska kvartets* (Tschaikovski's Qaurtet), *Psihopāts* (Psychopath), etc. and his mature ones, e.g. collections of stories *Māras zemē* (In the Land of Māra), *Neievērotie* (The Unnoticed), etc. Besides, the author's inclination towards the autobiographical mode of depiction grows stronger in the course of his writing. Hence, in the early works just individual episodes of his life and experience were included in some of his stories, whereas in the 1920 – 30s autobiographical elements had become very central in his prose, as it is in the novel-chronicle *The Long Mile*. In the 1920 – 30s Austriņš changed his narration strategy. His early works of the beginning of the twentieth century were marked by purposive inclusion of the 'other text' (e.g. in the stories *Psychopath* and *Kaspars Glūns*), while autobiographical elements formed in them just an intangible reticulation, as the texts contained only feelings and sensations that were hard to decipher as autobiographical nuances for readers who were not experts on Austriņš' biography. Later on Austriņš stopped positioning himself as 'one of others', gave up intentional citing of other texts and ideas, and started creating his own unique autobiographical text that was placed at the basis of the majority of his prose works. In Austriņš' early works their autobiographical character appears as a kind of lyricism (the author's thoughts and feelings are revealed by imaginary characters), whereas the mature ones are predominated by the narration of the author's life events.

The year of 1924 is especially significant in the context of Austriņš' autobiographical writing as exactly in this year his wish of arranging his past memories grew especially strong making them an object of literary work. In this year he wrote his autobiography *Family Tree*, started working at his novel-chronicle *The Long Mile* that continued until the writer's death in 1934. In 1931 the collection of his childhood memories *Puiškāns* (Lad) was published. These works bring out Austriņš' reflection on his past and its

vision determined by his desire of making sense of the past events, defining his identity, and revealing the mechanisms of his memory work. Austriņš referred his individual experience to the general historico-cultural situation. Thus the autobiographical context is actualized by his wish to study and understand the past and history of his nation. Past time has an essential role in the world model created by Austriņš as the way towards spiritual rebirth leads through the past. A person can survive into the future and define his or her identity only by becoming aware of his or her roots and revitalizing the past values.

Austriņš made an intentional use of autobiographical details in his fiction depicting the actual experience of his life. In his autobiography *Family Tree* Austriņš points out concerning the role of a relative in his life that he has depicted several close people in one of his stories, *No mātes radiem redzēju tikai viņas tēvu un māti (Matīsu un Ilzi Gailīšus), kuri zīmēti stāstā 'Daktu tēvs un Daktu māte'*[3]. [From my mother's relatives I met just her father and mother (Matīss and Ilze Gailīši) depicted in the story *Daktu tēvs un Daktu māte* (Daktu Father and Daktu Mother).] *Māte pa daļai ietēlojusies 'Ilzītē', 'Klētspriekšā', 'No lauku dzīves'*.[4] [Mother has been partially depicted in *Ilzīte*, *Klētspriekšā* (In Front of the Barn), *No lauku dzīves* (From the Country Life).] The close relation of Austriņš' prose to his life experience made some literary scholars consider him a realist. Though on the whole there are certain features of realism in Austriņš' prose, they are hardly discernible in the stories with autobiographical origin, as they focus on the subjective experience instead of precise depiction of events, place, and time. Real autobiographical facts form just the base of particular stories, while their subject matter and ideas are related to subjective experience and feelings, the depiction of which reveals an essential bond between reality and supra-reality.

Artistic text proved the best way of self-expression and self-awareness for the writer; in text he revealed the most essential dimensions of his life experience. His contemporaries recall that in reality Austriņš was reluctant as to telling about his life, he did not like to attract the attention of people around. Besides, the status of fugitive held the writer back from recording his life events and friends' names, as the records might be found by detective police and the written information could harm both Austriņš and people who were close to him. Even in his autobiography he is very concise about his life and is more preoccupied with describing people and environment around him. Austriņš' letters are usually no longer than a page; he does not reflect upon his life or major historico-cultural events, never describing his actions. The letters contain either information on some practical issues, e.g. publication of an article, promise to find, bring something, inform about something, or reserved information concerning his health condition or weather. Austriņš never wrote diaries, just his notebooks have been preserved with notes of some practical matters, calculations of royalties as well as short notes on separate pages on some issues he had been interested in (other national cultures, symbols, people's names, etc.). Hence, the whole of his life experience and reflections on it were expressed exclusively in his literary texts, and probably for this reason almost all of his prose is saturated with autobiographical details. Austriņš compensated for the impossibility of self-expression in memoir genres by introducing autobiographical details in his literary works that were mostly based on actual events of the author's life and described many real personalities.

The autobiographical character of Austriņš' writing was determined by the existing culture situation when it was popular to tell about one's life, reveal one's personal

experience and thoughts as well as the character traits of the writer's personality and life tragedy. Austriņš lived for 50 years, he survived two revolutions, for twelve years he was forced to wander around the world hiding his real name, and he suffered from the lack of money until his death. In his stories and the novel he had an opportunity to both tell about himself and his life and keep a distance from his experience expressing it through the point of view of an imaginary narrator and character. This distance in Austriņš' prose texts manifests itself in the use of the third person narration. According to researchers, an essential feature of ego-literature is the identity of the author, narrator, and character, i.e. the fact that the author writes about him/herself. Therefore the first person narration is considered to be organic for ego-literature. However, Austriņš repeatedly used third person narration in his autobiographical works that shows a certain distance between the author and his character enhanced by the fact that the names of autobiographical characters usually do not coincide with the author's name. Besides, in different works Austriņš gives different names to his autobiographical characters: Krenklis, Aizbetnieks, Kalns, Kaspars Glūns, etc. In each particular case, the choice of the name is related to the conception of the work, its genre, the central traits of the autobiographical character, author's subjective position regarding the particular case, etc. It should be noted that in the collection of stories *Puiškāns* (Lad) Austriņš' real biographical name is identical with the name of the central character, the young lad Antons. Besides, it is not only the given name that is identical but also the nick-name – 'puiškāns' [lad] (according to the contemporaries, Austriņš was really called in his childhood 'puiškāns'). The time depicted in the collection is writer's childhood that is opposed to the rest of his life as the harmonious time in opposition to the disharmonious one. There is a close emotional bond between Austriņš and his autobiographical character. Antons' behaviour and character traits are natural, as they should be. Austriņš is reluctant to make any changes in his character; he does not reveal his inner contradictions and identifies himself with this character. However, complete identification is impossible due to the great time distance separating the author form his autobiographical character that has formed a spiritual distance as well.

Memory is an essential category of ego-literature. It forms the identity of the human and structures his world as well as secures culture preservation. The category of memory is emphasized by Austriņš also in his autobiographical narratives, especially important it is in the collection of stories *Lad* where the author depicts his childhood trying to recall his own roots and thus define his own identity. Focusing on the category of memory at the beginning of the collection, Austriņš provides an indirect reply to the question of the correspondence of what he depicts to the reality, defines the specific character of autobiographical writing, and indicates the importance of the awareness of childhood for his personality. The narrator notes that he will not be able to provide an adequate depiction of childhood, because memory is subjective and some events and sensations have been forgotten. Therefore the narrator is forced to use his imagination in the process of restoring his childhood and create fiction. Throughout the whole collection of stories, the narrator emphasizes that he is writing from memory trying to restore everything as adequately to reality as possible and as if apologizes to the reader that it is not always possible. A certain disorder of the narration is also justified by relying on memory. Austriņš uses such stylistically marked phrases as *gluži vai piemirsu; vaļsirdīgi runājot; nez', vai tā nav pirmā atmiņa* [I almost forgot; frankly speaking; this could be the first

memory], etc. Creating the narrative as a free narration, recalling childhood, Austriņš gains intimacy with the reader and creates an intimate air owing to the illusion of free conversation, during which one person is sharing his memories with another.

Apart from childhood, the revolution of 1905, reaction to it, and taking refuge constitute another especially important period in Austriņš' life reflected in his texts. The events and experiences of that time appear in the plot of many stories and his novel. The trials caused by the revolution and seeking refuge affected Austriņš so strongly that he could not set himself free from these memories until his very death. Probably this was a reason why the writer not only returned to this period of his life in many of his works but also included almost identical episodes in different texts.

Including identical episodes in different works is a specific feature of Austriņš' autobiographical works. He formed his novel-chronicle *The Long Mile* as a depiction of the epoch from the perspective of an autobiographical character; therefore a number of episodes from previously written stories are included in the novel. E.g. there are some instances in the story *Kaspars Glūns* and the novel *The Long Mile* that reveal a total coincidence of sentences and even paragraphs, just changing the protagonist; besides they reflect the author's real life experience. The repeated material has obviously become an intrinsic and constant part of the writer's consciousness. The real life experience has so closely merged with the text depicting it that it is no longer possible to separate the fact from fiction, life from literary text.

Another kind of repetition occurs in Austriņš' works as well, i.e. partial similarity in the description of an event in different works. This kind of repetition is also used in the novel *The Long Mile* that includes fragments from previously written stories. A typical similarity of this kind occurs in the story *Daugavas laivinieks cietumā* (The Daugava Boatman in Prison) and the novel *The Long Mile*. The difference of the idea and conception of the story and the novel is great and the narrator's position differs as well. The protagonist of the novel is an autobiographical character whose life position and world view dominate in the text and whose life course lies at the basis of the plot of the novel. In the story, the autobiographical character who is also the narrator, is a secondary character, while the protagonist is the boatman whose world view and the tragic perception of life form the plot line.

These examples bring out the way Austriņš combines the documental and subjective aspects in his works. The depictions of the same event and character at different time periods reveal changes in Austriņš' life perception as well as reevaluation of his life experience. Though some details in the story and the novel have been changed and their protagonists differ, the conceptual emphasis and the emotional situation are very similar. Relating both works, the depicted event gains additional nuances and is regarded from more sides. These examples show how the real life experience is modified in the work of art and subjected to different artistic goals. As a result, the particular text of life gains greater variability. Taking into consideration that the story *The Daugava Boatman in Prison* (1913) and the novel *The Long Mile* (1927 – 1934) were written with a several years distance, the formation of both texts was determined also by the mechanisms of remembering and forgetting.

The mechanism of repetition described above brings out how a particular life event becomes a literary text and is modified according to the conception of the work. However,

Austriņš' prose demonstrates another way of including life experience into literary text, i.e. by precise transfer of some details or utterances from life to a prose work, and the life situation is depicted almost fully. Kārlis Kraujiņš in his memories of Austriņš describes his imprisonment:

> *Kādus zemiskus cilvēka cieņas degradējumus viņš panesis gan Rīgas slepenpolicijā Gregusa spīdināšanas kamerā, gan Kuldīgas inkvizitora Bredriha pratināšnas ūķī! Un, kad Austriņam jautāts, ar ko nodarbojoties, viņš atbildējis: "Ar rakstniecību."*
>
> *– Так, так... Углем на заборах пишите! – šis uzkliedzis.*[5]
>
> [What mean degradation of human dignity he suffered both in Riga detective police quarters, in the torture cell of Greguss, and in the interrogation slum of Kuldīga inquisitor Bredrich! And when Austriņš was asked about his occupation, he replied: 'Writing.'
>
> – So, so… You write with coal on fences! – he yelled.]

Austriņš writes in his novel:

> *Lielinkvizitors likās esam ar kaut ko nemierā. Viņa pirkstos kūpēja smaržīgs cigārs.*
>
> *'Jūsu nodarbošanās?'*
>
> *'Literārisks darbs,' nedroši atbildēja Aizbetnieks.*
>
> *'Ehe, laikam ar ogli rakstāt uz sētas,' Greguss ļauni nosmējās.*[6]
>
> [The great inquisitor seemed to be dissatisfied with something. He was holding an aromatic cigar in his fingers.
>
> 'Your occupation?'
>
> 'Literary work,' Aizbetnieks replied weakly.
>
> 'Aha, so you write with coal on the fence,' Greguss laughed nastily.]

The cited Greguss' phrase had obviously become an intrinsic part of Austriņš' image among his friends and acquaintances, the words of the inquisitor had acquired a mythic status and been included without changing in the novel, that attributed a specific air to the scene of interrogation; but only to the people who were well familiar with Austriņš did this scene allude to its hidden autobiographical character.

Psychologists consider that memory is the basis of human identity. This peculiarity of memory could have determined Austriņš' interest in the investigation of his individual past by recording his reflections in writing. The idea of a united and harmonious personality is one of the major ones in Austriņš' prose. The writer is aware that it is impossible to reconcile the contradictory nature of human, thus he suggests an idea of partial harmonization of personality. In the course of personality harmonization it is essential to lift the contradictions between the human and society. Memory in Austriņš' prose functions as a mechanism that makes it possible by making the past real to clarify many hazy personality dimensions and events thus providing a solution to the problem of personality harmonization. Individual past is closely related to the past of the nation, therefore the facts and events of his personal life are depicted by Austriņš in relation to the historico-cultural situation. The context of the fate of the nation is especially strong in the works published in the 1920 – 30s. Memory determines the unity of both individual personality and nation; in case the collective or individual consciousness loses the past, both the

consciousness and the nation as such are deformed. By losing mythology, history, traditions, i.e. by losing the past, a nation loses its ground, and the existence of this nation becomes endangered[7].

The peculiarities of Austriņš' prose were determined by the wish of recording his past from the present perspective. The past experience in his texts is fused with the present experience determined by the peculiarities of the writer's world perception at the moment of writing each particular text. Hence, the limits of the past are extended. Rather often the linear logical arrangement of events conceptualized in the narration is broken by a sudden interpolation from the distant past or the present. The reader's attention is drawn to a specific life event that has left a strong impression on the narrator's consciousness and is associated with a person, object, event, etc. mentioned. Strong impressions on this or that phenomenon constitute a formative element of Austriņš' autobiographical writing, attributing an impressionistic tinge to the narrative. Almost in the whole of his prose, feelings and emotions, passing impressions dominate over reflections; the visual image of the world predominates over the search for the existential meaning of the world.

Austriņš has managed to balance in his autobiographical texts a subjective approach emphasizing the individual world perception and factual precision. It is exactly the personal experience that grants a high degree verisimilitude to the depicted situations, authenticity of psychological characteristics and realism of the depiction of conflicts and details. The novel-chronicle *The Long Mile* is one of the best examples where subjective world perception has closely merged with the depiction of documental events. Austriņš depicts the major events and experiences of his own life against the background of a panoramic historical scene of the early twentieth century. To make his texts documental, the writer provides a detailed description of the historical situation (demonstrations, the public reaction, people's life-style, etc.), gives a realistic depiction of space creating the illusion of presence (cf. the respective chapter), includes in the novel characters having recognizable prototypes, mentions real historical persons among other characters of the novel. The above mentioned documental details may be deciphered only by informed readers who are well aware of the peculiarities of the historical situation and whose culture memory holds a particular image of the described characters and places, making the environment and time familiar. Nowadays it is hard to decipher some hidden details. However, researchers point out that Austriņš' works possess so great documentality and precision that a notion of the real situation may be formed after them. Yet, very often this kind of restoring facts without testing them may create a false notion of the particular events. Hence, the image of Austriņš existing nowadays is fictive to a great extent, as it has been formed on the basis of his autobiographical works that, though based on real events, are still works of fiction. Real facts in them are subject to the general conception, thus they are often corrupt. Austriņš' autobiographical works unite documentality and a creative interpretation of particular life facts in relation to the artistic task.

Memory and time, consciousness and fate are fundamental and meaningful categories of Austriņš' ego-writing that make it possible for the author to reveal his consciousness in the text. Writing gave sense to Austriņš' life, helped define his identity and smooth his personal contradictions that had been formed in the cruel trials of life. In his works

Austriņš created a subjective world that was simultaneously an alternative to the real life and its copy. Emphasis on ego in Austriņš' prose in the context of the early twentieth-century literature appears as a protest against the impersonal world perception. The plot lines of his works are not based on depiction of actual facts but on the analysis of his own life and the awareness of his unique identity.

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[1] Austriņš A. Radu raksti, in: *Atziņas*. 3. d. Cēsis, 1924. – 114. lpp.
[2] Ibid. – 114. lpp.
[3] Ibid. – 111. lpp.
[4] Ibid. – 112. lpp.
[5] Kraujiņš K. Antons Austriņš, in: *No atmiņu skrīņa*. Rīga, 1973. – 21. lpp.
[6] Austriņš A. *Kopoti raksti 8 sēj*. 5. sēj. Rīga, 1927. – 126. lpp.
[7] Федоров Ф. Память как демиургия: Довид Кнут, in: *Atmiņa kultūrvēsturiskā kontekstā*. Daugavpils, 2002. – 13. lpp.

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Aurika Meimre

PETER PIL'SKY – MEMOIR WRITER (A BRIEF OVERVIEW)[1]

Summary

A great part of the well-known pre-revolutionary literary critic Peter Pil'sky's literary heritage is dedicated to different types of memoirs about Russian Silver Age and first wave emigration literary and theater life. All his memoirs are disseminated in various newspapers from different countries. In most of his memoirs Pil'sky draws up his own artistic biography against a backdrop of recollections about the Russian writers and artists of the beginning of the 20th century.

Key-words: Silver Age Russian literature, Russian theater, Russian literature, Russian emigration

*

It is the common knowledge that, in the 1920s, hundreds of memoirs about the pre-revolutionary Russia, its culture and everyday life appeared all over the Russian diaspora. Memoirs, as a narrative genre *in terms of autobiographical writing about real events in the past a writer used to participate in or to witness*[2] and as a primary source of an intimate origin, form a part of Peter Pil'sky's literary heritage. In his journalistic toolkit, one can see more than a hundred memoir[3] texts which had originated, according to the writer, from 'forced parting' when

> *[..] the heart is starving for loving faces, beloved places, for the country where we used to be young, and that is why everything and everyone seemed to be young, cheerful and happy [..] This recollection of happiness is stronger and firmer than the life itself. However, the past itself has a miracle, incomparable force of 'what's lost will stay endearing.'*[4]

Unfortunately, P. Pil'sky failed to complete a separate volume of memoirs[5], which, according to his wife, actress Elena Kuznetsova[6], he had started to compile at the end of the 1930s[7]. Yuri Abyzov tried to create a kind of a *book equivalent, something like memoirs*[8] of Pil'sky in volumes 4 and 5 of ***Балтийский Архив*** (The Baltic Archives): he republished Pil'sky's memoirs from Tallinn daily newspaper ***Последние известия*** (The Latest News) and Riga daily newspaper ***Сегодня*** (Today) in chronological order. 53 full texts of memoir articles and their abstracts republished by Abyzov form by no means a complete set of memoirs by Pil'sky.

His whole memoir heritage-in-exile falls into the following categories:

1) memoirs proper:
    a) biographical memoirs relating events solely connected to writers, poets, journalists, different kinds of periodicals, i.e. texts as a rule free from literary/theatre criticism, while the heroes of the stories are given the nature of their personality. However, the biographies of 'the heroes'

are often drawn from recollections about personal meetings with them, participation in different publications, etc.

b) memoirs where Pil'sky himself is the most important subject matter. They are the memoirs about World War I (e.g. *The Destiny*), about the first days after the February and October revolutions (e.g. *The Shamashechkins*, *Mayakovsky*, etc.), about his escape from the Soviet Russia (*The Sentenced*, *Petliura*, *Bessarabia*, etc.), i.e. the stories connected personally to him.

2) memoir inclusions in different types of articles:
   a) in literary and theatre criticism;
   b) in memoirs-necrologies;
   c) in memoirs-portraits;
   d) in other 'memoirs apropos...'.

A separate group of memoir writings by Pil'sky is constituted by the so-called memoirs about 'today', i.e. Pil'sky's reports of the life in exile, about the things he saw and experienced in Estonia and Latvia, about his meetings with different artists. Moreover, they help to understand the author's attitude to everything he sees, to grasp what he experienced and got through, what he participated in, etc. Consequently, the memoirist of 'today' turns up to be a chronologist in a certain sense, the one who records the current events for future generations.

Memoir writing by Pil'sky is distinguished by the fact that he draws up his own artistic biography against a backdrop of recollections about the writers and artists of the beginning of the 20th century. He writes that *not long before this meeting in the magazine 'Мир Божий' (The Pax Christi) two of my stories appeared*[9]; *I witnessed them especially often while working together in 'Русская Воля' (The Russian Will) in 1915 – 1916*[10], he depicts nocturnal nature of L. Andreyev[11], *I got to know closely Doroshevich in 1918. By the time he had become one of the most active lecturers in my 'School of Journalism'*[12], etc.

There are utterly few recollections of the type 'me as a subject of description'; this may be accounted for by Pil'sky's personality: he thought that the readers were not interested in his personal life. By this message he finished his autobiography written for S. Vengerov[13]. In another autobiography written for the collection *Гримасы кисти и пера* (The Grimace of Brush and Pen), Pil'sky declared:

> *Nobody is willing to be naked in public. The exceptions are Adam and the beauties. There are no sincere autobiographies. However, knowing people you would have to answer the questions like 'How are you doing?' 'It's not your business!' 'How are you?' 'It's not your concern!'. It would not be rude. It would be just logical.*[14]

Pil'sky's recollections of the war, revolutionary days, and his escape from the Soviet Russia may be considered as his most subjective memoirs from the point of view of signature style in narration; consequently, Pil'sky himself is the central figure of these memoirs[15]. He says:

> *I felt the breath of Petliura much earlier than he appeared. He scented on me as soon as I crossed the border of the Hetman's Ukraine. Some dolt inspecting passports at Koreniovo station started to throw obstacles in my way*[16]; *on 20 October, 1918*

> *I left Petersburg for Kiev. – Escaped. For article 'To the Camisole' I was locked up and committed for trial in military tribuna.l*[17]

Memoirs-necrologies form the biggest group in the heritage of Pil'sky; they were written in a peculiar form of literary biography, *mortis causa* to a particular writer or artist. In these memoirs, Pil'sky often discloses the personality and the character of the deceased, instancing his personal meetings with them as well.

For example, in the memoir-necrology to Leonid Dobronravov Pil'sky depicts his adventures on arrival to Chisinau as follows:

> *I escaped to Chisinau on August night in 1920, and just within the first hour a ridiculous event happened to me. I arrived here looking the way I used to be in soviet Odessa, while moving thievishly in the town: sprouted crumpled beard, long ago trimmed hair, blue Russian shirt and some rags on the feet. If I had stood like this on a church porch, I would have been given alms. I went to the editorial office of the local newspaper*[18]*. The assistant was thoughtfully sitting and jotting something at the desk. I introduced myself. His eyes frowningly glanced at me, I read some fright, shame and complete distrust in them. He smacked lips and pronounced under his breath: 'You are not Pil'sky'. He fell silent. Can you imagine my plight! The misunderstanding ended very soon and the assistant explained to me: 'There have appeared impostors among refugees. Recently one person came to our desk and introduced himself as Osip Dymov*[19]*, he was paid in advance and disappeared'. Later on we learned that Osip Dymov was in America. In the very same evening Leonid Dobronravov and me were sitting in the garden of the August Gathering Assembly, listening to music and conducting a quick, joyful and unburden talk, the first among others and the most thoughtless of them. The more often we met the more serious our conversation became. I started to write for newspaper 'Наше Слово' (Our Word), Dobronravov also changed over for it, we got inseparables, I liked Dobronravov. He was gifted.*[20]

At first sight, there is nothing in common with the object of the memoir, L. Dobronravov, and Pil'sky as the central figure there. However, the story proceeds as a detailed description of life and activities of this *gifted writer, amiable interlocutor, companion* for Pil'sky's exilic evenings[21].

The memoir necrology *Петр Петрович Потемкин* was written according to a similar design. Here Pil'sky connects his own biography with that of the object of recollections:

> *We last met in Bessarabia and lived there for a year. Potemkin wrote for local papers*[22]*. He did that unwillingly. He slathered his articles. He was a gifted poet, however, this causerie prose condemned his weakness, the articles revealed the other traits of his personality – his inactivity, his shiftlessness and maybe laxity. [..] Of course, I remember well that recent year 1920 – 1921 in Chisinau and our work together for the newspaper, and our everyday meetings, and his verses, and fugitive flat, his family and his newborn daughter Irka, his darling child who made the young father happy touchingly enraptured him by resemblance with him.*[23]

Pil'sky wrote memoirs-necrologies not only as reaction to death', but also to death-obits. As concerns the necrology to Arkadiy Averchenko, it is striking that the first reaction and the necrology for the first death-obit of the humorist are very similar not in content, but in reaction: both of them have very few memoir features. The personality of Averchenko is in the foreground in terms of his nature, his thoughts as well as the characteristic

traits of the humorist's creative work. Nevertheless, a memoir layer is present in them, at least tangentially related to the deceased friend: *I remember well as during the war on all the tables in hospitals I saw his books and booklets published by 'Новый Сатирикон' (The New Satyricon)*[24], in the first edition, but even in a year one can see the same, more detailed episode:

> *It happened in the war time. The hospital for Kiev's nobility was packed by the wounded to the utmost. The Russian Army was retreating from the Carpathians then. Those were hot wearying southern days. None was in the mood for reading books. They were agitating events. Everybody was leafing through newspapers. However, there were no tables or bed where you could not see Averchenko's works. Even here he was a comforter in times of our personal and historical grief.*[25]

It ought to be noted that the first death-obit of Averchenko was followed by two materials of Pil'sky, essentially different from the point of view of memoir writing. In Reval's variant (the last mentioned abstract) Pil'sky basically pays attention to the characteristics of Averchenko as a person and humorist. In Riga newspaper *Сегодня* (Today), on the occasion of his friend's death, he published the article *Averchenko in Estonia. (To his death-obit)*[26], where a more extensive memoir frame is drawn: along with the Estonian episode in Riga article, he more precisely speaks about their pre-revolutionary meetings.

Here is another example concerning Averchenko, which may be in equal measure interpreted as both a memoir-necrology and memoirs 'apropos...'. In 1931, in Paris, the publication of the magazine *Satirikon* (The Satyricon) was resumed (28 numbers issued), and on this occasion (the first number came out on 4 April) Pil'sky wrote Averchenko's death-obit. There are lots of recollections, e.g. their first meeting in 1906 at the editorial board of *Свободные Мысли* (Free Thoughts), regular meetings at the editorial and restaurants, walks around Saint-Petersburg. He also writes about the creation of *Satirikon*, the split among the editorial board, etc. A lot of facts, of course, have migrated from the earlier recollections: the episode with hospital is repeated, it is told once again about Averchenko in Reval, etc., but time after time more emphasis is placed on the part of proper memoirs, as *days pass by, the grief dims, the time of cold evaluation is coming*[27].

As it was mentioned before, memoir inclusions as a rule appear in his criticism and other works 'apropos...', sometimes in memoirs-necrologies and in memoirs-portraits. From the compositional point of view, these inclusions play different roles: mostly being a digression from the main topic – analysis of one or another writing/publication – they always emphasize Pil'sky's presence in the destiny of some or other litterateur.

For instance, in one of the literary review articles collected under the title *The Scraps Down the Wind*, Pil'sky wonders why soviet critics in the magazine *Новый Мир* (The New World) suddenly went into rhapsodies *in honor, compliment, to the glory of him, the same Eduard Bagritsky*; to their indignation, he writes about his own role in discovering the poet:

> *I first saw him in the very evening [..] when on my call a horde of local poets got together in 'Odessa Literary-Artistic Club' [..]. After that I lost Bagritsky from my sight. Time passed. In five years, in 1919 – flinging up my heels from Petersburg via Kiev I turned out to be in Odessa and meet Bagritsky. He was a chap in all glory already; although he claimed to be a conquistador, he had in fact a soft spot for Bolshevism or plainly for a fine scandal.*[28]

Having bared his heart Pil'sky proceeds with the analysis of the Soviet literature.

The episode with Bagritsky is not the only inclusion in the article: it also ends with memoirs where Pil'sky compares the circumstances of the literature of the first Russian revolution and those of modern Soviet literature:

> *I wrote then: – Everybody got married. Husbands and wives, friends and strangers, fathers and daughters, brothers and sisters. Now, sentenced to odious joys, a grandmother is next on duty. Observing the sexual flow in the Soviet literature now, I think that once escaped grandmother won't avoid her destiny...*[29]

Memoir inclusions in the articles 'apropos...' often turned out to be multi-layered. Hence, having read *The Journal* by Valery Bryusov published in Moscow in 1927, Pil'sky started reviewing the book:

> *I closed the book – and the recollections flooded over. In a fast cut of familiar faces old acquaintance came back with burning clarity, light pages of the first literary fun and dreams turned over, a crowd of friends went swinging like leaves on a living tree of life.*[30]

The first inclusions are his memoirs about high school literary parties arranged in the flat of Bryusov's father. The next memoir layer of the article is revealed by Pil'sky's recollections about Nikolai Gumilev and his duel with Maximilian Voloshin[31]. They were caused by the fact that Bryusov wrote in *The Journal* that Gumilev's bad teeth[32] left a bad taste in his mouth. This fact appeared also in Pil'sky's article *The Two Spaniards*[33] devoted to the duel of the two poets and published in *Одесские Новости* (Odessa News): *neurasthenic young man, hardly with teeth, I suppose, without hair*. As Pil'sky writes in this article, Gumilev never forgave him this bite[34].

As Pil'sky was not a spectator of the duel (he reveals this in another memoir-portrait, *Gumilev's Fate. To His 15th Death-Obit*[35], introducing the story of the duel by an oblique statement: *They said that the immediate cause of their duel was some gossip*), he could have heard of it either from a participant of the event or from whatever third parties. Therefore he chose to describe in his memoirs a generally known episode instead of his own recollections.

The episode of the duel between Gumilev and Voloshin is depicted in all Pil'sky's articles devoted to the poet. For example, he started the article *Gumilev's Devotion and Duel*[36] from afar. He employed himself as a rare witness of the events connected to Gumilev's meeting in Paris with Cherubina de Gabriak:

> *In that distant evening when I first saw Gumilev with top hat on. He started to wear top hats in Paris that he probably visited in 1906 or 1907. Strictly speaking, my story known to few people besides me starts here. In Paris he met Elisaveta Ivanovna G-va*[37]*, a limped girl with wonderful black eyes. [..] Gumilev got mashed on; Elisaveta Ivanovna G-va could not love back, so the poet went back to Petersburg. However, by some quirk of fate they started to date here. The issue of 'The Apollon' (The Apollo) was being expected, 'Академия Стиха' (The Academy of Verse) was appearing in which Vyacheslav Ivanov and Maximilian Voloshin were to give lectures on poetry and versification art, Valery Bryusov himself was awaited from Moscow. There it happens once. The modest girl that Gumilev met once in Paris turned to open up the gift. A small series of poems read in a narrow circle of friends and acquaintance deeply amazed the audience. [..] So, a mischievous scheme came up. It was decided to send the poems to the editorial of 'The Apollon' on behalf of a*

> *mysterious stranger. [..] Because of Cherubina de Gabriak he clashed with Maximilian Voloshin. Apprentice poetess should have justly considered him a godfather in literature. Gumilev kindled. He miss-stepped or got awkward somehow, which caused Voloshin's straightforward and sore affront. So Gumilev demanded satisfaction from him.*[38]

Memoirs 'apropos...' often appeared on the occasion of anniversaries. They are not considerably different from memoirs-necrologies and memoirs-portrait in structure as they provide the same 'looking back'. Memoirs always begin with an introduction stating the cause of the matter (sometimes in a subtitle, in some cases in the first lines of the article or in the first abstract, regardless of its length) followed by the character reference, a passage of recollections, and only after that came a review of the creation of the respective hero.

In this kind of memoirs, Pil'sky tries to emphasize how long he has known the regarded artist. Hence, in the article devoted to the 25th anniversary of Osip Dymov's career, he wrote:

> *I remember him to be very young. His first lines appeared in the 'Театр и искусство' (The Theatre and Art). He was a secretary of the editorial board there, published short reviews, but his first three stories we also read there, devoted to theatrical life as well... And later we worked together for the 'Биржевые Ведомости' (The Stock Journal). Here I got to know Dymov better and immediately felt his narcissism and desire to be fancied.*[39]

Or another instance in the article devoted to the 35th anniversary of Alexander Kuprin's literary career[40]:

> *Our first meeting happened at a literary supper. I think they are called dinners. It was freak by the belletrists. [..] His story 'At the Circus' had been just published in the 'Мир Божий' then, he was the author of the first volume of The Stories published by popular publishers 'Знание' (The Knowledge), he was spoken about, he was in the limelight, and being not loudly-known by vast reading audience he was held in firm repute of a gifted young writer.*

Apart from the anniversary occasion, articles and books by other writers were reflected in Pil'sky's memoirs. In such cases, memoirs in the articles occur either as inclusions (see cited above *The Lonely / Odinokii*) or as memoirs proper. For example, the memoir article about Leonid Andreyev *The Luminous Man* appeared after publishing *The Book about Leonid Andreyev. Memoirs by M. Gorky, K. Chukovsky, A. Blok, Georgi Chulkov, Bor. Zaitsev, N. Teleshov, Yevg. Zamiatin, Andrei Belyi. Grezhebin's Publishers* (1922). In this article, Pil'sky describes 'his' Andreyev whom he met at the beginning of his literary career:

> *We first met in 1901 in Moscow daily 'Курьер' (The Courier) [..] I clearly remember the light day in April, the sun brightly floating the spacious room through big windows, and him – young Andreyev, having just entered in a tight-fitting coat, high boots, with dramatically tossed head. The fame was coming to him, however, had not yet come*[41]

He perceived Andreyev in two ways – as a genius and as *a person, who understands nothing*.

Some of Pil'sky's memoirs can be called 'collective', which describe the everyday life of Russia of olden times, while there are also 'private' ones, where Pil'sky depicts

the events of his personal life. Transition from the 'collective' to 'private' memory occurs, e.g. in his article *The Death of the Ballerina* written before the Easter of 1926. He begins the article as follows: *In Russia I last celebrated Easter in 1918. It was in Petersburg. Then I left for Hetman's Ukraine...* Then Pil'sky depicts the starving Ukraine, where they *issued a quarter of pound of bread. It was greenish. It was said to be baked from the peas that the Greeks fed their mules with. It became worse every day*. After some lyrical digression devoted to spring flowers and *sparkling southern spring*, Pil'sky passes over to his own recollections about the occasion when he had to deliver a lecture in *Kiev's Mobile Theatre*.[42]

> *Like other retrospective genres memoir writing refers to available documents of the time, like any piece of memoirs prose memoirs rely on the living author's evidence which acquire the status of an original document.*[43]

In such a case, the use of letters, journals, commentaries, etc. renders to memoirs more credibility. From a source of information they are turned into a source of memoirs. Such sources are often used by Pil'sky. In the memoir-necrology dedicated to L. Dobronravov, he refers to a fragment of the letter where the latter wrote about his recent work little known to a wider audience:

> *Thanks to 'Родная Земля' (The Dear Land), – Leonid Dobronravov told me in the letter, – I can work on the novel about Pobedonostsev, the church, cloisters, pontiffs, dignitaries, ladies, unfrocked priests, tradeswomen, students, etc. [..] I have printed three fragments, and I am sending them to you. Write me about them! The novel comes out to be big, two volumes, 600 pages. I am writing and rewriting, correcting, – I am taking my time.*[44]

The other example is from M. Pervukhin's letter:

> *With grief and late regrets he recollected this period in his letter to me which he wrote three years ago. – I remember, – Pervukhin wrote, – that publisher Sytin assigned publishing one of holding a hot pace magazine – 25 000 of circulation! – to some T., a retired director of a high school for girls. This old school-dame declared: 'We do not need ingenious things.' In two years the magazine got killed: the circulation from 25 thousand went down to 10.*[45]

There are also excerpts from letters by Kuprin, Averchenko and other writers. Beside letters, Pil'sky also uses fragments from published journals and memoirs of the writers and playwrights he described: Bryusov, Gippius, Rozanov, Yasinsky, etc.

Anecdotes or stories told by other people, the reality of which Pil'sky would never venture to affirm, also served as the material and sources for memoirs. Such an example appears in the article on Vassily Rozanov *The Person without Counterpart*:

> *I remember in Petersburg I was told about Rozanov, maybe an anecdote, maybe a true incident. He brought an article to the conservative 'Русский вестник' (The Russian Herald). It was accepted. Rozanov sent another one. In the editorial they lifted their hands in dismay. Rozanov was said: – Vassily Vasil'yevich! You must have mistaken. Bring this article to some liberal magazine. So he brought. The article was accepted. Some time later he brought another one. Now in the liberal editorial they told him: – It is not for us, Vassily Vasil'yevich! With this article you should go to conservative 'The Russian Herald'. So Rozanov got off, delivered, was accepted, and so on and so forth. Megillah. I say again: the story must be anecdotic. However,*

> *it is very typical for Rozanov. Everybody considered him this kind of person, because he never 'followed the crowd'.*[46]

Most of his memoir portraits of artists turn to be less subjective. As a rule, Pil'sky recalls actors from the auditorium keeping in memory their portraits or photographs; he remembers and describes their roles:

> *She is presented the keys of mystery in the antique (nymph Echo), and in secret and mysterious romance ('The Phantom of Rose'), and in affectedly skittish roles created by the 18th century of nice conventions, and in fairy country of fantasy, and in pasticcio (Armida), as well as in typifications of Russian fairy-tails, and in creations of Oriental seeings, – in 'Scheherezade', in 'Tamara', in 'Islameya', in Egyptian Nights. Everywhere she is an inimitable actress*[47]*; especially memorable roles that arise before us are his Ruy Blas, Hamlet, Sheilok and especially Chatsky. It is amazing and remarkable: the admirer of pathos, personal beauty, grand pose, Yuzhin-Sumbatov enacted hero of the comedy by Griboyedov not as an ardent hero, but as a highly self-restrained character, rather clever than in love, considerate but not passionate, – he turned to be an insulted person, but not a rebellious young man.*[48]

Only sometimes does he glimpse backstage almost never entering actors' dressing rooms. He never wrote about his acquaintances[49], common dining; and even personal meetings are mentioned extremely seldom, although he knew quite a lot of these people personally or through his wife, actress E. S. Kuznetsova.

In conclusion it could be stated that Pil'sky's memoirs are basically 'collective' biographies built up against the background of the Russian literary and theatre world of the first half of the 20th century. Due to their scope, his memoirs are worth further studying and publishing in a separate volume in full measure.

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[1] The article was written in the network of the Estonian Scientific Fond's Grant No SF013126f08.

[2] *Краткая Литературная Энциклопедия.* Т. 4. Москва, 1967. – с. 759.

[3] It should be mentioned that there are few recollections which got such a genre definition by the author. In 1920 – 1940 he published not more than twenty texts of a similar nature in the Estonian and Latvian press. All other examples of memoir writing one should look for in his other publications, whatever journalistic genre they refer to.

[4] Трубников П. [Пильский П.] Влечение сердца. / *Наша газета* № 53, 24.05.1927. – с. 2.

[5] One can consider the books *The Novel with Theatre* and *The Dimmed World* published by P. Pil'sky in Riga in 1929 as a kind of memoirs. In the two books he republished a selection of his newspaper articles about the literature and theatre world and its representatives. If his articles about writers in fact mostly resemble the memoirs, then the articles about the theatre and the men are still rather criticism than memoirs.

[6] E. S. Kuznetsova got her drama education at the Imperial Drama School in the course of V. N. Davydov, she graduated from it in 1910 (see the class photograph in: *Театр и искусство* / Theatre and Art). 1910. № 32. – с. 599). Being a student she signed her first contract with *Одесский Городской Театр* (Odessa Town Theatre) under the guidance of M. F. Bagrov. After having graduated she worked in Kiev, Odessa. She emigrated with her husband P. Pil'sky via South of Russia. In 1921 she appeared in Riga, then in Tallinn where she started to work for the local Russian theatre. She also worked in Riga in *Русская Драма* (Russian Drama Theatre). In 1944 she emigrated for the second time in her life, via German DP camps to the USA.

[7] To recap, P. M. Pil'sky died in Riga on 21 December, 1941 in the period of German occupation. Before, in May 1940 he experienced a cerebral thrombosis and got abed. Later on, after the establishment of the Soviet power in Latvia, his flat was searched by KGB, all his literary archives were confiscated. Only his disease saved him from being arrested.

[8] Абызов Ю. Петр Пильский. Литературные края. Вступительная статья, in: *Балтийский Архив. Русская культура в Прибалтике. Материалы к истории. Материалы к общественной жизни. Литература и искусство. Мемуары.* Т. 4. Рига: Даугава, 1999. – с. 237.
[9] Пильский П. Куприн в России. Воспоминания. / *Сегодня* № 174, 28.06.1937. – с. 2.
[10] In 1923 in the article *The Luminous Man* (Блестящий человек. / *Последние известия* № 6, 8.01.1923. – с. 2–3), Pil'sky indicates 1915 – 1917 as the years of his co-operation with L. Andreyev in the *Русская Воля* (The Russian Will). It has to be pointed that in 1915 Pil'sky could not be an active member of the newspaper, as before the spring of 1916, i.e. before being wounded, he was at Poland front, so he could only send his military correspondence or publish stories about the war in this and some other newspapers.
[11] Пильский П. Ночные страхи фантаста. / *Сегодня* № 249, 4.11.1926. – с. 2.
[12] Пильский П. Дорошевич. / *Сегодня*. № 53, 5.03.1922. – с. 2.
[13] IRLI. F. 377. Op. 7. Ed. hr. 2836.
[14] Пильский П. Петр Пильский. О себе, in: *Гримасы кисти и пера*. / Сост. В.В. Гадалин. Рига: Литература. – с. 258.
[15] They are the sort of memoirs which most often get the author's genre definition of 'memoirs/ recollections'.
[16] Пильский П. Петлюра. / *Сегодня* № 117а, 31.05.1926. – с. 2.
[17] Пильский П. Мужик. / *Последние известия* № 245, 22.10.1922. – с. 2.
[18] Newspaper *Bessarabia* published in the period of 1919 – 1923 in Chisinau is meant.
[19] It is interesting that in a later republication of the same article, although in short-hand form, in book *The Dimmed World* (1929) Pil'sky uses an impersonal cryptonym NN instead of O. Dymov's name.
[20] Пильский П. Затаенный мечтатель. Памяти Леонида Добронравова. / *Сегодня* № 123, 6.06.1926. – с. 3.
[21] Ibid.
[22] It is known that in the newspaper *Бухарестские новости* (The Bucharest News) P. Potemkin published his political satires.
[23] Пильский П. Петр Петрович Потемкин. / *Сегодня* № 245, 30.10.1926. – с. 3.
[24] Пильский П. Аверченко. / *Сегодня* № 60, 15.03.1925. – с. 3.
[25] Пильский П. А. Т. Аверченко. 12 марта 1925 года. / *Последние известия* № 57, 12.03.1926. – с. 3.
[26] Пильский П. Аверченко в Эстонии. (К годовщине смерти). / *Сегодня* № 65, 21.03.1926. – с. 6.
[27] Пильский П. А. Т. Аверченко. 12 марта 1925 года. / *Последние известия* № 57, 12.03.1926. – с. 3.
[28] Пильский П. Клочки по ветру. / *Сегодня* № 246, 30.10.1927. – с. 11.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Пильский П. Одинокий. / *Сегодня* № 176, 10.08.1927. – с. 2.
[31] The duel took place in the borough Novaya Derevnya not far from the well-known Chyornaya Rechka on Sunday, 22nd November 1909. See: Полушин В. *Николай Гумилев. Жизнь расстрелянного поэта.* Москва: Молодая гвардия, 2006. See also article: Пильский П. Увлечение и дуэль Гумилева. / *Сегодня вечером* №195, 2.09.1926. – с. 3.
[32] On 15th May 1907 when Gumilev got acquainted to Bryusov in the latter's flat, Bryusov jotted in his journal: N. *Gumilev came in Moscow. He is very nice in his dress, however his bad teeth create aftertaste*. (Cited by: Гумилев Н. С. *Неизданные стихи и письма*. YMCA-Press, 1980. – с. 163.).
[33] Pil'sky's article *The Two Spaniards* was published on 25th November 1909 in the newspaper *Одесские новости* (The Odessa News). He wrote in the article: *Gumilev is [..] a neurasthenic slanting young man, hardly with teeth, I suppose, without hair*. (Cited by: Тименчик Р. *Остров искусства. Биографическая новелла в документах.* http://www.akhmatova.org/articles/timenchik4.htm).
[34] See: Пильский П. Одинокий. / *Сегодня* № 176, 10.08.1927. – с. 2–3.
[35] Пильский П. Рок Гумилева. К 15-летию со дня его смерти. / *Сегодня* № 251, 11.09.1936. – с. 3.

[36] Пильский П. Увлечение и дуэль Гумилева. / *Сегодня вечером* №195, 2.09.1926. – с. 3.
[37] So, here Pil'sky, in spite of M. Aldanov's words about his 'phenomenal memory', got mistaken: Elisaveta Ivanovna Vasil'eva (nee Dmitrieva) could not be 'G-va'. Besides, in 1936 in the article *Gumilev's Fate. To His 15th Death-Day* he even writes out her name – Grigor'eva, which she never has had.
[38] Пильский П. Увлечение и дуэль Гумилева. / *Сегодня вечером* №195, 2.09.1926. – с. 3.
[39] Пильский П. Человек с нюхом. По случаю юбилея Осипа Дымова. / *Сегодня* № 36, 15.02.1927. – с. 2.
[40] Пильский П. А. И. Куприн. К 35-летию литературной деятельности. 1889 – 20/XII – 1924. / *Сегодня* № 291. 21.12.1924. – с. 9. It has to be noticed that on this data it is impossible to find out when exactly they met first: 1. Story by A. Kuprin *At the Circus* was published in the *Мир Божий*. № 1, 1902; 2. Volume *The Stories* was issued by publishers *Знамя* (The Banner) in 1903.
[41] Пильский П. Блестящий человек. / *Последние известия* № 6, 8.01.1923. – с. 2–3.
[42] Пильский П. Смерть балерины. / *Сегодня* № 75, 4.04.1926. – с. 5.
[43] Симонова Т. Г. *Мемуарная проза русских писателей XX века: поэтика и типология жанра*. Гродно, 2002. – с. 25.
[44] Пильский П. Затаенний мечтатель. Памяти Леонида Добронравова. / *Сегодня* № 123, 6.06.1926. – с. 3.
[45] Пильский П. М. К. Первукшин и его прекрасная дама. / *Сегодня* № 4, 4.01.1929. – с. 2. In the necrology *P. M. Pervukhin died*, meaning probably the same event of Pervukhin's life, Pil'sky wrote: *About 17 years ago in a monthly for children published by I. D. Sytin, he remarkably succeeded and created to the magazine an exceptional success, which immediately vanished as soon as Pervukhin left the editorial, when two schoolmistresses chaired the staff and started sickly-sweet 'Розовая Библиотека' (Bibliothèque rose), liquored the magazine with goody, tendentious and historical spirit, and Pervukhin's brainchild faded at once* (П. П. [Пильский П.] Умер М. К. Первукшин. / *Сегодня* № 2, 2.01.1929. – с. 2). It has to be noticed that *Bibliothèque rose* was a popular series of books for children in the 19th century, established in France in 1857. Such a series in Russia was first started by M. O. Wolf. However, it is difficult to say now which magazine is mentioned by Pil'sky.
[46] Пильский П. Человек без двойника. / *Последние известия* № 165, 23.07.1925. – с. 2–3.
[47] Пильский П. Тамара Карсавина. К гастролям ее в Риге. / *Сегодня* № 67, 24.03.1925. – с. 7.
[48] РОЛ. [Пильский П.] А. И. Сумбатов-Южин. / *Сегодня* № 209, 17.09.1922. – с. 3.
[49] The advertising article about N. V. Plevitskaya before her shows in Estonia in 1922 Pil'sky prefaced with: *I know her for a long time* and immediately makes allowance typical of drama memoirs – *it means: I have been admiring* (П. П-ский. [Пильский П.] Н. В. Плевитская. / *Последние известия* № 257, 5.11.1922. – с. 3.)

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Inga Stepukonienė

BALTIC PROSE IN THE 1990s: THE EMERGENCE OF 'AUTHENTIC HISTORICISM'

Summary

Approximately since 1988, memoir and documentary literature has become especially extensive in Lithuanian and Latvian literature: it becomes important for the authors to depict the things that are experienced, that are held in the consciousness but that were not possible to publish because of censorship. In addition to authentic memoirs, documentary novel becomes important at this time, as it recreates real facts and dramatic events. The plots are mainly related to the war and post-war experiences, the authors document their authentic experiences. The novels generalize the dramatic situation of a person: harmonious life destroyed by historical events, loss of home, family, social status, former functions, group identity, collective pride, experiences of massive killing, forced deportations, famine, reflections about the blurred boundary between the good and the bad, the feeling of identity crisis, loneliness and helplessness. Trauma is generalized as the most common person's experience in the 20th century.

Key-words: documentary Lithuanian and Latvian novel, authentic historicism, experience of a trauma

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A significant feature of Baltic literature in the 20th century is the writers' attempt to recreate an authentic experience through individual experience, emphasizing not only the history but also the psychological reality itself, the marks of the past in a person's consciousness. It is possible to maintain that Lithuanian and Latvian prose is moving towards the direction of 'authentic' historicism as remarkably as it never did before. At the beginning of the 1990s, memoir prose and documentary novel flourished. *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros* (Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea) by Dalia Grinkevičiūtė, *Ešalonai* (Eshelons) by Antanina Garmutė, *Be kaltės* (Without any Fault) by Valentinas Gustainis, *Trys sąsiuviniai* (Three Notebooks) by Ojars Mednis and the works by other authors are tragic memories about Soviet forced labour camps in Siberia, repressions in Lithuania and Latvia after WWII and partisan fighting were probably the most popular books during this period. At that time, especially in Latvian literature, one can notice the whole bunch of documentary novels, depicting personal experience expressed in the artistic form: the novels *Ekshumacija* (Exhumation, 1990) and *Košmarų laikas* (Time of Nightmares, 1993) by Anita Liepa, *Latvių karininkas Nr. 35473* (Latvian officer No. 35473, 1990) by Roberts Gabris, *Vėlių upės krantuos* (At the Banks of the River of Souls, 1991) by Melanija Vanaga, *Pusryčiai šiaurėje* (Breakfast in the North, 1992) by Valentins Jakobsons, *Šauksmas iš dangaus* (Yell from the Sky, 1994) by Egils Lukjanskis and its follow-up *Ašaros iš dangaus* (Tears from Heaven, 1997), *Kas apverks jų dalią* (Who

will Mourn their Destiny, 1992) by Vincas Adomėnas, *Penktas: nežudyk* (Fifth: Don't Kill, 1994) by Birutė Pečiokaitė, etc. The focus in these novels is authentic experiences, painful reflection by the subject, self-destruction caused by historical havoc. These works may be unified under one broad, traumatic and collective memory discourse, which represents a painful period of Lithuanians and Latvians in the 20th century. At this time, similarly to memoir prose, documentary novel concentrates on the new topic of deportation, which, according to Petras Bražėnas, had been banned by censorship and other state institutions, almost untouched publicly and alive only in the memories and dreams of the people who underwent unbearable trials. Therefore, with the winds of Rebirth, people wanted to reveal the truth, which was hidden and persecuted for a long time, to disclose the tragedy measure of these countries and to record the most terrible events and phenomena, to pay the last respect for those who did not come back and to verify those qualities of the nation that help to preserve and protect humanism even during the most inhuman conditions.[1] A Lithuanian and Latvian documentary novel is grounded on the live experience of the authors, as they seek to look into their true selves, to leave something from their being, according to Vytautas Kubilius, *a verbal legend of their 'I,' created from the changing moments of their being*.[2] The creators of these novels are the people who followed the long Golgotha ways and drank the bitter chalice of deportation and forced labour camps. A documentary novel makes the history, which is already known, more concrete and personal, adds the features of personal experience. In these works, the images of the past melt because of artistic imagination, memories and diary pages written during those austere days revive, as well as extracts from letters, document citations and pieces of news from the newspapers. Different fragments are joined, the content and the narrator's tone is determined by the person's self-awareness, *the self-retrospection and self-judgement covering the wholeness of life*[3]. Individual sensation and evaluation of the world, individual existential reflection of the individual, is at the centre of attention. It should be emphasized that the authors of these novels are professional litterateurs, experienced creators who published some fiction works and who can feel the nuances of style and artistic language. The experience of the personal and collective trauma and essential structure violation are the reflection of the usual social and cultural order breakdown, the sudden cultural premises – values, group identity, experiences of collective pride, massive massacre, forced deportation, famine, contact with risk society – criminalists, boundaries between order and chaos, sacredness and secularity, diminishing of goodness and evil reflection, the understanding of guilt, its acceptance and displacement, transfer, experience of forgiveness and hatred, identity crisis feeling, 'forgetting' the trauma, negation and the memory of the generation, finally, a subtle representation of events or situations. All these marks allowed for the authors of documentary novel to express the specificity of the trauma, the discourse of its problematic, to emphasize its psychological, social and cultural aspects. According to Irena Šutinienė,

> *The trauma seems to be an concurrent part and mark of the world-view of the people who lived in the second half of the 20th century: the wars and massive massacre of this period transformed the optimistic world-view of modernism and the scenario of history progress. In addition to the saying by Tomas Adorno, describing the person's feelings in the presence of traumas ('It is impossible to write poetry after Auswitz'), we can remember a strophe by the Lithuanian poet, who parallels both world-views: 'Die Welt is Traum/pasaulis yra trauma' [The world is a trauma].*[4]

According to Anita Rožkalne, 'a small person' who is undergoing an existential trauma is in the centre of a documentary novel. S/he experiences the pressure of an indifferent and monolithic history, as well as is forced to live his/her life in the situation where somebody else makes the decisions and determines the most important aspects of being. The person cannot change anything, except the simplest and the slightest things of his/her personal life. S/he is forced to take part in the activities that he/she does not want to, to behave as s/he does not want to and to live according to the order that is not acceptable.[5] The only thing that remains is stoicism, the strength of one's soul, the objective to survive at any circumstances. According to the scholar, the opposition of different ideologies, the fight between different authorities is understood as the feeling of absolute alienation, distancing from humanism, despite the fact which side the person supports.[6] The topics of the works, plots and characters are very close. Brutal foreigners invade the quiet and harmonious life of the nation, destroy all former life background and values, kill, separate families, deport people in cattle wagons, make them undergo terrible experiences in forced labour camps and deportation places. According to Bražėnas, the person is cranked in the quern against his/her will unable to resist, preserving the identity with vital efforts, as s/he is fed with a warm wave of memories. The disability to free, the degradation around and the motives of steadfast humanity are the most important aspects of Lithuanian and Latvian documentary novel at the time.

Experience of the country's trauma

One of the most notable Latvian documentary novels at the time is *Ekshumacija. Dabar vėl grįžtu į savo Tėvynę* (Exhumation. Now I'm Coming back to my Homeland). The destiny of this novel, as well as its author, is extraordinary: because of historical circumstances, it was rewritten five times and only the last version appeared in the readers' hands. The first version was burned by relatives, the second and the third were taken by Soviet searchers, the fourth one was gnawed by mice and the fifth was the one, for which the material was collected for 45 years. In the centre of the novel, there is a biography of a woman, the author herself, who documents the tragic destiny of Latvian officers during the years of Soviet occupation, as well as the history of the whole Latvian intelligentsia and the events experienced by it. A. Liepa records the history of a national group, a community. As it is similar for many novels of this time, the history is revealed by depicting the destiny of one family: its plot is based on the artistic chronicle of Latvians Sondor from the first decades of the 20th century till the end of the century: the echoes of the revolution (1905) in the family, WWI, which made them leave home, wandering in Russian cities, harmonious family life in independent Lithuania, Russian occupation. The text is full of different kinds of elements: the colours of foreign countries where the characters have to live, the facts, that represent the spirit and the tension f the time. The panorama of historical time is focused by introspective means, as the novel is told from 'I' perspective. The novel, which is based on the author's diaries, includes precise details about the environment and time, it has the features of a new Latvian novel, i.e. realistic autobiographicity and deep emotional empathy.

The title of the novel, Exhumation is taken from a posthumous ritual, burial of the corpse. The word has a generalizing effect, as the author tells her biography which is 'made to die': deportation, prison, suffering and deaths of acquaintances. However, the

past is dug again: the events are remembered and all the past of the country is generalized because the trauma is too big to be forgotten. As it is common for the documentary and memoir prose of this time, the author tells about the historical time, its dramatic presence in people's destinies. The novel is developed on two planes: the story of Aleksandrs and Adolfs, the author's relatives (mother's brothers), which is represented from a longer distance in time and from the time and space perspective and the impressive personal experience by the author. Aleksandrs and Adolfs are two great and proud brothers, who become the centre of attention in the family. Anga, who is extremely talented and finished high school with the best results and got a golden medal, gets the possibility to study in any Russian university, even though he is not a gentleman. After graduating from Russian Nikolai War Academy, he becomes a hero: for leading the battles during WWII, he is awarded the medal of St Vladimir, later he is awarded with the highest award in the Russian Empire, the arm by St George, or a golden sward. According to the imperator order, he became a noble, then a general, the door of the Winter palace opens for him, nobility salons wait for him. His brother Adolfs also chooses an officer's profession. However, historical havoc destroys family harmony and the lives of outstanding, yet simple people: Latvian officers are shot in Russia, Aleksandrs was among them, the father of the family, daughter Emma and the mother's brother die in a foreign city, Latvian officers are arrested and deported to Siberia by the occupational Russian army; this way Adolfs ends in the cattle wagon. The story of the family is a certain prism, reflecting the tragic process of history.

After loosing her uncles, the character of the novel decides to find one of them in Siberia; therefore, the detailed picture of the family history is changed into a personal projection of the author of the novel, Nameda. The spiritual culture formed by the nation, traditions, love for one's relatives are those value measurements that influence the person's decision to perform dangerous tasks: a twenty-year-old girl goes by train to Siberia and writes a diary in the evenings in hotels; because of that a Russian girl, who lives together, denounces her to the authorities. Nameda is arrested, goes to prison, where she spends almost nine years. Despite the trials, she continues searching for her beloved relative, as this bond and feelings to the nation are stronger than any fear. The uncle is already dead, but there are his, as well as other relatives' graves. It is very important for a Latvian to put a wreath of flowers from the native land and to record everything to one's memory book. This way the novel emphasizes the essential topic, national memory.

The oppositions of the native country, its culture, mentality, values and ideology and the opposite foreign culture are very clear. They become ethic, moral categories, emphasizing the opposition of violence and morality, and influence the most subtle connections in the novel. Much attention is paid to the documentation of the environment in Siberia: descriptions of corrective labour camps and scenery, the most important events that took part there, i.e. for the history of the nation, which developed in this corner of the world. The diary contains all impressions of this dramatic journey, the book depicts the people who were imprisoned for many years in the corrective labour camps, records the facts from Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian torment history, as well as the details from the revolt in Norilsk corrective labour camp. Nameda writes her diary intensively, which is like a chronicle; this way she continues her Latvian, European spiritual culture and the position of a free inside, respectable and straight person, the traits that

were common for most of her countrymen condemned to destruction. This position expresses her love for her relatives, faithfulness to her country and respect to its torment. This is emphasized by the fact that she seeks to record everything what happened in Siberia as accurately as possible, without omitting any events, facts, fragments, names or painful histories, understanding that all these things are a special and unforgettable page in the history of the country. It is a brave attempt to record the experience of the country trauma in great detail, to pay a special attention to the memory of the country, with the desire to leave all these experiences as a testimony for future generations. The position of the author demonstrated resistance and steadfast spirit, as well as humanity and self-esteem at any conditions and circumstances. This is understood as behaviour, grounding the group identity of her nation.

Nameda attempts to reveal the trauma experienced by the nation through the destinies of many people; however, the most unique and probably the most intriguing one is her own destiny. The destiny of a brave, fearless and young girl who knows what kind of force she faces. The past and present events and processes of the nation form a strong character of the heroine. It is a challenge of a fragile girl to the terror of the century, the humiliation of the oppressors with the thing, which is the most precious one, the price of her life. There is no place for the feeling of a victim and self-humiliation, even though the person is helpless, forced to obey the orders of others and live the enforced life. Much more important things are the live stoicism and the desire to support others, to unite with the community, which does not surrender, to refresh the national memory, this way demonstrating the presence and dependence to another ideological and cultural narrative.

A different and distinctive model of national drama reflection is presented in the novel *Negandų metai* (The Years of Hardship, 1991) by Jonas Laucė. The work is full of external events and transfers the reader to terrifying years of war and post-war resistance. The author, similarly to Liepa, experienced the prisoner's destiny: he was sentenced for two years for an autobiographical novel in 1971. The novel cannot be published and has to wait in the drawers for its time, which comes only after twenty years. The novel impresses everybody with its horrific true. The author does not dramatize any collisions, does not overcolour, he only depicts the reality, which is known and true for a lot of people, openly, without any secret and reticence.

The cover of the book reflects its content in a meaningful way: a grim and wrinkled face of a leaning man reflects the dramatic experience of the main character Vytautas Norkus and his spiritual tension, as well as the concept of a prostrate, lonely and unhappy man. The experience of the man is extraordinary: the historical period destined him to appear in the most dramatic scenes of the period, to experience various terror: he serves in a German legion for a long and dramatic time, together with others fights in the Curonian battle, is taken by Russians, becomes a war captive and a refugee, later he becomes a leader of partisans, undergoes the perish of friends and separation with a beloved girl and finally the hardship in prison and deportation to Siberia. The story grounded on the personal experience of the author is full and colourful of events, facts, shocking dramas; it seems that it gives sense to the condition and experiences of a person, who happens to be in this chopper of history. The picture of a person here is very generalized, as it acquires symbolic meaning. The destiny and situation of a person from a small country is reconstructed: he is involved into the surge of historical events against his

will and is tossed in the historical tempests, appears on one or another side of barricades. History does not allow being an outsider, it forces to become an active participant of dramatic events, to feel a constant danger, to face death every day. Constant hopeless situations are in the center of attention. German and Russian occupation and the war are revealed from an officer's and sergeant's perspective: after entering self-defence and parapolice troops in order to earn money for studies, Vytautas becomes a soldier of a troop recruited by Germans and goes to the North front. This way, original and unknown experiences are reflected in Lithuanian prose, as well as the authenticity of events and facts that were almost unknown before and the conflicting sides of the 20th century that did not receive much attention.

The documentary aspect of the novel are revealed by its structural peculiarities: chronological order common to documentary narration, level telling, chronicle of events very closely related to the plot. From the past, the author chooses the most vivid facts, representing his and his countrymen's experience. The novel is comprised of three parts, three long stories about different encounters of the author and his nation with a brutal foreign force: the first part *Tricks of the Reaper* portrays the dramatic reality of Lithuanians who serve in the German legion; the second part *Puddles of Blood* depicts the complicated and horrific activities and destiny of partisans; the third part artistically reconstructs the Golgotha of the nation in Siberia. The changing space and time reflects the most important periods in the main character's life chronologically; he is also the centre axis in many events of the novel and the unifying frame.

The pictorial scenery common to the author is marked by the concrete contours of place and time in the documentary novel: the Lithuanians, who serve in the German legion, are transferred to the Latvian territory and serve in the frontier troops. Impressive Latvian landscape is depicted, life in villages, daily life of wealthy Latvian farmers, details of customs, which express the ethnographical colour of the time. In the German army, Vytautas meets a lot of Lithuanians; the author is interested in their biographies, events from their lives, dramatic destiny of each of them. One of the most remarkable moments in the novel by J. Laucė is the concept of 'big' and 'small' nations common to the postwar period, disdain of the 'big' nations to the 'small' ones and confrontation between them. This topic is revealed in the complicated space of war, and this creates the essential dramatic tension of the novel. The Lithuanians, who went to the war and to the German army without their will, live in constant fear and anxiety, they feel a constant trauma not only because of the war, which destroyed their ordinary lives, everyday threat to their lives, troublesome cold, humidity, wretched food, but also because of the mistrust in them in the German army and unceasing humiliation. German point of view towards Lithuanians is exceptionally arrogant, the Lithuanians are 'damn litauers' for the Germans, the author provides an authentic description of this relationship. He creates a suggestive picture of everyday life during the war: every day is full of terrible extremes, intrigues, moments of constant discord. In the period of time, the relationship between Lithuanians and Germans become the collision of a sudden drama: the battalion leader Vytautas Norkus receives an order to disarm Lithuanian soldiers. German soldiers rifle Lithuanians, choose their better things, arms, cartridges. The culmination of the situation is reached when the Germans choose a small group of Lithuanians, who are sentenced to fusillade by the court-martial, while others are imprisoned for several years in the concentration camp. The men have to die because they let take the Latvians, who came

from Riga or other places surrounded by Russians, and to bring them by boat to Sweden, as they wanted to run away there from the Bolsheviks. The boat used to come on agreed nights from Gotland island, which belonged to Sweden. Lithuanian soldiers did not disturb the boats to approach the bank and allowed the civil people to depart, while the refugees paid them in food. The Lithuanians were preparing to run away to Sweden themselves with the last refugees but did not succeed, as the Germans revealed their plans.

The tension explodes with an incredible cruelty: the authorities of the army decide that the guilty ones have to shot by battalion friends, Lithuanians themselves. Lithuanian officers are forced to obey the order and to choose the principals of the execution. The men shoot at their brothers-in-arms with their eyes closed, unable to look up.

The rendering of personal events and impressions is very lively, dynamic self-awareness of the narrator influences quick shift of scenes and the intensification of psychological drama. The novel concentrates on the dramatic destiny of the person, the problematic relationship between a person and a fierce reality, existential loneliness of a person in the horrific scene of history, the felling of absence of support. Every day of the war is full of deep tragedy, losses and sacrifices, every moment Norkus faces the touching experiences of one or another person. As the war continues, the trauma of the main character intensifies: the front moves forward, the group of Lithuanians becomes smaller, one after another men, already friends, leave the troop, while the Germans send new and new victims, who are taken away from their home by force. The victims are also very young boys, who are killed in Vytautas's eyes; therefore, the moments of fragmentary and short-lasting relationship change each other, leaving the author with deepening wounds in his heart. The possibility to feel any steadiness disappears and the only thing that remains is an anxious waiting for another day, which is also horrific and marked by new losses. The existential drama for Vytautas and for other Lithuanian soldiers is reinforced by the understanding of meaninglessness of the fight: after long and tragic fights in Latvian territory Lithuanians go to the first rows unwillingly in the Curonian battle not only because they are afraid to loose their lives, but also because they are also afraid to shoot other Lithuanians who fight in the first rows. Maybe they are the same Bolsheviks as we are Hitlerite – consider the men preparing for the battle. The chalice of suffering is overbrimmed by the dramatic end of the battles: during the crucial battles there is no help from the reverse, thus finally the radio announces Germany's capitulation. The writer reproduces their emotional reactions: Lithuanians are confused, unable to hide their despair and discontent, as they became the toys in the field of cruel and ruthless history. This time their destiny is of the slaves of Bolshevik who are hiding very near in the trenches.

The tragedy of the documentary novel by Laucė is determined by various and horrific personal experience, he portrays different and dramatic in their own way plains of historical reality. The experience in the German legion is changed by another authentic reality of a Russian war prisoner: spending nights in the scrubs on their own rags, famine, constant taunting by Russian soldiers. Drunk and spreeing because of the victory, they direct their emotions to the people who were fighting on the other side: stick them with knives, beat with fists, trample with boots. The second part of the novel is the continuing fight of the main character for survival, as he runs away from the Russians and chooses to become a partisan. Vytautas becomes partisan Šarūnas and organizes a group of men in the forest. He does not want fighting and shedding blood, does not have inner

imperatives for that, but he cannot live free. This way the author motivates and reveals the causes of this choice. He also reveals the breakdown in self-awareness caused by suffering, he looses earlier spiritual imperatives and starts protesting with everything what happened to him; therefore, the main character expresses a cold and indifferent relationship with the world, kills People Defence Platoons in a cruel and cold-blooded way, have irresponsible relationship with women. The daily life by a partisan is terrifying and unmerciful, full of deaths and horror.

Norkus is a certain hero in the novel: he achieves incredible victories during the period of fights, gets awards, rises in hierarchy. Both, in the German army and being a partisan during the Russian occupation he experiences the most terrifying cross-fires and survives. However, all this is external victories, trying to save his life, but it does not provide anything else, as his soul is agony, as it does not get any love, tenderness or harmony. This is even a more dreadful spiritual, inner death.

Total loneliness and alienation is faced when he comes back from Siberia. He does not get a job, he cannot register to live somewhere. The only place where he finds comfort after all terrible storms in his life is his parents' graves. There he prays, as his mother had taught him for the dead, kneels for some time, asks for help and goes away without knowing where to turn at the first crossroad. This metaphorical ending reflects the situation of many people at the time and verifies the most dramatic experiences of the nation.

The author created an impressive panoramic story based on subtle epic distance. Plenty of events instead of an independent action, the wish to cover as much material as possible influenced the fact that the plot of the novel is a story of events, not a character. The work lacks the precision of the main idea, a bit incoherent structure diminished its artistic attractiveness. Tragic destinies, the collapse of their beautiful life are the main tension in the novel; however, the events are not dramatized until the highest tragic point: the manner of depiction allows the reader to feel that the author tends to control his emotions and dignified wisdom and to cover them with external restraint. The revealed reality the novel *The Years of Harship* is a thrilling chronicle, emphasizing the tragic and disabled life of a small nation to maximum.

Other prose works also reveal the experienced trauma, similarly to Laucė. During this period, one of the most impressive Lithuanian works grounded on personal experience is the novel *Kas apverks jų dalią* (Who will Mourn their Destiny) by Vincas Adomėnas. The novel was written in 1956, in the Inta lager, and was published in 1992. In Lithuanian literature, it is the only novel from the lager in Siberia, which was written in the mine tunnels, lighting with a small mine lamp. It reveals the reality of Siberian lagers and post-war resistance fights. It was hidden in the gaps in the walls, in the labyrinths of the mine, its parts were secretly brought to Lithuania by the author's wife. The main ideological tendency is the dramatic situation of the people during this period, destinies of the people, the marks of terrible losses and trauma.

The novels by Anita Liepa, Jonas Laucė, Vincas Adomėnas, as well as other similar works by Lithuanian and Latvian writers, are significant chronicles of the century history, revealing not only facts but also human reality, without which the full view of the period is impossible. These are the works that discuss the most dramatic things in our history, which is even too live, the losses are too horrible to be able to be forgotten. There works is a clear verification that trauma is the most significant mark of the 20th century.

[1] Bražėnas P. Amžinam įšalui tirpstant. / *Pergalė* Nr. 4, 1990. – p. 181.
[2] Kubilius V. Kas yra autobiografija. / *Metai* Nr. 6, 1995. – p. 87.
[3] Ibid. – p. 88.
[4] Šutinienė I. Trauma ir kolektyvinė atmintis: sociokultūrinis aspektas, in: *Filosofija ir sociologija*. Vilnius, 2002, Nr 1. – p. 59.
[5] Rožkalne A. Между небом и адом, in: *Naujos idėjos ir formos Baltijos šalių literatūrose*. Vilnius, LLTI, 1999. – p. 37.
[6] Ibid. – p. 29.

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MEMORY AS THE RESONANCE MEDIATOR OF EMIGRATION, DEPORTATION, AND SOVIETIZATION

Aare Pilv

MEMORY AS EXILE: TÕNU ÕNNEPALU'S TRAVELS IN SPACE AND TIME

Summary

The article views Tõnu Õnnepalu's 'exile texts' that describe feelings of an Estonian/ East European person in West European space and time. It can be seen how spatial distance takes also the shape of temporal distance, as though East and West were situated at different points on timeline making possible certain 'travels in time'. Places where Õnnepalu or his protagonists live in voluntary exile, become places of anamnesis where one can remember his proper identity; and remembering means in that case also 'true seeing' and 'coming to mind'. So an interesting figure is created – because Estonia lies 'in the past', it can properly come to mind as a memory. Finally the article tries to point to a possibility to interpret the whole Estonian culture as an essentially 'exile culture', because in some sense the initiation place of modern Estonian identity has always been 'abroad'.

Key-words: Estonian literature, identity, autobiography, memory

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There seems to be quite a general connection between being in exile and dedicating oneself to memories. It is statistically provable that the percentage of memoirs in Estonian exile literature is much bigger than in the literature that was written in Estonia.[1] Of course, one reason for the fact is that in Soviet society it was not allowed to remember some things publicly, but on the other hand we could also talk about certain discursive compulsion of living in memories while being in exile – hence, it is a situation that is unbalanced on both sides. There is some coherence between the spatial distance from one's own soil and the temporal one from one's identity roots. Exile means stepping out of one's own time. It is like stepping out of one's present into another present which cannot be shared with others as every present grows out of its past. One cannot share the present of the new place because s/he has not experienced the past of the place. So the only choice is to live in one's own past, to replace the inaccessible present with the accessible past.

Though it is quite trivial, I would like to outline this issue a bit more closely examining an author who does not live in exile but who has produced several texts where the topic of memory, history, and time is closely connected with experiences of exile and moving in space.

Tõnu Õnnepalu became famous with his first novel *Piiririik* (Border State) that describes in a somewhat mannerist style an experience of Western Europe (or 'the genuine Europe') by an East European person, the desires and tensions that are inherent in the experience. The novel was written in the spring of 1993 during Õnnepalu's first travel

to Paris and was published in the same year. As the way of dealing with the topic seemed very significant and meaningful both in Estonia and abroad, the novel became one of the most important works of the newest Estonian literature.[2] *Border State* got the Estonian annual award for the best prose book and the award of Baltic Assembly; during the first 7 years it was translated into 15 languages[3]. The remarkable success means that also outside Estonia the novel conveys something significant about being East European. In Estonia there have been two consecutive prints (1998 and 2003) and a CD with the author's reading of an abridged version of the novel (2003).

In the aftermath of the success of *Border State*, Õnnepalu wrote two more novels and a poetry book[4] and then took a break for five years. His last three books have a slightly different character. In 2002 he published two voluminous books – a diary called *Harjutused* (Exercises) and a book called *Raadio* (Radio); the latter is a strange hybrid of novel and memoirs, a mix of fiction and real life. Both books showed some wish to so-to-say write oneself out of the cultural game where Õnnepalu felt trapped; both books deal among other things with his main 'anguishes of influence' – Jaan Kaplinski and Viivi Luik. In a way these books were certain 'burning the bridges'. And last year his *Flandrian Diary* was published entailing over 300 pages of essayistic notes on random topics written during a month in a writers' house in Flandria.

So, it seems that Õnnepalu has abandoned writing the 'proper' *belles lettres* and his works in the new century differ from his earlier ones by being closer to autobiography or autopsychography.[5]

But in some sense these latest works are quite closely connected with *Border State*. I would call them the 'exile books' of Õnnepalu. Three of them were written abroad during predetermined time – *Border State* and *Exercises* in Paris, *Flandrian Diary* in Belgium, and they all speak about being abroad that is sometimes directly called temporary voluntary exile. All of these books actually deal with memories or temporality and the way different times dwell in different places.

Further we will introduce a series of examples from these books and by doing so outline their underlying temporal-spatial structure.

In *Border State* the main character recurrently uses the figure of coming from the past.

> *The wine went to my head. It was a 1986 vintage, and I thought about the spring of 1986 when those grapes must have been growing somewhere in Italy but when I was still walking in total innocence* ***in an entirely different century***.[6]

The main character is looking at a painting in the museum and remembers that the same picture was also hanging on the wall of Grandmother's apartment:

> *If only I hadn't squeezed my eyes shut because I couldn't bear it all. Just as there,* ***a hundred years earlier,*** *always and forever there, in the high school lavatory where I had run to from class…*[7]

Speaking of a church pastor in Estonia, he says to Angelo:

> *Now you can understand my untimely allusions, my temporary eloquent sermonizing. It was all his, from there, from those times,* ***that lost century in which I lived,*** *which perhaps I most belong to*[8]*. That's where my adventure with religion all started, dear Angelo. Yes, it (religious adventure! loss of faith!) probably seems highly unlikely to you, and it is unlikely in this world in which all further appeals*

> *have become impossible. But there, in that frozen period of time, in that country behind the stacked firewood, the one from which I slipped away, it was still possible, even probable.*[9]

Another quote:

> *The flower beds in the Tuileries have probably been left there by mistake, remnants of that bygone, naļve world, like the paintings by Renoir and Matisse,* ***from the nineteenth century, from my world.***[10]

So, we see that the main character of *Border State* feels that he has come not only from distant space, but also from distant time – from a distant century. While he is now in the Western Europe, he feels being here and now, and where he came from is there and then, although in a formal sense these spaces exist simultaneously. Europe has abandoned history keeping to the present time while its eastern part dwells in history. And it seems so exactly from the perspective of the West.

It is expressed also in the opposition between the main character and his French lover Franz:

> *Franz once enthusiastically told me that I came from a country where* ***history was made on a daily basis*** *[..] I assured him that one can do very well without reality and history being made.*[11]

Both are longing for something else – Franz is longing for the times back when Europe was not ready yet but the main character is longing for the condition of readiness, finitude.

At the beginning of *Exercises*, Õnnepalu (or more exactly, Anton Nigov) speaks about his desire to live in a monastery where there are no big changes and where he can dedicate himself to a pure routine. This reminds of the *Border State* character's desires. Anton Nigov is in Paris and wishes to be there like in a monastery.

But the motif of monastery is used also in another sense:

> *I thought this morning that to live in this world as an Estonian-speaking person, as I am – although I r e a d mainly in French – is similar to living in some smaller monastery before the invention of typography. There are very few books and even fewer are to come. All your life you must read basically the same books – your Alver, Enno, Tammsaare and Kaplinski, Viivi Luik, Juhan Liiv, Aleksander Suuman and a couple of others. Like a monk reads his St Augustine and St Thomas and the gospels.*[12]

Compared to *Border State*, *Exercises* was written nearly 10 years later when the situation between West and East (or Europe and Estonia) had slightly changed. Now Estonia is also moving into the condition of readiness, it is abandoning history. Estonia as a society is now realizing the desires that the character of *Border State* had.

For example, looking at an old Estonian map which he carries with him, he comments:

> *Except Pärnu, Tallinn and Tartu, all these places seem* ***anachronistic, untimely****. Why there is Mustla? Karksi-Nuia?* [minor towns in Southern Estonia – A.P.] *What do they do there, what life they live? [..] Why there is Karksi-Nuia and Kolga-Jaani – this is maybe comprehensible only for some Baltic German old man in his house in the suburbs of Munich or in a rest-house near Cologne. [..] The people that are ruling the country now do not understand that a country is soil, hills, fields, lakes, rivers, roads, forests, not only the name. The people who are living there*

> *now do not want to hear anything of that land. It's too complicated, too expensive. They want only to forget, forget their little miserable past, dark and poor, their farmhouses, and to imagine something big and vague instead of it. Or nothing at all. Who said that there must be some kind of the past? Or a land? Couldn't we get along without them? So, everything that "belongs to the past", is a bit uncomfortable, embarrassing. Even Tartu.*[13]

Further on he continues:

> *The biggest paradox of the independence is that all those 10 years have been the period of the most powerful acculturation, liberation from our own culture, at least during the last century. Estonian culture is being forgotten with a tremendous speed. It seems that Estonia became independent for finishing with itself. [..] But God says: wait a minute. Before you can forget, you must remember everything. All of it. From the beginning. At least seven generations back. Before that you cannot be free. So – let's start with it. I am a schoolboy that has been left after lessons. The lesson 'Estonian culture' is over, other children have gone home to watch TV and play with a computer but I must sit here and repeat the exercises, because I havent learnt my lessons properly.*[14]

So, Estonia as a society is now realizing the desires that the character of *Border State* had and Nigov/Õnnepalu as the author of *Exercises* sees it as something undesirable feeling the need to remind of Estonia. This contradiction between the attitudes of the narrators of the two books is only superficial – first, because one is a work of fiction (although seemingly autobiographical fiction) and the other is a factual diary; but, second, in the light of this contradiction it becomes understandable what Õnnepalu meant when he wrote in his afterword to the Russian translation of *Border State* that the most surprising thing in the reception of the novel (both in Estonia and abroad) was that nobody has interpreted it as an ironic novel[15]. It must be noted, however, that the irony of Õnnepalu in *Border State* and other works is not very apparent because of his style; besides, irony has several layers and the very notion of irony is rather ambivalent.

Hence, if Estonia is now a place that wants to get rid of its history, what is Paris now? At the end of the book, already preparing himself for leaving, he says that for the Estonians 100 years ago (that is, in terms of the real time, at the beginning of the 20th century, but, as it seems, for the character of *Border State* who came from that lost century that had lasted yet to the beginning of the 1990s)

> *Paris is the place of initiation, a symbolic door into the tale called culture. Into the fairy-tale. [..] But now Paris is more a place of reminding, anamnesis. A place where nothing changes. It is necessary. Culture cannot exist without that. In Estonia it is nearly impossible to remember Estonian culture. Everything disappears so fast, grows into thick bushes, changes its proprietor, changes its meaning, gets out of fashion. And out of mind. Just because of that it is so soothing to come back here from time to time. Exactly – b a c k .*[16]

Estonia is trying to forget in order to come into synchrony with Europe. Paris is still something ready, steady, a place where memory is settled. The overall structure is the same as in *Border State* – in order to remember Estonia properly, one must go to a distant place. The need for remembering has also a personal meaning – *Exercises* is mainly an attempt to write autobiography, so the personal memory is intertwined with the cultural one, the former cannot be approached without the latter.

Of course, the situation describes quite trivially the condition of post-communist cultures that have lived through a great liberation, but at the same time they have undergone a major disruption that has disconnected the lines of cultural memory. Maybe we could say that the final disruption took place not during the communist era, but as late as in the 1990s, because then it became obvious that a direct return to the times before the Soviet era is impossible; and at the same time the return through the experience of the intermediate decades is not desirable; the memory is polluted. The cultural break, the necessary mechanism of forgetting is unavoidable.[17]

Õnnepalu's next book *Radio* is a fictionalized memoir, and from the viewpoint of the current topic it is worth mentioning because of one peculiarity. Namely, Õnnepalu is narrating as though he was speaking to a foreigner – he explains the phenomena and notions that are specific to the Estonian culture, but which are very self-evident for an Estonian reader and actually need no explanation. It creates an effect of a commented translation; sometimes he even adds French translations in brackets for some words. So it is written in a certain manner of estrangement. The novel did not get a very positive reception in Estonia, but against the background of Õnnepalu's other works the method becomes understandable: it is another version of moving into distance for seeing and remembering more clearly. It is as though he was in Paris, in a place of anamnesis, and told the story to a Frenchman – except that actually he told it in Estonian for Estonians.

And finally, his last book, *Flandrian Diary*, received the award for the best Estonian book of essays for 2007. This book is not as personal as the two previous ones; it is more focused on general issues while describing also his daily actions in the writers' home in Flandria.

The motif of anamnesis becomes overwhelming here. Õnnepalu says, *this culture [..] has become already long ago only the memorial service of itself*[18], and he means by that all the Occidental culture. At the same time he talks about the erosion of memory which is characteristic not only of Estonia any more but of the whole European culture that has entered the age of information; the reason of that erosion of memory is disappearance of hierarchies among different texts. But Õnnepalu does not call for restoring those hierarchies; he sees it as a natural process: the fields must be fallow in order to produce a rich harvest again in some unforeseeable future (like it was with the Antiquity, Middle Ages, and Renaissance).

Hence, Europe is not only ready, it is ripe, ready to fall; and Estonia shares this fate.

Still there is a certain difference between Western and Eastern Europe, a certain temporal gap. He writes:

> *This civilization that I see here in the heart of Europe, in old Flandria [..] it is our civilization and at the same time it is not. I am inside as well as outside. It is a little shift of time and space. I am not yet used to the condition where everything is so ready, covered with concrete, polished, filled with buildings, in order and secure. But I have seen how quickly and enthusiastically the people in Estonia have striven to this condition during recent years, and with certain success, although 'a lot must be done yet'. But I have never truly believed that we will achieve such a condition in our country. We have arrived to the feast in the last minute, we have reached it, but too late. For the time of dessert.*[19]

The shift is the same shift that was more dramatically shown in *Border State*; Estonia is still in the past, though the distance is quite short now.

This attitude is similar to an Estonian scholar Tiit Hennoste who has written a history of Estonian literature called *Hüpped modernismi poole* (Jumps towards modernism, published in journal *Vikerkaar* 1993 – 98 as a series of lectures). According to his account, Estonian literature has never stepped into unison with European Modernist literature; there have been 'jumps' toward Modernism but it has never been truly reached in Estonian literature. The programmatic essay that sets basic framework to his approach is titled *About Estonian 19th century literature in the 20th century*[20]. So this attitude is not shared only by Õnnepalu, seems that it circulates also in the unconsciousness of other Estonians. But – Estonia lies in the past namely if looked against the background of Europe – and Europe is the only background that Estonian culture can accept. So – Estonia is 'doomed' to the past by its deeper nature because it defines its own nature through belonging to the European cultural continuity.

This deeper nature reveals itself from the perspective of voluntary exile (it is worth mentioning that Hennoste's concepts have also taken shape partly while holding lectures about Estonian literature and culture to Finnish students). We could see the very name of Estonia as a symbol for essential self-estrangement: Eesti, Estonia, Estland literally means nothing in Estonian language, it etymologically comes from Scandinavian *Eistr*, *Eistland* ('Eastern land'); hence, the name of Estonia becomes meaningful from a distant perspective.

The motif of monastery is present also in *Flandrian Diary*. Õnnepalu again thinks about his voluntary exile as being in a monastery; and even more – between the daily notes Õnnepalu starts to write monologues of a monk in Middle Ages who was born in Estonia and happened to become an inhabitant of a Flandrian monastery. The monk remembers the life and habits of his homeland and compares them to his present life. So we see here a doubled version of the same figure of *memorial service* – Estonia is remembered through an imagined recollection of Europe in those times when history was made *on a daily basis*.

A recurrent figure of Õnnepalu's works is moving back in time, and supposedly it needs moving away into a position where this backward perspective can open up – into the place of anamnesis, a foreign monastery. Without it everything will be forgotten. Hence, if those who were forced into exile were forced to remember, in Õnnepalus case it is vice versa: in order to remember he is forced to go into specific exile.

We can draw two vectors from that point. One is socio-cultural, the other is existential.

The socio-cultural aspect concerns the character of Õnnepalu's exile, which is connected to a specific type of exile in the history of Estonia. Those people who escaped from Estonia in 1944 seeked for asylum; they were forced to live in the past tense. But at the beginning of the 20th century there was a wave of exile of Estonian cultural figures – members of the literary grouping *Noor-Eesti* (Young Estonia) and artists from their generation lived or traveled a lot outside of Estonia during the period of 1905 – 1917. Some of them did that for political reasons, others studied there but in any case it was the first generation in Estonian culture whose development took place abroad to such a great extent. Helsinki was the main place that was common to many of them because it was the closest 'foreign country'[21]; another one was Paris, which was the gathering point for many Estonian artists and some kind of final destination in the 'quest of Europe' of Noor-Eesti. One of the leaders of Noor-Eesti, Friedebert Tuglas

spent five winters in Paris. Among the places where these men traveled (and sometimes lived) were also Mediterranean countries (Italy, Spain, French colonies in Northern Africa) and Nordic region, especially Åland and Norway.[22]

Noor-Eesti introduced a new paradigm into the self-determination of Estonian culture; they wanted to break away from German bonds and build the new European-Estonian culture on the basis of French and Mediterranean cultural patterns. Tiit Hennoste has analyzed their cultural turn as a case of an *unfinished self-colonization*[23], a basic trait of which is determination of Estonian culture from the distant viewpoint and permanent comparison with Western Europe.

The voluntary exile of Õnnepalu, seeing and reminding Estonian culture through that prism, belongs in a way to the tradition of the exile of Young Estonians – the ideal center of European culture is similar as well as the pattern of self-identification – the 'true Estonia' is seen only from this distance. In some sense Õnnepalu goes back to this spatial and temporal point where Estonian culture – in the form that it has maintained through the whole century – was initiated. In a certain sense he goes back to the roots, as strange as it may seem. Paris (i.e. Western Europe) can be the place of anamnesis *because* it has been the place of initiation, the place of beginning of an identity pattern; there lies the key that opens the memory machine.

And finally the existentialist turn. In *Flandrian Diary* Õnnepalu makes another statement about being abroad. He is speaking of going to Brussels, a big city, and he says:

> *Not that I long for being there. I am not longing any more, I am on the other side already, I have got used to the countryside, it is, to myself, because you cannot escape from yourself in countryside* [he is referring to the fact that he is living in countryside in Estonia – A. P.]. *But it has taken a long time. Twenty years and more. And am I properly used to myself. And will we get used to ourselves at all. In spite of all we will remain a little strange to ourselves, still wondering what kind of persons we are. Like we were in fact guests, strangers, foreigners in that land that we call our own life.*[24]

Here is a new level, compared to his previous experiences of foreignness – all our life is a foreign land, and the figure of border state gains a new meaning: our life as a cultural being is a constant life abroad, and the border lies within our minds – only the border makes possible to articulate what we are; and what we are, depends on the fact that we articulate it and the way we do it. Thus, 'border state' is not any more only geopolitical or geocultural; it is rather a state of mind. (And again – I could not do that play of words with state' in the Estonian language – *quod erat demonstrandum*.)

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[1] According to *Estonian Literary History*, 750 Estonian belletristic books were published in exile in 1944 – 1989, and 155 (that is 1/5) of them were memoirs (Annus E., L. Epner, A. Järv, S. Olesk, E. Süvalep, M. Velsker. *Eesti Kirjanduslugu*. Tallinn, Koolibri, 2000. – p. 353). I could not find exactly similar statistics about Soviet Estonia, but I got the following numbers: in 1940 – 1985, 2982 Estonian belletristic books were published (Liivaku U. *Eesti raamatu lugu*. Tallinn: Monokkel, 1995. – p. 202); about memoirs Liivaku says only that their part in the overall book production was *miserably small* (ibid. – p. 206), but Rein Ruutsoo states that in 1944 – 1982, 122 books of memoirs were published (43 of them various collections and over a half of them were political memoirs). A list of Estonian memoirs based on electronical catalogue of Estonian

libraries shows that during the years of 1945 – 1979 there were published 46 books of memoirs in Soviet Estonia and 122 in exile (Isotamm J. *Eesti memuaarid (mälestused, autobiograafiad, päevikud). Bibliograafiline nimestik*. 2004) – the reason for differences between the numbers of Ruutsoo and Isotamm is that apparently the statistical criteria of Ruutsoo were wider (or the books have not been accounted under the keyword 'memoir' in catalogues), but probably it also comes from the fact that during the new independence many ideological books have been removed from the libraries. But the general comparison is still apprehendable from these numbers.

[2] In Estonia the novel is also important as the first example of our own gay literature, which is also a component of the novel's *Europeanness*.

[3] 1994 Finnish (translated by Juhani Salokannel), 1995 Latvian (Guntars Godiņš), Lithuanian (Danutė Sirijos Giraitė), Swedish (Enel Melberg), Danish (Anne Behrndt), Norwegian (Turid Farbregd), 1996 Dutch (Marianne Vogel and Cornelius Hasselblatt), Italian (Francesco Rosso Marescalchi), 1997 German (Horst Bernhardt), French (Antoine Chalvin), Russian (Vera Ruber), 1998 Spanish (Ruth Lias and Albert Lázaro Tinaut), Hungarian (Reka Pusztai), 1999 Turkish (Egemen Öztan) and 2000 English (Madli Puhvel); few years ago (2005) also the Hebrew translation (Rami Saari) was published.

[4] Novels *Hind* (Price, 1995) and *Printsess* (Princess, 1997) and a long poem *Mõõt* (Measure, 1996).

[5] As Õnnepalu told in *Flandrian Diary*, he had already a contract with a publisher for writing a new diary of his own life in 2008 – it was published in the spring of 2009 as a diary in poems *Kevad ja suvi ja* (Spring and Summer and). It is worth mentioning that his books have different authorial signatures – *Border State*, *Measure*, *Princess* and *Radio* were written by Emil Tode, *Exercizes* by Anton Nigov, all other works (including also his essays in media) by Tõnu Õnnepalu. The principle of this nameswitching is not very clear.

[6] Õnnepalu T. *Border State*. Translated by M. Puhvel. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2000. – p. 22 My emphases in bold here and elsewhere in quotes.

[7] Ibid. – p. 33.

[8] In direct translation: … *which became my true home*…

[9] Ibid. – p. 37.

[10] Ibid. – p. 42.

[11] Ibid. – p. 75.

[12] Nigov A. *Harjutused*. Tallinn: Eesti Keele Sihtasutus, 2002. – p. 60.

[13] Ibid. – pp. 114–116.

[14] Ibid. – p. 125.

[15] Тодэ, Эмиль. Пограничье. Роман. [Перевод с эстонского Веры Рубер]. / Дружба Народов 1997, № 12. с. 121—122. (also in: http://magazines.russ.ru/druzhba/1997/12/tode.html; accessed on 5 May 2009).

[16] Nigov A. *Harjutused*. Tallinn: Eesti Keele Sihtasutus, 2002. – p. 228.

[17] Estonian sociologist Rein Ruutsoo has analyzed how Estonian (and Latvian) *catching-up revolutions* (the term from J. Habermas – *nachholende Revolution*) differ from those of other East European societies by sharper disruptions – the elite and social capital of the Soviet era was swiped away from public consciousness more excessively, compared to other post-Communist countries. (Ruutsoo R. Järeleaitav demokraatia Eestis: saavutused ja väljavaated. / *Vikerkaar* No 4–5, 2008. – pp. 111–120.)

[18] Õnnepalu T. *Flandria päevik*. Tallinn: Varrak, 2007. – p. 162.

[19] Ibid. – pp. 152–153.

[20] Hennoste T. Eesti 20. sajandi 19. sajandi kirjandusest, in: Hennoste T. *Eurooplaseks saamine. Kõrvalkäija altkulmupilk. Artikleid ja arvamusi 1986 – 2003*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2003. – pp. 25–29.

[21] Although Finland was a part of Russian Empire at the same time as Estonia, it had autonomy and slightly different social and cultural conditions; in Helsinki there was also university that had several advantages compared to Tartu university – it was possible to learn Finno-Ugric languages there, and it was open to women.

[22] *A Brief History of Estonian Art* (1999) says that *The reasons for going to Norway were admiration of its nature and interest towards the culture of the small nation that had recently*

gained independence, but also the high prestige of Nordic countries in Paris of the beginning of the century. (Helme S., J. Kangilaski. *Lühike Eesti kunsti ajalugu*. Tallinn: Kunst, 1999. – p. 84.) So we could say that on the 'mental map' of those Estonians the way to Norway went via Paris (and actually the real physical journey to Norway went also via Paris, not from Estonia). About the connections of Estonian Writers and artists with Åland see: Koll K., J. Undusk. *Åland phenomenon. Young Estonian artists and writers in Åland 1906 – 1913. Exhibition catalogue*. Tallinn: Art Museum of Estonia, Adamson-Eric Museum, Under and Tuglas Literature Centre, 2006.

[23] Hennoste T. Noor-Eesti kui lõpetamata enesekoloniseerimisprojekt, in: Lindsalu E. (ed.) *Noor-Eesti 100. Kriitilisi ja võrdlevaid tagasivaateid. Young Estonia 100. Critical and comparative retrospectives*. Tallinn: Tallinna Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2006. – pp. 9–38; Hennoste T. Noor-Eesti kui enesekoloniseerimisprojekt. Teine osa. Olulised kirjandusmõtteviisid ja nende suhted kolonialismiga 20. sajandi algupoole eesti kirjanduses. / *Methis. Studia humaniora Estica* No 1/2, 2008. – pp. 262–275. I have developed and discussed Hennoste's approach in my article '*You are the other for me. Otherness in the self-analysis of Estonian culture* (Pilv A. "Sa oled mul teine". Teisesusest Eesti kultuuri eneseanalüüsis, in: Undusk R. (ed.) *Rahvuskultuur ja tema teised. Collegium litterarum 22*. Tallinn: Underi ja Tuglase Kirjanduskeskus, 2008. – pp. 67–92.)

[24] Õnnepalu T. *Flandria päevik*. Tallinn: Varrak, 2007. – p. 276.

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Anneli Mihkelev

BETWEEN HOMELAND AND EXILE – THE ESTONIAN AND SWEDISH MEMORY[1]

Summary

The experience of exile generated a new paradigm in Estonian culture, literature, and national identity. In exile society, there was very strong cognizance of collective identity and a very strong will to preserve national collective identity, which is related to collective memory. It is important that there were writers and poets who had very clear, certain, and stable cognizance of (national) identity in exile. This kind of traditional and stable cognizance of identity appears also in contemporary Estonian literature. Allusions to the Bible give an eternal dimension to Estonian exile poetry, which tried to remember and save the national identity in exile. We can see the medieval motif of Ahasuerus as well as the other biblical motifs in contemporary Estonian literature. Perhaps the myth of Ahasuerus is one of the most impressive myths for Estonians after World War II: in 1944 our nation was cast out into the world and we had the experiences of exile, Siberia, etc.

Contemporary theories of identity do not consider identity as a stable, certain, and ordered phenomenon; instead identity is dynamic, dialogical, and also ephemeral. It means that identity is also a heterogeneous phenomenon, the same as memory. The experience of exile gave to Estonians also such kind of identity. At the same time, it seems that ephemeral identity is not so sure and strong and especially national identity changes slower, but at the same time individual identity dominates. This kind of identity is represented in contemporary literature. The article examines Käbi Laretei's, Tõnu Õnnepalu's, Ene Mihkelson's, and Ingmar Bergman's novels, and Estonian exile poetry.

Key-words: Estonian and Swedish literature, cultural memory, identity

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Exile and homeland

The Estonian literature in exile came into being in 1944, although the first people emigrated already in 1940 when the Soviet Union occupied Estonia for the first time. Afterwards some people were deported to Siberia and some people went on exile to the Western countries. However, the year of 1944 was the time when the Estonian literature in exile was born along with Estonian exile society as the majority of people went on exile at the end of World War II. According to different data, 70 000 – 75 000 people emigrated from Estonia and went to different countries: Sweden – about 22 000, Canada – 17 000, USA – 13 000, Australia – 6000, Germany – 3000 and also other countries.[2] Stockholm and Lund in Sweden and Toronto in Canada became the new

cultural centres.[3] This experience generated a new paradigm in culture and literature. Estonian culture and literature suddenly became divided into two parts: one had the language but no country, while the other had both the country and the language. The political terror imposed restrictions on literature in homeland, and the national ideology limited literature in the initial years of exile. The national ideology was preserved in exile, while at the same time the communist ideology emerged in homeland; both of them were closed communities. The people who escaped on exile to Western countries did not get assimilated to their new resident countries because they thought that exile was temporary and many of them believed they could return to their homeland very soon, in the 1950s. However, later they realized that the state of exile would not end soon, perhaps – never.

Estonian exile society was the biggest in Sweden, but the first years after World War II in Sweden were not very safe for political refugees because Swedish government gave some of Estonian soldiers over to the Soviet Union. Estonian government in exile started its work in 1953 in Oslo because in Sweden political activities of non-citizens were forbidden. That situation changed for the better at the end of the 1940s.

At the same time, as we can read in the exile memories, Swedish people where very kind to Estonian refugees who arrived in boats to the small Swedish towns Ulricehamn and Örnsköldsvik, as recalled by the Estonian writer Raimond Kolk.[4] However, these were the first years in Sweden and the first impressions. Yet the years of exile gave to Estonians also different experience that was new for (national) identity.

From the semiotic point of view, the problem of exile concerns centre and periphery. It also concerns the space of culture and that of national identity: whether it is geographical space or language, or both. Or is it something more that includes both language and geographical space? It seems that in literature written in exile as well as all exile culture, geographical space, homeland, and language were constituted by memory; it was not a real country but the memory that the exiles and the deported people carried along, both to Western countries and to Siberia. It means that the country was always present, but only in people's mind. It also means that the most important thing concerning exile and deportation as well as national culture and identity is memory or, more precisely, cultural memory.

Cultural memory is a heterogeneous phenomenon. Cultural memory contains different moments and different components from our socio-cultural context: it is our everyday-life as well as our impressions of cultural events and texts we have read, etc. At the same time, cultural memory has a great role in the creation of identity: these phenomena are connected. Kaie Kotov has written:

> *The process of identity formation and cultural self-descriptions that manifest and reify some aspects of identity, are inseparably intertwined, yet it is methodologically important to draw a heuristic distinction between two. This distinction implies a further differentiation of individual and collective identity on the one hand and actual and declared identity on the other hand. Collective identity that is manifested in cultural self-descriptions can be understood as an instrument that serves to organize both diachronic and synchronic dimensions of cultural reality.*[5]

Exile, memory and identity

Thinking about exile society and experience, we can see all these aspects of identity. In exile society, there was very strong cognizance of collective identity and a very strong will to preserve national collective identity. And collective identity is connected on collective memory. It is important that there were writers and poets who had very clear, certain, and stable cognizance of (national) identity. The main topic in their works was homeland and the destiny of homeland, as well as nationality and nation. For example, Kalju Lepik who lived in Stockholm and was the main national ideologist poet in exile. Homeland is the main topic in his poetry and it was represented by fixed signs: home is a safe and beautiful place, often an old farmhouse, the surrounding nature is beautiful, with sweet-scented blossoms. The figures of parents are very important, especially mother who bakes tasty bread, works hard and is a good and gentle woman. Lepik's words from the poem *Nägu koduaknas* (A face in the home window, 1946) have served as a motto for the whole Estonian poetry written in exile for many years: *I want to feel my home does not change in sandstorms of times*[6].

In Lepik's later poetry, memories are connected with the new experience of life and culture, but his poetry still represents mainly the collective memory and/or collective national identity. In the 1950s, his poetry changed from classical and formal to modern and even assumed a postmodern-deconstructive style. He expresses the spirit of a nation without homeland and at the same time expands the boundaries of national imagery as well. His most essential themes are fight for freedom, love for one's native country, sense of nationality, earthly happiness of humankind, future of the world, etc. It means he related both the collective (national) memory and cosmopolitan identity, which is also connected with his individual identity. It seems that Lepik's individual and collective identities are equal. And it is very significant that he also used the motifs from the old myths and the Bible: homeland is like a kind housewife who is waiting for the wanderer, or like the beloved with whom the poet's 'ego' longs for a physical as well as a spiritual contact, or like Christ who was crucified but resurrected like a phoenix in Lepik's poetry. His nation and motherland are a part of the world and their troubles are a part of the troubles of the world. God has created the world, it is full of evil and violence as Satan moves around alongside with goodness. And a human being may feel alone and afraid in this kind of world. Sometimes the poet's 'ego' is also overwhelmed by apocalyptic fear but there can almost always be found a little sign of evangelic hope: a donkey listening to a ballad, a mother uniting memories of childhood and homeland, a mad man with Christ's eyes or a flower in the Land of Wind. In his poetry, the author depicts the struggle for life of both a single person and of the whole nation and humankind. He moves from the problems of an individual to the problems of the world and humanity. It means he matches the diachronic (the Bible, folklore, ancient literature) and synchronic (political and social situation, exile, etc.) cultural dimensions. Lepik connected the national and international signs in his poetry and he was not in the periphery of culture in exile: he was in the cultural centre. His motifs are mostly drawn from traditional texts (the Bible, classical literature, etc.) that are well-known for Estonians. Thus, Lepik's exile poetry represents and cultivates national collective memory and identity, and reinforces and preserves national identity using national collective memory as a

tool. We never see Lepik having any doubts about his identity or asking the question 'who am I?'; he is very sure in his belief and identity, he believes that his homeland will get freedom in the future, even if other people have already lost their belief in it.

Identity and memory in homeland

It is interesting that this kind of traditional and stable cognizance of identity appears also in contemporary Estonian literature, e.g. in Ene Mihkelson's novels where the main themes are the severance of the Estonian identity after the war and attempts to rediscover the deeper continuity of identity, which is often partly condemned to fail, the intervention of social and political rules into personal self-knowledge, and the forced (and unconsciously accepted) forgetfulness of past relationships and of natural sources of self-creation. E. Mihkelson also uses biblical myths in her novels. The allusion in the title of Mihkelson's novel *The Sleep of Ahasueros* indicates mythological consciousness: on the one hand, it points to the old myth of Ahasueros, while, on the other hand, it indicates mythical thinking in contemporary times, that mythical thinking is important also in contemporary culture, and it is important concerning national and individual identity. The protagonist of Mihkelson's novel also tries to discover her family's and her own history through the names. She searches for traces of her predecessors, asks who they were and what the secret of their identity is. At the same time, it also raises the question 'who am I', 'what is my own identity?', and the answer greatly depends on the essence of her predecessors. The whole investigation begins with studying names written in the family tree in the archives. A change in the family name creates a mystical situation: a name is a key aspect of personal identity and if it is changed, there must be a serious reason. If the family has evolved from different nations and individuals of different social classes, it is also possible to decide upon the point with which you would like to associate the origin of your identity. Each name of one's predecessors is surrounded by mystical and mythical space. It is a space that includes events from the distant past. It is another world and we can just dimly imagine what happened long ago. It is mysterious for us and also very magnetic because these people from the past were also our predecessors; they are not very close to us, but still close enough to feel the connection with them. And the same phenomenon also works if we read old myths, not only our own family myths, but those which speak not only of personal identity but also of identity in a larger sense. Thus, the name Ahasuerus points to old myths, which permit identification at a national and even higher level, not just a personal one.

The author uses both biblical myths and proper names to create the feeling of mythical or eternal time. This is characteristic not only of Mihkelson's prose, but also of her poetry. According to Janika Kronberg:

> *The main aim of Mihkelson's poetry is to give names to things. Memory and naming are her dominant motifs. Mihkelson names things and phenomena, as only those possessing names are able to persist. As regards the past, naming denotes saving something essential from oblivion and, as regards the present, it is an invitation for something essential to come into being.*[7]

Naming is also important in the novel *The Sleep of Ahasueros*. According to Juri Lotman and Uspenski, naming is related to mythological thinking, and a proper name is connected with mythological consciousness.[8]

It is important that the story of King Ahasuerus is the opposite of the story of another Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew. This is a medieval legend where Ahasuerus, a shoemaker from Jerusalem, is condemned to roam the earth until the Day of Judgement, because he taunted Christ on the way to the Crucifixion, urging him to go faster, and did not allow him to take a rest. The punishment for Ahasuerus is everlasting, sleepless wandering. That curse presses him till the Day of Judgement, and he must remember everything about it.

According to Marju Lauristin, Ene Mihkelson's novel reveals the most profound pain: if we lose our names and ourselves, our familial memory, we will lose our personality. If we forget our real history and are complicit with violence, it is the same as putting the self-awareness of the nation to sleep. Indifference is a timeless crime.[9] Personal identity and memory are connected with collective or national memory and identity.

If we think about the first myth of Esther and Ahasuerus, it is the same thing that Mordecai avoided: he convinced his stepdaughter to act against violence, remember and save her family, as well as herself.

Although this is a legend from Jewish history, a parallel exists for Estonian history: first, the direct parallel between the Holocaust and Soviet repressions and, second, the parallel with national identity created through history, myths, and literature. Marju Lauristin has written that Mihkelson's novel *The Sleep of Ahasueros* is very deeply concerned with Estonian identity, more than any other contemporary novel or writer.[10] The function of the old biblical myths is to create the eternal, mythical dimension in the novel, and create a bond with older nations – perhaps this demonstrates that Estonians have not been the only nation in history to have very difficult problems, and if we know history and the old myths, then we can learn something from them. Or, as Kajar Pruul has written, it is a feeling that we still live in the same primordial time when the universe was created.[11] A continuity between different generations and different nations is needed for identity creation.

We can see the same effect also in our poetry: Kalju Lepik used allusions to the Bible which attributed an eternal dimension to his poetry that tried to remember and preserve the national identity in exile. We can also see the motif of Ahasuerus as well as other biblical motifs in Ene Mihkelsaar's poetry. Perhaps the myth of Ahasuerus is one of the most impressive myths for Estonians after World War II: in 1944 our nation was cast out into the world and suffered the experience of exile, Siberia, etc. Like Ahasuerus the Wandering Jew, we have looked for our own place in the world and experienced limitlessness.

Contemporary theories of identity do not treat identity as a stable, certain, and ordered phenomenon, but as a dynamic, dialogical, and also ephemeral one.[12] It means that identity like memory is a heterogeneous phenomenon. The experience of exile gave Estonians also such kind of identity. At the same time, it seems that ephemeral identity is not so sure and strong, especially national identity changes slower, but at the same time individual identity dominates. Such kind of identity is represented in Käbi Laretei's novels.

Searching for individual identity

Käbi Laretei (1922) was born in Estonia before World War II. She is the youngest daughter of the Estonian diplomat Heinrich Laretei. In 1940, when Estonia was occupied by the Soviet Union all her family emigrated to Sweden. She studied music in different countries: in Lithuania, Estonia (Tallinn), Sweden, Germany, and Switzerland. She started her career as a pianist in 1946. She gave concerts in Scandinavia, Western Europe, USA, Canada, and North-Africa.

Her second husband (1959 – 1969) was Ingmar Bergman, the famous film director from Sweden.

Käbi Laretei has told that she is a human being in exile; it means she feels different from other people. Käbi Laretei has written:

> *I've got a Swedish passport and Swedish life according to Swedish standards, but my grandparents and parents died in foreign countries. That fact has made me a stranger both here and there. I'm an exile person. I'm between here and there. If I speak with my Estonian friends about some songs, they understand immediately what I mean. Such kind of Swedish songs are strange for me, I do not know them, and they do not interest me. At the same time Swedish people were not interested in my background. They were interested in me as I am. But who am I? I was a combination of international cosmopolitan – pianist, and finally, I was an Estonian girl.*[13]

At the same time she wrote her novels in Swedish, and she is also a member of Swedish Writers Union. Yet the main topic in her novels is Estonia, memories about life before World War II and the post-war Sweden, so these would be the novels of memoirs. She is a good story-teller, and these are stories about life.[14] As a diplomat's daughter, she remembers the tragic events of 1940 when Estonian Embassy in Stockholm gave all its properties and rooms to the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and how they were passed over to the Embassy of Soviet Russia. It was a sudden interruption, the end of the beautiful and carefree life. It was a historical necessity that created a new life and also a new identity of an exile, which is not stable and demands vitality from people who have this kind of unstable life and identity. From that point, exile assumes a new meaning – exile is now a lifestyle.

Käbi Laretei's husband Ingmar Bergman wrote in his book *Laterna magica* about his voluntary exile which began in 1976 from Paris and continued till 1983. It was the time when Bergman visited several countries and places in Germany where he worked for several theatres. He describes his works and at the same time compares life in Germany to that in his homeland; he writes that he is longing for Swedish audience and life style: if he stands on München Street and hears a strange language, he thinks: it is still a foreign country. The memories from his childhood remained with Bergman all the time, and *Laterna magica* ends with pictures where he is talking to his mother, looking at old family pictures, and reading diaries. One of his last ideas is that he must think about what he has got, instead of what he has lost or what he has never been.[15]

Käbi Laretei has a similar experience, only she has not been a voluntary exile. Her experience is very similar to Ingmar Bergman's, and she writes in a very similar style. She writes about her concert tours to different countries and difficulties related to them; at the same time she remembers her family, her farther, mother and sister, finally she

keeps thinking of her son all the time. Most of all Käbi Laretei's memories are connected with her close people; the homeland is associated with the people who lived back there, not so much with things from homeland. It is similar with Ingmar Bergman – the personal identity is stronger than the collective national one.

Bergman writes in *Laterna magica* that he got tired from his bohemian life style and married Käbi Laretei who was a successful pianist, and they planned to live as a normal bourgeois family in a luxury house. All these magnificent dreams changed into a new catastrophe. They both searched for identity and security and took roles that proved too difficult in reality. The result was – two lonely people. The pianist went on concert tours, while the film director worked on his films and plays. The surface picture shows a successful and stable family, the scenery is in good taste, and illumination is the right one.

We see how cognizance of identity is changed and changes: after World War II the homeland was lost and it existed as something static in the memories of émigrés. At the same time, a new life began and it needed assimilation and new identity. The world had changed and so had the times and people: it is the life style of the modern world, and it seems Estonians got that experience through the experience of exile. We are all in exile in the contemporary time.

Käbi Laretei has described a meeting at her place in Stockholm. There were three people, three Estonians: Käbi Laretei who was born in the free Estonia, Tõnu Õnnepalu, an Estonian writer, who was born in the Soviet Estonia, and a young Estonian musician who was 10 years younger than Tõnu Õnnepalu, although he was born in the occupied Estonia, too. All these people had different opinions and different relations with their homeland. They discussed Õnnepalu or Emil Tode's (his pen name) novel *Piiririik* (The Border State) published in 1993. Käbi Laretei has written that the title of Õnnepalu/Tode's novel is excellent, but it is about Estonia that she does not know, and although the language of the novel is excellent and brilliant, it is untranslatable.

Now we still know that *The Border State* has been translated into fourteen languages and is, perhaps, considered to be one of the symbols of the Baltic identity (it received the Baltic Assembly Prize in 1994). Laretei thought it was impossible to translate all the nuances and she was probably right.

The idea running through the novel is that Estonia, the same as other Baltic countries, is in a peripheral position between the East and the West. It is something special that separates us from other regions: the balance between the West and the East, between the Russian Empire and West-European culture, and between the experience of freedom and its loss is a special landmark of the Baltic memory and identity. The tragedy of the Baltic countries that is also our joy is that we know the price of freedom. This tragic historical ambivalent cognizance is characteristic of Tode's novel along with the experience of borders and the strong potential to create and also play with meaning.

The novel examines very deeply, for the first time, the oppositions between East and West, and also between Estonia, or the Baltic States, and Europe. Hence, it is a new layer of experience of the Baltic identity which is different from the one we have from the Soviet period, or even from earlier times.

The tragedy of the East Europe and the Baltic States appears when the borders are open and it is possible to compare life in the East and the West. It is also significant that the novel is set in Paris, which is quite a neutral place if we think about the history of

the Baltic States. Paris has no border with Estonia; it is the centre of Europe. In the novel, there is an interesting movement from the semiotic point of view: a man from East Europe, from a border state, moves to the centre of Europe, of the semiosphere. He brings to the centre new information and also acquires new information from there. Centre and periphery are always opposed: life in the periphery is more active and variable and also contains more information; life in the centre is concentrated but at the same time also more static. The man from Eastern Europe needs help from the older man from the Central Europe. He gets the help and a better, more sterile life, but he must also do what the older man wants: it seems that the border between freedom and prison is still fragile even in the free world. Who exploits whom, the man from Eastern Europe or the one from Western Europe? They both need each other, but the man from Eastern Europe kills the man from Western Europe. It is a symbolic act pointing to the new information coming from the borders, and a fresh lifestyle that is wilder and more arrogant. Eastern Europe disturbs the life of Western Europe, which is comfortable and problem-free. Eastern Europe is inconvenient, it is a mystery for the West-European man – it seems that we can treat these two protagonists as symbols in this novel.

Speaking of the Baltic identity, we cannot ignore history, which is one of the main factors of the Baltic identity and memory of all three components of the literary communicative process. I am not referring to the history of wars and deportations, but to the history of a little town with streets full of holes by the river where there is a little flat with stove heating, a pile of wood and a foul-smelling outhouse. This is a history without conveniences, but it is still freer than a welfare society in certain ways. Yet the boundaries between freedom and imprisonment are ambivalent and flexible. This is also a story of dreams and reality: what is beautiful in our dreams is not such when we have attained it.

This history also includes the grandmother who is a figure from the past and at the same time connects the world of the deceased and the living. The motifs of death and the past are very important for the Baltic identity: our history has been complicated and tragic, and it still obsesses us.

Tode's novel also revolves around the boundaries between sexuality and gender. The problem is that in the Estonian language the grammatical gender is absent, and the writer plays around this linguistic fact. The ambivalence of gender in his novel also represents a new experience and meaning in Estonia. The young homosexual man who has escaped from Eastern Europe seems to belong to Western Europe because homosexuality was officially considered a crime in the Soviet times, and the phenomenon itself was silenced and kept secret. Now, in Paris, gender is not a problem: the problem is freedom. At the same time, the boundaries between gender and sexuality are ambivalent in this novel: the homosexual man does not want to accept gender stereotypes; he wants to be genderless, androgynous, or just an angel.[16] The status of the young man is truly ambivalent: he is standing on the borders.

The same ambivalent state also appears concerning the nationality of the young man. We may suppose that he is Estonian, but actually it is not mentioned, and his nationality is not important to him. It seems that this will be our new identity in the European context: it will be an absolutely new attempt to overcome national borders and frames.

The young man is constantly manipulated by his East European past – it is impossible to break free from history and the past, and, perhaps, from gender either. This is made impossible, according to the new rules, by the tragic sense of history and memories.

The novel indicates that the identity will change; perhaps it will fuse into a European identity in the future. At the same time, an essential and one of the most important questions in contemporary Estonian and, perhaps also other Baltic literatures, is: who are we? This same question people asked in exile. Indeed, we all are in exile in the contemporary time.

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Asta Gustaitienė

LITHUANIAN STORIES ABOUT SIBERIA: BETWEEN MEMOIR AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Summary

The article focuses on the Siberian stories published in the period of independent Lithuania. The main attention is paid to three works published at the beginning of the 21st century: 'Oi, ta Vorkuta' (Oh, That Vorkuta, 2002) by Viktoras Alekna, 'Virš mūsų poliarinė pašvaistė' (Polar Lights Above Us, 2005) by Nijolė Ambrazaitytė, and 'Nelaukta kelionė' (Unexpected Journey, 2007) by Juzė Avižienytė-Žukauskienė. The article does not refer to the books written by various former Soviet agents of nomenclature, where they try to justify or provide an explanation of their activity and to create a rather pleasant image of themselves. The generic characteristics of the Siberian stories are discussed applying E. D. Hirsch's theory. The article aims to show the blurred boundaries of the genre (between a memoir and an autobiography). Though the main features of memoir literature – reflections of external processes and expression of collective consciousness or collective offence – are stronger in the analyzed stories, these stories also demonstrate some characteristics of autobiographical novel: the personal history of an individual or attempts to experience God. Besides, the narrators of these stories use various elements and structural details characteristic of the genres of fairy-tale, anecdote, short story or others.

Key-words: national consciousness, collective offence, exiles, individual values

*

After Lithuania regained its independence, a lot of various memoirs were published which were of different size, character, and literary value. The main feature of these books was the reflection of various spheres of social or individual life in the Soviet period: the authors pondered upon the obedience and conformation to the regime, and the experiences of partisans and Siberian exiles. Most of the authors were beginners in the field of literature or they were known for other activities. Memoir stories make up the research object of many academic fields, e.g. psychology, sociology, history, and literary studies. The results of the research by historians and psychologists are extremely interesting (e.g. Kazlauskas's doctoral dissertation *The Psychological Results of Prolonged Political Repressions* (2006) and his study *Fifty Years on: the Long-term Psychological Effects of Soviet Repression in Lithuania*[1]). Literary scholars have concentrated more on the stories by Siberian expatriates published at the end of the 1980s and in the 1990s focusing on the texts that currently became classical.

The aim of the present article is to discuss the memoir stories published at the end of the 20th and at the beginning of the 21st centuries and to analyze three books of Siberian stories, having in mind the specifics of the genre. Such aim stipulates the following tasks:

- to provide a general review of the memoir literature of the end of the 20th and of the beginning of the 21st centuries;
- to reveal the unfolding of the collective consciousness in the stories of Siberian exiles and the forms assumed by the aspects of collective offence;
- to analyze the ways of representing the internal story of the individual and the 'rivalry' of the genres of memoir and autobiography.

General review of the Lithuanian memoir literature of the 20th century and the early 21st century

It is interesting that in Lithuania there were simultaneously published a lot of memoir stories written both by the victims of the Soviet regime and those who served it and executed repressions. As regards the latter, the words by Vincas Pietaris (the author of the first published memoirs in Lithuanian in 1905) can be cited: *each autobiography is not truth, but praise, as everyone aims at revealing only good things about oneself and at swallowing the bad things*[2]. This idea is confirmed by the data of the research by the psychologist Danutė Gailienė. In the recollections by the Soviet public figures, the narrators take up a 'defensive' position avoiding the whole truth; in such texts there are no signs of deeper reflection or penitence and in some cases (e.g. *In the Secret War of Brains: the Recollections by Soviet Intelligencer* by Ričardas Vaigauskas[3]) an obvious lie can be seen. The critics observe that there is only a desire to retrieve or to form anew a positive memory of oneself and the life in Soviet Lithuania. The Soviet public figures are idealized in these texts; a partial truth overlaps with preterition[4]. The titles of such books are revealing: *The Phenomenon of Sniečkus: The Recollections and Thoughts*[5], *The Oaks Are not Afraid of Storms: Reminiscences about Motiejus Šumauskas*[6], *Not Lost Generation: Silhouettes and Colors: Reminiscences*[7], *We Also Served Lithuania: Facts, Reminiscences, Comments*[8], and *In the Secret War of Brains: the Recollections by Soviet Intelligencer*.

The other part of Lithuanian memoir stories entails the memoirs written by the former partisans, convicts of Soviet and German concentration camps, and deportees to Siberia (by Ramanauskas, Lukša, Pečiulaitis, Končius, Yla, Šilas, etc.). According to the historian Arvydas Anušauskas, 350 000 residents of Lithuania became the victims of communist repressions within the period from 1940 till 1958. More than 50 000 people executed the genocide of Lithuanians. Analyzing the relation between the traumatic experiences of those who survived and his own experience, Reich-Ranickis proves that the experienced events may be recorded in literary form only after 10 – 20 years have passed because only then there is 'a vision' from a greater distance[9]. Owing to the historical circumstances, many memoirs by those who experienced various repressions and people who executed them started to be published in Lithuania only after Lithuania had regained its independence, i.e. only 30 – 50 or even more years after the real events had taken place. This article is focused on the Siberian stories which, according to the Lithuanian literary critic Rima Pociūtė, *around the year of 1990 and later [..] made a bigger impression and impact on the readers than the prose works by Lithuanian writers published at the same time. Memoir literature had affected the creators of novels as well*[10].

The topic of Siberia

A huge part of Lithuanian memoir literature entails reminiscences about Siberia. The selected stories by different authors are presented in many books and have more literary than historical or documentary value because of their narration mode. Some of the Siberian stories by the deportees belong to the classics of this genre: *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros* (Lithuanians at the Laptev Sea, 1988) by Dalia Grinkevičiūtė, *Ešelonai* (The Echelons, 1989) by Antanina Garmutė, *Iš laiko tėkmės sūkurių* (From Time Flow Whirls, 1990) by Algirdas Griškėnas, *Tremtinio dalia* (Exile's Fate, 1990) by Arvydas Vilkaitis, *Šiaurės eskizai* (The Sketches of North, 1990) by Vladas Vyšniūnas, *Mūsų – ne dainų metas* (Our Time of No Songs, 1992) by Ričardas Kalytis, *Tarp giltinės ir slibino* (Between the Reaper and the Dragon, 1992) by Vytautas Kauneckas, *Ne lapas, vėjo pūstas* (Not a leaf, Blown by the Wind, 1992) by Jonas Kudžma, and *Už ką?* (For What?, 1995) by Antanas Kryžanauskas.

The experience of exile for the authors of Siberian stories was the strongest and the most brutal experience in their life, unambiguously having a tragic shade. As this traumatic experience has a very strong record in a person's mind and s/he has a strong desire to share it with others, the experience 'explodes' from inside and is a precondition for a new work of recollections. Nijolė Ambrazaitytė, an exile to Siberia and a famous Lithuanian opera singer, has said, *a word 'Servitude' (Katorga), which in old Greek language sounds very nice – katerdon (galley), will not leave person's mind ever, and the strange thing is that this word recently was a symbol of hard forced labor, unbearable life and humiliation.* The depicted events in the Siberian stories follow a recurrent formula: home (the experience of heaven) – forced isolation from home – a long journey (often in stockcars) – the experiences in Siberia (cold, hunger, fight for life, labor under awful conditions, and encounter with death) – return. In general, this scheme is typical of all Siberian stories. In order to make an impression of authenticity and to shock a reader, things have to be told in a very creative way.

The article also presents the analysis of three large scope memoirs published at the beginning of the 21st century (though they were written earlier): *Oi, ta Vorkuta:* (Oh, That Vorkuta: Memories, 2002) by Viktoras Alekna, *Virš mūsų poliarinė pašvaistė* (The Polar Lights above Us, 2005) by Nijolė Ambrazaitytė, and *Nelaukta kelionė* (The Unexpected Journey, 2007) by Juzė Avižienytė-Žukauskienė.

Between memoir and autobiography: the problem of genre

The creator of the modern theory of genres, E. D. Hirsch in his book *Validity in Interpretation*, according to Wilfried L. Guerin, *shows again and again how the reader's understanding of meaning is dependent on the reader's accurate perception of the genre that the author intended as he wrote the work*[11]. This insight is very important while reading the stories about Siberia, because the reader has to appreciate both the literary value and the genre of the book. The dynamics of these processes follows such steps: *when we read a work with which we are not previously familiar or read a work that is creating a new genre, we operate ('triangulate') by moving back and forth from what we know to what we do not know well yet*[12].

Traditionally the Lithuanian stories about Siberia belong to the memoir genre. According to Vytautas Kubilius, the compositional axis of memoirs is a movement of time from past to present; the authentic testimonies give rise to memoir story and its psychological reasons; in the center of memoirs there is an objective historic being, which is recorded by the description of the closest environment, the encountered people, and the experienced events.[13] The author of the memoir to a greater or lesser degree identifies him/herself with his/her family and nation. Memoir stories express the identity of the author as a citizen, a family member, and a member of community.

Though memoir and autobiography are basically non-fictional genres, there are memoirs and autobiographies that straddle the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction, literature and document. According to the German romantics, every person is a novel, i.e. his life story may become a novel. But this life story can be represented in non-fictional structures, just rendering dry facts. According to Gintaras Lazdynas:

> *[..] in general, how much exactly imagination there is in a work has no meaning in respect to the theory of a novel. The other question is: did the writer manage to pull away from the direct subjective experience of events and by avoiding retelling did he start the analysis of these events, raising his own experience to the level of more abstract generalization. In fact, we need to ask whether the writer managed to pull away from the direct subjective experience of events and look at his particular life as if from outside, objectively – as to the common manifestation of individual entity, or whether he only revealed his feelings, reported the emotionally marked information accumulated inside, and rendered only a spontaneous, private reaction by random expressions.*[14]

Our assumption is that the Siberian stories very often compete with autobiographies and herewith tend to a novel. The main goal of this article is to reveal how the characteristics of autobiography and memoir compete in the stories and how the epic consciousness changes after merging with the nation and the individual expressing individual values.

There is no clear line of division between memoir and autobiography. Traditionally autobiography is considered to be a more individualized, subjective narration about oneself as compared to memoir; typical features of autobiography are intimacy, disclosure, often self-irony, seeing oneself in a negative light (similarly to Spanish *novella picaresca* where Ego is the only narrator, *talking in his own name and opens the entirety of his life*). For its nature the autobiography is sometimes regarded as a novel (Cellini's *The Life of Benvenutto Cellini*, J. J. Russo's *Confessions*, J. W. Goethe's *Poetry and Reality*).

Expression of the collective sense

Certainly, the main part of the three analyzed texts comprises a collective subject ('we') as an expression of a sense as a human, a representative of the nation. Their stylistics is typical of heroic epic (which the Lithuanians do not have). A positive image of nation is created: the Lithuanians are depicted as very united, having titanic patience (a repeated motif is ten kilometers long journeys through taiga in the stinging Siberian cold), managing to remain dignified, and not 'selling' themselves to unbearable conditions. A strong collective emotion of harm is revealed as well (a Lithuanian woman sees that bags for potatoes are made of especially thin cloth weaved by Lithuanian women).

Almost every story represents a humiliating experience of using a common lavatory under the train. In the story by Vincas Lozoraitis there is a suggestive joke about the place to relieve oneself: a man knows that he goes in the right direction to relieve oneself because the place has already been 'marked' by other deportees. A popular Russian song of those times comes to his mind: *Our native country is so wide – so many rivers, forests and fields…* The country is really wide, but for a 'special case' a place is allowed only under the train.[15] Akvilė Indrašytė-Jakovleva dramatically reveals the experience of 'the call of nature' under the train wagons as well:

> *Women and men, children – all together under the train… Not too long, some of them didn't manage to return on time… Once, an old man didn't manage to come out from under the wagon in time, so the wheel of the train cut his leg. Swear-words, laugh, loud speeches were heard – so the orderly men went for an old man. From that time it was forbidden to go under the wagons.*[16]

The Lithuanian national consciousness is reflected in choosing a life partner and avoiding marriage with non-Lithuanians. In Avižienytė-Žukauskienė's story there is a very comical episode depicting what happened when her sons grew up as very handsome men and started to be 'attacked' by Russian women. As one of the sons (Stasys) did not pay any attention to a Russian woman who was interested in him, she started to 'negotiate' with his mother:

> *She started to attack the teacher especially, however without luck. Once she said to me:*
>
> *'Am I beautiful?'*
>
> *'Of course you are beautiful. You are so slim, your eyes are so big and beautiful and your hair is a real masterpiece!', I said to her because she was really beautiful.*
>
> *'Then why doesn't your son value all this?'*
>
> *'Nonsense! He values all this very much and looks up to you as well. We always praise you for your culture and activity…', I was ready to say more, but she stopped me:*
>
> *'Then why doesn't he want to have such a 'treasure'?'*
>
> *I didn't know that Stasys refused to sleep with her…*
>
> *'I'm not asking him to live with me for the whole life, but while I'm here, I want a man.'*
>
> *I have to admit I was stunned by this confession. I never thought that a woman could say this, although she is a Soviet gipsy and of hot temper.*
>
> *'Marija Georgijevna, I think it won't work. I will not play cupid to my son. Look for some Russian man. They are more decent… Lithuanians are very cold blooded…'*
>
> *'Anyway, if we had an opportunity to stay alone, I would seduce him. He wouldn't resist.'*
>
> *She astonished me. I couldn't imagine such a passion.*
>
> *'Well, Marija, I may help you to deal with arithmetical tasks, but I refuse to help you in love tasks. Please, do not mention anything similar in future, still I will not tell my son about our conversation and your wishes.'*
>
> *She left me disappointed and unsatisfied.*[17]

Alekna's story emphasizes a psycholinguistic aspect: under the hard living and weather conditions in Siberia, experiencing the brutality of supervisors, the exiles' emotional state is expressed by the most terrible debris of a language (and sense), i.e.

swearwords, which very quickly passed into the consciousness of the people of various nations, especially men's speech and consciousness:

> *Not only Ukrainians or Kazakhs, but even our brothers Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians have learned this poor language… Though they didn't understand the Russian language, not understanding what these swearwords coming out from their mouths mean, they could understand people of other nation by means of this distinctive language of swearwords. Polish people were swearing as well, though they had their own swearwords, which were used among the Polish, and while talking with people of other nation they 'used' swearwords of Russian origin. The international swearword language was heard everywhere: at work and in barracks, on the road, in the bathhouse or ambulatory… People used these swearwords lard and richly, when they were fighting for some meaningless things… Almost everyone was using them, perhaps only our women could move their tongues for these pearls of language.*[18]

This description of the usage of language pearls' brings out certain irony in the voice of the narrator.

The discussed fragments of stories demonstrate how an individual person mingles with people of other nations. The stories not only clearly reflect the vision of the world and present a man who perceives himself as a member of a nation, but also represent individual values and existential anxiety for one's own life and individual choices. This individuality is especially felt in Alekna's memoirs *Ak, ta Vorkuta*.

Existential values in memoirs by Alekna

In the Siberian stories, a significant role is played by letters and fragments from diaries, in which the individual moves from his/her own experience to reflections on existential values. The deep structure of the soul, existential tension, the issues of faith, the experiences of love and death are revealed in Alekna's diaries and letters. In his diary, for instance, he describes his empathy on Maundy Thursday: he wonders how faithful he is, what the faith and his relation to God means to him in general. He admits that the dynamics of faith changes: *I always believed, but I was not practicing, whereas in youth faith is frivolous, because life is quite sinful*. He tells his rosary and writes:

> *[..] however, now I am lost like Dante in the middle of the century. When I read an article against the faith I start doubting in the confidence of my convictions. Some priests and their activities have even strengthened my doubts. But all these moments of doubts pass and I return to my faith.*[19]

Alekna's self-awareness is most clearly revealed when reading books and considering his life in the light of the fiction he reads. While reading he was recording quotes from books, which coincided with his own thoughts and inspired him to write his own story. He wrote about it, *Though everything was planned till the end in my head – a death in tundra under the wheels of a train, but I couldn't find more time or mood to continue the started story…*[20]. Together with many other quotes, Alekna recorded words from the book *A Wind from South* by Elmar Grin: *Stop giving food to people and they will start looking at each other like wolfs*[21]. It seems that it was very important to him to perceive his everyday routine through fictional experience. Repeating Romaine Rolland's words from *Jean Christoph*: *suffer, die, but be whom you have to be – a human*, Alekna

writes: *Be a human*. And for him *being a human* relates not to some highest ideals, but with a very natural vision – love to a woman: *And that a person wants to take pleasure with a donated Eve by God*[22]. Just after these words had been written, Alekna is sort of afraid of them and remembers Torquato Tasso's words in *Jerusalem Delivered* about a woman, that fictionally extinguishes the real impulses of his love desire:

> *Only when you get closer, horrors will appear from everywhere, and then only God will help: duty, pride, decency, public opinion and disdain… You don't have to look, you just have to go straight; and then little by little all the horrors disappear and you see a cozy and bright bridge builder, where verdant mints blossom in. But woe is you if at the very beginning your heart will shiver and you will look back*.[23]

One of the main existential values – love to an individual – is reconsidered by Alekna on the basis of fictional experience, basically in the light of Faustian tension. As already mentioned, the explicit expression of existential values is present in those memoir stories that integrate the genres of letter and diary. The creative reality of the Siberian stories demonstrates adherence to a lot of genres: not only letters, but also fairy tale, anecdote, short story, and others.

Memoir literature and other genres

A multigenre is a result of a subject's individual expression – the feature typical of novels. As the analysis of the selected Siberian stories has disclosed, this aspect is specific to the Siberian stories as well.

The conventional expressions typical of traditional folk tale are used most often. Like in tales, the portrayed people are often very clearly differentiated – good people gain good looks and vice versa. For instance, Ambrozaitytė describes her uncle Leonas: he is like a duke, more handsome than artists and his *iced clothes reminded a hero of a tale, fighting with evil and defeating all dragons*[24].

The experience of a miracle is the most important component of a tale. It obtains two versions in Siberian tales: the experience of miraculous transformations and the routine of miracle. The experiences of miraculous transformations are shown in the situations when the laughing cold attempts to turn a human into ice:

> *A first meeting with permanent cold was as a wild and cruel dream, as a bad tale, where cold like an enemy trains into the life of snow castle through the doors, where an angry fairies ice everyone who came into their castle, even turn children into ghosts*.[25];

> *I had seen the Nothern lights, which with the move of a magic stick were reflecting a lost world. [..] A fear was on everyone's faces, as if everybody was afraid of mythological Gorgon, there was terror in the air, everyone was afraid of the terrible cold, which was just waiting to turn a human into ice*.[26]

The reality of the Siberian cold here is reflected by the expressive means typical of the genre of tale.

The second category of miraculous transformations is positive, when the narrator moves to a dream world, where changes take place according to the laws of tales. For instance, a little girl jumps from one floe to another flowing in a rapid river and ignores

the sense of danger, focusing only on the game, she does not notice when she starts to fantasize:

> *[..] I can imagine myself in a great ice castle. Taters immediately transform into the most beautiful princess's clothes there, embroidered with flowers, painted in ornaments. Fairies enweave marvelous ribbons into my long plaits with spangles, fluttering with the wind their emphatic colors change and glitter. Everything around is shining, I am listening to the music; it sounds and takes me on invisible wings.*[27]

Very important for living and surviving is to keep identification with one's gender, for instance, a girl's need to be a princess is depicted using the motifs from fairy tales and is interestingly repeated in Avižienytė's stories. A will to live – to be – is expressed in parallel with the wish 'to look' in a particular way, especially in the stories by women. Even the heroine's vital instinct of living is directly connected with the wish to remain a woman in these stories. Juzė Avižienytė-Žukauskienė remembers that after she had mended clothes for one Polish woman, she had a possibility to buy a coat and flannel housecoat from her. Then she made a housecoat into a very beautiful dress. While talking about it, she never loses the opportunity to laugh about herself: *Oh, I made such a good 'frantė' (dress). Even legs have recovered*[28]. Here, not only a wish "to look good" is important, but also the self-irony, the ability to laugh about oneself, is significant.

Talking about miracles, it is seen that stylistic means of tale are often used to depict the beauty of nature. While trying to draw a picture of the northern lights, Viktoras Alekna invokes intonations of tales: *like a magician or a magus from tales he is laying the strips of silk in the space of heaven, folds them, rolls, unfolds, lifts upwards, downwards, as if checking the intensity of colors, paints them with both lighter or darker tones…*[29]

Non-miraculous things in the Siberian stories often obtain the status of a miracle. The subjects of stories, people suffering from hunger and cold, seem to be more sensitive to living circumstances than to the interpretation of miracle. It is interesting that the mentioned magic experiences are related to the experiences during Christian holidays – Easter and Christmas. The miracle is most successfully described by Juzė Avižienytė-Žukauskienė: when she was boiling the stolen wheat grits for Easter and singing *Hallelujah*, the door opened and the man, from whose house roof her sons had removed snow, but had not been paid for this job, walked in and brought a bucket of sauerkrauts with a few cucumbers and three liters of milk. It was a miracle for people living in hunger.[30]

In almost every Lithuanian story about Siberia there are many typical Siberian proverbs: e.g. *Zdes zakon taigi, prokuror – medved*[31] [Here is the law of taiga, the procurator is bear]. Avižienytė-Žukauskienė remembers that her brother's friends after entering the nautical school wrote in their letters: *Chorošo more s berega, korablj – na kartinke, a kačka – v restorane*[32] [the sea is good on the seashore, a ship – in the picture, and swinging – in a restaurant]. Local sagas also often interfere in memories. For instance, Ambrazaitytė remembers her aunt Ana's story, explaining why it is so cold in Siberia:

> *Long, long time ago it was very hot on the Earth, as there were many suns in the sky. The Earth became a desert, small rivers went dry and the big Janisiejus sank. Then a sharp shaman from locals turned up. He was a hero. He shot with an arrow and knocked down the unnecessary suns. Thus, the sun almost never appears in the North, warms the Earth only a little.*[33]

Some stories, having an especially strong emotional load, crystallize into a separate story, which could absolutely compete with fictional stories of similar type. As an example one Ambrazaitytė's story could be mentioned. In this story she tells what happened when she as a little girl went for a long journey to a Russian woman to borrow some milk, as all her house had got sick. On her way back, the girl got lost. The episode of the girl's farewell to life, her visions, when she was between life and death, and the reality of the northern lights, which saved her, are represented with a great artistic force:

> *I could feel as if someone was poking me, tickling me, sort of pushing me, sometimes even roughly and painfully twitching me upwards. I could feel as if someone gently took me and raised me up, pulling me from a pit. It seemed that someone caressed me as gentle as mother's arm did, forced me to raise my head and open my eyes. My consciousness returns slowly, I start to realize that I am looking at the sparkling and shimmering Polar light. The light of the Height just jumping, loping, it becomes lighter, although still tingling in the ears, a body, being enchained, recovers, and the eyes see heaven with changing colors of a rainbow. I understand this is the reflections of the Polar light, which are waking me up. They are above me; they are mystery, while swinging they are calling me to swing together. The Light, swiveling in spiral, turned the darkness into stripes of light; it plays there – above – beside my head, sparkles in all colors of light spectrum… It twinkles… falls down, but never falls to the ground, flashes and demonstrates it luxury veils, scribbles them against my eyes. I stare to this glamour miracle like to some tale, I see moving colorful colors, wanting to play with me, and smiling. Looking to the veils of the Light suddenly very closely I see a heated black chimney of our house. I can feel a returning forces, I jump like a spiral out of drift and shout very loudly: 'U-N-C-L-E'*[34]

The narrators regard their life as the theatre where they are the artists and the Siberian life details are poor decorations.[35] Nijolė Ambrozaitytė very often treats the situations of life in Siberia as the theatre of the absurd. For instance, she describes the reaction at school to the news of Stalin's death when everyone – teachers and schoolchildren – started to cry with sobbing.

> *Seeing and hearing doleful moaning I thought that after the Leader has died, humanity would be wretched, similarly as we are, and some of them will not make such cruel destiny. The whole school was crying. The collective crying started to look like a competition: who will sniff his nose longer and more tearfully, whose eyes will flow with tearful tears, who will break arms more assuredly because of the terrible elemental disaster – he will be the one who will win a prize of crying or will be recorded in Guinness Record book. The story of crying continued. [..] I could not make myself cry, thus I was feeling uncomfortable, sort of being converser to those who were crying. Being afraid, that the teacher will condemn me if I do not cry, I started to pinch myself – it did not help, I started to bite my tongue – not a single tear. I was standing scared and looked at the crying classmates. But when Nina Nikolajevna came closer to me, her face was puffy and ugly with tears, and my bench-mate Raja Petrova fell on the table all crying, I could not resist and even me – because of a public solidarity, I started to cry and even very loudly.*[36]

Ambrazaitytė also represents the absurd situations related to her hobby of reading. She remembers the stories about Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver, and Cinderella, which she read in Lithuania. She dreams to read books written by Jules Verne, and when she enters

the library, she sees many books with the same Russian title *Дело*, that in the English language means 'File': *Дело* on the table, *Дело* on the cupboard, *Дело* under the table, on the shelves; what there could be seen, was only *Дело*. She thought, maybe *Дело* was the name of a writer or a title of a tale or a novel[37]. This anecdotal episode reveals the Siberian reality, which for the child is difficult to understand. There are many jokes in the stories by Siberian exiles. Most often anecdotal situations happen because of misunderstanding. Alekna describes an unexpected anecdotal situation, which he experienced directly: being angry with other people who very quickly adopt the language of swear-words, he tells a word *suka* ('bitch') to a Russian, instead of a word *sucho* ('dry'). Ambrozaitytė also describes an anecdotal situation: when they were balancing on the edge of a real hunger, they received a parcel full of various goods from the distant Canada, in which some black beans with the name *coffee* were included. The beans were absolutely useless, because they did not soften even after boiling them for two hours long. Alekna, talking about his friend, presents a conversation, which became an anecdote and cost 10 years of prison: once they were given very watery and tasteless soup. Then his fellow said, *If Stalin knew what kind of soup we eat, he would punish the cooks, as Russians say 'prikurit' ('hell')*. Some snitch heard all this and rephrased these words as follows:

> *Why don't they serve such soup to Stalin for lunch… And that was enough: he was sentenced to 10 years in camp.*[38]

While trying to assign an individual story to the genre of memoir or autobiography, it is important to understand which kind of reflection dominates in the story – the reflection of the world or the reflection of the individual. It is clear that the observation of the world and others is dominant in the Siberian stories. And according to this, they are rightly assigned to memoir genre. The task of this article was to reveal the conditions under which the narrator of the memoirs about Siberia comes closer to the narration mode of autobiography (and novel) and what kind of narration strategy the Siberian stories represent.

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Ilona Ļaha

CHILDHOOD MEMORY SKETCHES IN THE LATVIAN LITERATURE OF 1991

Summary

Childhood memories are a kind of a revived picture of the past. Many Latvian writers' stories about childhood memories have roots in what has been experienced in their childhood. New childhood memory sketches both in poetry and prose have appeared in Latvian literature since 1991.

After the regaining of independence in 1991, various changes in Latvia's political, economic, and cultural life have been taking place gradually. The most radical changes are to be observed in the sphere of literature.

Memory stories are also historical testimonies, life stories about people's fates, memoir literature about the time when Latvia was a free state, about occupation of Latvia, World War II and refugee camps, years of anguish in Siberia, and as such they compensated for the lack of the 20th century history of Latvian nation yet unwritten then and expressed the feeling of abuse committed by the Soviet regime and national pain caused by it.

Two especially outstanding examples of Latvian autobiographical writings are Vizma Belševica's trilogy: 'Bille', 'Bille dzīvo tālāk' (Bille Continues to Live), 'Billes skaistā jaunība' (The Wonderful Life of Bille) and Sandra Kalniete's 'Ar balles kurpēm Sibīrijas sniegos' (With Dance Shoes in Siberian Snows).

Both authoresses touch upon the issues which have been silenced for more than 50 years, because only in 1999, after the renewal of independence in Latvia, the opportunity appeared to reveal to the society problems forbidden till then. Perhaps due to the fact that Kalniete spent in Siberia only a little bit more than four years, her childhood memoirs are depicted in bright and pleasant colours, while Belševica had to go through both occupation and war.

The category of memory is significant in childhood narratives of both authoresses. Writers rely on real events that have taken place in their childhood. By including autobiographical details into their texts and revealing the phenomenon of a child from the angle of the subjective world perception, Belševica and Kalniete have become part of the common cultural space of the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century.

Key-words: Latvian literature, Belševica, Kalniete, childhood, memory sketches, category of memory, photographs, the image of mother, past time – 'that time'

*

Memory has the ability to retain the events of the past and depict them in the present. Memory forms person's identity and structures the world; it links the separate elements of human experience into an undivided whole and thus becomes a vital

component of the process of personality development. Memories accompany us throughout the whole lifetime; they participate in shaping it, as it is shown by the Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer in his poem *Memories see me*:

> *I have to go out into the green space of memory; memories watch me. They are invisible and melt into the distance and turn into very good chameleons.*[1]

Childhood memories are a kind of a revived picture of the past. Being a favourite theme of narratives in Latvian literature, childhood is a special time and a special space. Looking back on her childhood memories Vizma Belševica writes:

> *Almost every writer once feels an overwhelming desire to look back on his/her childhood, especially when s/he is already old and, odd as it might seem, remembers his/her childhood better than the events that have happened an hour or month ago.*[2]

Many Latvian writers' stories about childhood memories have roots in what has been experienced in their childhood. Childhood lays a foundation for the whole adult's lifetime, and from childhood we take with us love, understanding, and kindness of our parents and relatives.

New childhood memory sketches both in poetry and prose have appeared in Latvian literature since 1991. To understand why it was just the turn of the 1980–90s that introduced a new stage in literature and aroused growing interest in autobiographical writings, we have to consider the situation in Latvia before 1991.

Since 1940, literature in Latvia was closely linked to the mainstream political and ideological positions of the Soviet Union. Artistic values, traditions, market demand, taste and fashion were no longer of any importance. During the Soviet period, literature became the principal promulgator and panegyrist of the ideas of communist power.

After the regaining of independence in 1991, various changes in Latvia's political, economic, and cultural life have been taking place gradually. The most radical changes are to be observed in the sphere of literature. The traditions of translating foreign literature have also changed. The changes have made both writers and readers look at the world in a different way, including literature in which much has been held back and not apprehended. The increasing awareness of the tragic history (occupation, deportation, exile) could also be considered as a feature of the new Latvian literature of this time. As a result, the amplitude of the autobiographical stories and search for original expression forms expanded. Moreover, the most essential changes in the literature development process are concerned with certain corrections just in the writer – reader relationship sphere.

Guntis Berelis, writer and literary critic, writes about the changes in literature of the 1990s:

> *[..] Changes are too comprehensive to be considered a short-term or accidental whim of literature (or an individual writer). Writers try to acquire those areas of literature whose boundaries the men of letters have avoided crossing evaded to up to now. Literature is making an attempt to live according to its own regulations. In other words, the paradigm of literature changes again.*[3]

This is a period when several works of autobiographical prose appeared. Among these, works by women-writers occupy an important place: *Ekshumācija* (Exhumation, 1990),

Kumeļa gadi (Years of Youth, 1993), *Vējgāze* (A Wind-Throw, 1996) by Anita Liepa, *Vēstules mātei* (Letters for Mother, 1998) by Margita Gūtmanis, *Sieviete dzintarā* (A Woman in Amber, 1997) by Agate Nesaule, trilogy (further in the text: Trilogy of Bille) *Bille* (1992 – in the USA, 1995 – in Latvia), *Bille dzīvo tālāk* (Bille Continues to Live, 1996), *Billes skaistā jaunība* (The Wonderful Life of Bille, 1999) by Vizma Belševica, *Ar balles kurpēm Sibīrijas sniegos* (With Dance Shoes in Siberian Snows, 2001) by Santa Kalniete, etc. These books provide evidence on the historical period of Latvia of the time where history is as a fact as well as childhood memory stories. As a result, 'white spots' in the history of Latvia have been identified and described not only factually but also artistically. The tendency to focus on the past was a kind of response to the collapse of the socialist regime, the decline of the Soviet Union, time of disorders and regaining of independence by many countries. Memory stories are also historical testimonies, life stories about people's fates, memoir literature about time when Latvia was a free state, about occupation of Latvia, World War II and refugee camps, years of anguish in Siberia, and as such they compensated for the lack of the 20th century history of Latvian nation yet unwritten then and expressed the feeling of abuse committed by the Soviet regime and national pain caused by it.

The present article regards two especially outstanding examples of Latvian autobiographical writings, namely Vizma Belševica's trilogy: *Bille*, *Bille Continues to Live*, *The Wonderful Life of Bille* and Sandra Kalniete's *With Dance Shoes in Siberian Snows*.

The reply to the question why just these two writers have been chosen might be as follows: Belševica and Kalniete are among those few writers whose names are known in Scandinavia, especially in Sweden because Belševica's *Trilogy of Bille* and Kalniete's *With Dance Shoes in Siberian Snows* are translated into Swedish; besides the second book of Bille's Trilogy *Bille un karš* (Bille and War) is the first Latvian book broadcast in full on Swedish National Radio.

Several essential differences can be identified in Belševica and Kalniete's childhood sketches. First, Belševica depicts the space and time of Latvia in the 1930 – 40s from the position of a child, while Kalniete describes the life of her relatives – mother, father, grandmother, and grandfather – in Siberia in the 1940 – 50s. Her narrative is mainly based on various interviews, archival documents, stories of her parents, letters, and only an insignificant part of the novel is based on the writer's childhood memories. In a well-considered plot and composition of the narrative, the author has included the tragic story of her family, deportation of her mother, father, and grandparents to Siberia. While reading the book, the boundaries between one's own suffering and that of other people vanish because any Latvian might have been in the place of Kalniete's parents. Unlike memory sketches of other writers, Kalniete's attitude to what she describes differs in a carefully selected empirical material.

Belševica's *Trilogy of Bille* depicts the complicated childhood of the main character as well as parent – children relationships in the pre-war, war, and post-war Latvia. Belševica admits:

> *Childhood is no idyll as it is traditionally presented. This is a hard and very emotional time. Youth is even more painful.*[4]

In memory sketches of *Trilogy of Bille*, the subject depicts her own version of the official history. The time described is the past time – 'that time'. Besides, the description

reveals the model of a child's perception, whereas the evaluation from the viewpoint of an adult person is hidden in the deeper layers of the text. In Belševica's text the attention is more focused on time, epoch, past time, child's emotional experience and feelings at that time, and the destiny of a nation is reflected through the childhood memories of the characters.

Kalniete recalls her childhood in Siberia as follows: *In my memories of Siberia there is not a single black spot, because my world was confined to the love of my parents.*[5] The author has depicted the difficult life of her parents and grandparents in *this God and people's forsaken corner*[6]. However, in both Belševica and Kalniete's texts there is a dominant of the vector of the past, the space of Latvia and that of Siberia are viewed in the light of people's memories and emotional experience.

In both texts, **photographs** take a special place because they are direct witnesses of the past and are linked with memories. If in the 19th century people were yet quite skeptical about photography[7] but in the 20th century it was endowed with a special status.

Photography is a visual mode of information; it is a bridge to the past which helps to remember bygone and forgotten events and people.

The title of the first chapter of the first part of Bilševica's trilogy is *Family Album*, and this implies that photography is a bearer of the information on the past. Kalniete also points out that photographs, often viewed, helped them to live.

In Belševica's *Trilogy of Bille* as well as in Kalniete's *With Dance Shoes in Siberian Snows* there is a wide system of space centered around **home**.

In the works of both writers, home is a family space, it is a space unit possessing a close emotional link, home is a keeper of family memories. Harmony at home is possible only if both parents are present there because the core of the home is father and mother.

The feeling of home in the works of both writers, but especially in Belševica's *Trilogy of Bille*, first and foremost has a bearing on the image of **mother**.

Throughout the whole of Belševica's trilogy, the greatest tragedy of Bille is the fact that the child feels unloved and neglected by her mother. The first book of the trilogy, *Bille*, and the beginning of the second book *Bille Continues to Live* are mainly concerned just with these relations between mother and daughter. Every failure to get closer to her mother hardens Bille's heart more and more. Every time when Bille gets into mischief, or her mother is in a bad mood, but quite often for no reason at all, mother addresses her using rude, harsh words and calls her denigrating names as *lēvurs*, *kraupis*, *dullā*, *muļķe, jēlnadzis*, *lemesis*, *knauķis* etc. (all of them are taboo and swear words in Latvian). *Mama would jab at her, shake her and call her a scab, or even worse – her father's daughter and the accursed blood of the Gūtmaņi.*[8] *The Gūtmaņi blood* is a phrase that clearly shows the dissatisfaction of Bille's mother with her life and disastrous marriage but not with some abstract evil. Being unable to forgive her husband her unhappy life, mother becomes ill-tempered every time she sees Bille who bears a strong resemblance to her father, and she cannot help taking a hostile and negative attitude to her child.

The destructive figure of mother is supposed to facilitate Bille's closer contacts with her father, but father's disfunctionality makes it impossible. In Bille's opinion, after he went bankrupt father changed from a strong figure into a weak and unprotected

one, besides, he lost his authority because he failed to be a bread-winner for his family and to support his wife and Bille. To Bille's mind, blood is the element which is common to her and her father and unites them both, but the bad blood of her father makes her perceive herself negatively; this is the reason why she is so clumsy, slow, and awkward. This blood is a shame that should be hidden from other people.

> *Dark blood, almost black. Accursed blood of the Gūtmaņi. Perhaps Bille also has the same blood, and mama hates them both for this. Mama's blood must be light and pure.*[9]

Kalniete depicts quite different family relations, relations full of love, loyalty, and responsibility for each other. Her father was *the family stronghold. It was the father who took all the essential decisions, leaving rest of the family members with the impression that they were those who had made the decision.*[10]

These two autobiographical texts, though produced at the same time, are difficult to compare because the depiction of time and space in them are different. Space is to be especially emphasized here because one text is set in Latvia, but other – in Siberia. However, these childhood memory sketches have many factors in common.

First, both authoresses touch upon the issues which have been silenced for more than 50 years, because only in 1999, after the renewal of independence in Latvia, the opportunity appeared to reveal to the society problems forbidden till then.

Perhaps due to the fact that Kalniete spent in Siberia only a little bit more than four years, her childhood memoirs are depicted in bright and pleasant colours, while Belševica had to go through both occupation and war.

The category of memory is significant in childhood narratives of both authoresses. Writers rely on real events that have taken place in their childhood. For both of them it is important to convey very precisely and to the minutest nuances their characters' frame of mind, feelings and thoughts at some definite moment. Belševica describes the events of her youth, while Kalniete pictures destinies of her parents and grandparents pointing out that *exile is sure to have left an imprint on me and on psychology and value orientation of my generation*[11].

In Belševica's *Trilogy of Bille*, by combining creative imagination with real facts, an autobiographical text has been created in which there is an important place for both the depiction of the image of childhood and the stratum of the consciousness peculiarities of an adult author. Besides, the subjective world perception prevails in the trilogy. In Kalniete's novel, an essential part is given to documentary evidence, facts, and parents' memories.

On reviewing Latvian poetry, Swedish scientist Per Wastberg emphasizes that *it is almost next to impossible to read Latvian poetry without thinking about occupants, Germans and Russians, deportations, treachery, deceit – and about secret fighting in order to save language and culture.*[12] It should be mentioned that this could be attributed to the Latvian prose of the end of the 20th century as well, especially to that part of literature which appeared in Scandinavia.

In the conclusion it should be pointed out that by including autobiographical details into their texts and by revealing the phenomenon of a child from the angle of the subjective world perception, Belševica and Kalniete have become part of the common cultural space of the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century.

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Irina Belobrovtseva

THE ESTONIAN MUSCOVITE DAVID SAMOYLOV

Summary

The purpose of this article is to account for the unique case of the outstanding Russian poet who was born in Moscow and spent in Estonia last 15 years of his life. The main body of this article considers David Samoylov's life in the small Estonian town Pärnu, his position in Estonian society and in the writers' community in 1976 – 1990. Samoylov's status as an outsider leads to the hypothesis that his previous aqcuaintances and contacts with Estonian literati had grown much weaker owing to the national consciousness upsurge in Estonia in the 1980s.

Key-words: David Samoylov, the generation of poets born on battlefields, Pärnu and Moscow, semi-emigration, outsider position, a translator of Estonian poets, national question, Lacanian mirror-stage, spatialisation

*

Speaking of one of the most prominent Russian poets of the second half of the 20th century, David Samoylov (1920 – 1990), one cannot but mention Estonia: it was here that Samoylov spent the last 15 years of his life, in a small town called Pärnu.

Many thought it strange: D. Samoylov was Moscow born and bred. It was in Moscow that he finished school, and in Moscow he entered the legendary Institute of Philology, Literature and History, which had produced a whole generation of talented writers, historians, and philosophers, and was disbanded in 1941. It was from Moscow that Samoylov, who belonged to *the generation of poets born on battlefields*, went to war. By the fall of 1942, he became a machine gunner, was wounded in his very first battle, and, once healed, made into a clerk; yet he managed to arrange for himself to be sent to the front line, became an intelligence officer, and the war ended for him in Berlin.

Samoylov reminisced war in his poetry (his poem *Сороковые-роковые* (The Fateful Forties) became a classic piece in Russian literature) as well as in prose and interviews. However paradoxical it may sound, he was in a sense grateful to these times, and many a front line soldier could second his confession: *It was a time of our internal harmony*[1]. The war simplified the relationship between a human being and the power bodies as well as between humans. A single common task remained for all: to defend their motherland. It was the very thing that gave to a person who was at war the sense of freedom, a withdrawal from *the zone of doublethink*, from a contradiction between word and action.

Having made his debut as a poet during the pre-war times, Samoylov was in no haste to release his first book (the collection *Nearby Lands* was first published only in 1958), yet he translated a lot – from French (Arthur Rimbaud), Polish (Cyprian Kamil Norwid, Julian Tuwim), Serbian (Desanka Maksimovich), Lithuanian (Eduardas Meželaitis), Czech, Albanian, etc.

The very first book brought fame to Samoylov, and those who read the verse lines closely find in the poem *Nearby Lands* a hymn to Warsaw that rose against the Nazi and perished. It was written with deep compassion and an equally deep feeling of guilt: the Soviet army, staying out of the battle between those who revolted and the fascists, stood on the other bank of the Vistula. The internal harmony of a human being who fights for the just cause is violated and trampled upon. *Это было на том берегу* [It was on the other shore] reads the poem, or else it would not have made through the censorship. Yet the draft version is *Мы стояли на том берегу* [We stood on the other shore], which means that the poet shares the responsibility with those who did not come to aid the perishing city.

Popularity, acknowledgement, the love of the readership – Samoylov had it all in full measure. Sociable and easy to get on with, jovial, and a master of improvisation as well as epigrams and jokes, he was a magnet for people. A great many of his friends and acquaintances called him, a person of a medium height and somewhat slight of frame, not by his biblical name David, but rather by the friendly, curt and merry, almost boyish, version – Dezik. In Moscow circles, he was invariably the life and soul of the company. Yet this title had a downside: at any rate, his young wife insisted on leaving the noisy and at times unceremonious Moscow for some quiet place, where her husband could work and she could take care of him and bring up their three children. At first, the role of such a quiet place was given to their summerhouse in Opaliha settlement near Moscow. It has entered the poetical history: many grateful, at times rapturous lines in Samoylov's poetry are dedicated to Opaliha.

Yet once, when the summerhouse, too, had become all too crowded with people, in the summer of 1975, the Samoylovs made up their mind to spend their holiday in the then fashionable Baltic region, in Pärnu. This decided their fate for the upcoming 15 years. The visit to Pärnu had at the same time become an exodus from Moscow. At first, the Samoylov circle was of the opinion that he would not stand it to be far away from Moscow for any length of time. However, as one of Samoylov's friends from that time recounts, *The years in Pärnu have all the same, if but a little, prolonged his life*[2].

Already before he moved to Pärnu, Samoylov had been translating Estonian poetry: he was introduced to it by a dear friend of his, a Moscow Estonian Leon Toom (1921 – 1969), a poet and a translator, whose poems, alongside with the translations of Estonian poets, are collected in the book *Among Friends* (Tallinn 1976). In the foreword to this edition, Boris Slutskiy, having dubbed Toom *a poet of translation*, recalled how Toom had been fervently convincing talented Russian poets to take up translation of Estonian authors. Samoylov dedicated to Toom a section of the poem *The Last Holiday* (1972 – 1974), where, bidding farewell to him, he called him a *good friend*, *dear friend*, *eternal friend*. It is also to Toom, who was the first to show Samoylov Tallinn, that the volume of verse and translations of Estonian poets, *Toominga Street* (Tallinn 1981) is dedicated.

In the presentation of this book, which he proudly referred to as my Estonian booklet', to the readers, Samoylov admits in the foreword:

> *After the first journey, I have begun to constantly yearn for Estonia. I have visited its various localities [..] and made acquaintance with many littérateurs. I would like to hereby remember kindly the deceased August Sang and Juhan Smuul.*[3]

These two names of Estonian writers set side by side reveal that Samoylov was not privy to the Estonian cultural space. Certainly, he was not aware that between the point at which August Sang's (1914 – 1969) poetry was published in the magazine *Eesti Kirjandus* (Estonian Literature) in 1940 and his subsequent appearance in front of the readership with his poetry, 16 years had passed. Unable to 'tame' the 'bourgeois' poet, the Stalin authorities had simply expelled him from the Union of Writers during the years 1950 – 1956, which at that time implied a total cut off from literature and making translation the only possibility to earn one's daily bread.

Quite the opposite is the biography of Johannes Smuul (1922 – 1971), a poet, a prose writer, a dramatist and a publicist. He and Samoylov were united by their military past: Smuul was drafted to the Red Army during the mobilisation in 1941, but after an illness, he stayed in a reserve regiment of the Estonian Rifle Corps, and after demobilisation at the beginning of 1944, Smuul quickly became a public Soviet figure and a Soviet politician. Already in 1952, he was awarded the Stalin Prize, in 1961 – the Lenin Prize (in the field of social and political journalism). In 1971 – 1989, an annual literary prize in the name of Smuul was being awarded (until it was discontinued during the period of *perestroika*).

The *outsider position* (M. M. Bakhtin) is also reflected in the choice of authors whose poetry is included in *Toominga Street*. Omitting the classical authors (Lydia Koidula, Ado Reinvald, Karl Eduard Sööt), one can briefly characterise the remaining five poets. Debora Vaarandi's (1916 – 2007) biography was initially developing along the lines of that of a typical Soviet poet, yet gradually, the poeticized Estonian landscape and interrelations among people became the permeating motif in her poetry.[4] Because of her profound religiousness, she removed herself from the public social and political life. Ralf Parve (1919) was drafted to the Red Army during mobilisation in 1941, up until 1989 he was a member of the Communist party, a public figure who in his creative work shared the socialist values. Jaan Kross (1920 – 2007) is one of the best renowned Estonian writers (during the last 15 years, he has been repeatedly nominated for the Nobel Prize). During World War II, he was arrested by the German Occupation authorities (1943 – 44) and in 1946 – 54, by the Soviet ones, sent to the concentration camp in the Autonomous Republic of Komi, after which he was exiled to Krasnoyarsk district. Striving to escape the pressure of the totalitarian regime, Kross became a freelancer from 1954. During the period of *perestroika*, already holding a great authority in the literary and social spheres, he became a Member of Parliament (Riigikogu). Ellen Niit (1928), a famous author of children's literature, has most likely entered the lists of the authors translated for *Toominga Street* as the spouse of Jaan Kross. And finally, the last poet belonging to a younger generation than Samoylov and the rest of his already above-named peers, Paul-Erik Rummo (1942), became already after publishing the first collection of poems one of the most popular Estonian poets, who reflected in his works the internal tension and desperation at the sight of the cloven social public consciousness of his contemporaries. The publishing of Rummo's collection of poems *Saatja aadress* (The Sender's Address, 1972) was forbidden, and from that moment on, Rummo became the banner for the Estonian youth's resistance against the inert socialist regime. In the new Estonia of the time of *perestroika* and regaining of independence, Rummo has shown his capabilities as a public figure and a politician, having served as a Member of Parliament and a minister.

The present excursus into the personalia of Estonian literature is made only with the aim of showing that Samoylov, although he was acquainted with Estonian poets, did not conceive of the profound contradictions in the Estonian society, which, during the years of stagnation, only appeared to be uniform on the surface. In truth, there existed, on the one hand, a fairly Soviet stratum, and on the other hand, a constant silent resistance to all things Soviet.

The perception of Tallinn (and, more broadly, Estonia as a whole) in the Soviet context from 1940 on, after the land was turned into a Soviet republic, and after World War II, when Estonia was once again incorporated in the USSR, had a specific character: under the impact of the ideological stereotypes of the Soviet propaganda, during the decennium following the war, the Soviet people perceived Estonia as a space of 'their own', thus being equated with any other Soviet territory. However, with the coming of the Political Thaw and the emergence of a new generation in the Russian public life, literature and art, the attitude towards Estonia changed fundamentally. The perception of 'our own' was superseded by that of 'alien' and undoubtedly 'other' space. The sociocultural symbolism of the poeticized Estonia, and Tallinn in particular, consisted in its becoming an analogue of not being involved in the 'Soviet reality'. It is an emblematic depiction of a free space, *trying on emigration*, as put by the Russian-American writer and literary critic Alexander Genis[5]. He was echoed by the Lithuanian-American poet Tomas Venclova who spoke of the *obviously, a palliative, surrogate – yet still West*[6].

Thus, Samoylov had come to be abroad. The self-immersed poet who, by his own admission, would relentlessly hear the 'creeping line', had hardly realized the change of his status in the eyes of those whom he translated.

A new phenomenon powerfully found its way and rooted itself in his poetry: spatialisation, i.e. *transformation of mental essences into the form of spatial representations*[7].

Samoylov's poetry, particularly at the very beginning of the Estonian period, is filled with a sensation of life in solitude with nature, between the sky and the sea.

* * *

И вот однажды ночью	*And so, one night*
Я вышел, пело море.	*I went out, the sea was singing.*
Деревья тоже пели.	*The trees were singing also.*
Я шел без всякой цели.	*I walked without an aim.*
Каким-то тайным звуком	*By some secret sound*
Я был в ту пору позван.	*I was called upon at that time.*
И к облакам и звездам	*And towards the clouds and the stars*
Я шел без всякой цели [..]	*I walked without an aim [..]*

(1976)

For the Muscovite Samoylov who lived almost at the very shore of Pärnu Bay, for a while the sea became most important in his life, since, as it suddenly turned out, he had always been missing it; it is not incidental that he sometimes spells the word *Залив* (The Bay) with a capital letter in his verse, which is not customary in Russian.

In the foreword to *Toominga Street* already mentioned above, Samoylov writes that he

> *[..] became attached to this town with my very soul. Pärnu has an 'arboreal' name, which in Russian would sound as Lipovetsk or Lipetsk [Lindenton in*

English]. [..] In this town, quiet and green, ***illuminated by the dual light of the sky and the sea***[8]*, [..] in a town where all seasons are good in their own way – the conditions for pondering and creativity are ideal.*[9]

The fact that the choice was deliberate is also underlined in the poem *The Bay*, which may provide the best answer as to why the poet settled in Pärnu.

Я сделал свой выбор. Я выбрал залив,
Тревоги и беды от нас отдалив,
А воды и небо приблизив.
Я сделал свой выбор и вызов. [..]

И куплено все дорогою ценой.
Но, кажется, что-то утрачено мной.
Утратами и обретеньем
Кончается зимняя темень.

(1977)

I have made my choice. I have chosen the bay,
Having distanced the worries and troubles from us
And having brought the waters and the sky closer.
I have made my choice – and my challenge. [..]

And everything is bought for a dear price.
Yet it seems as though something has been lost by me.
With losses and gains
Ends the winter darkness.

The town of Pärnu, the Pärnu landscape, is undoubtedly one of such gains. It is the Land of promise, even the beer cellar in the poem *A Frequenter* has the epithet of 'salvaging'; noteworthy are also the characterizations of the sea and the wave in the first of *Pärnu Elegies*:

Когда-нибудь и мы расскажем,	*Once upon a time we will also tell*
Как мы живем иным пейзажем,	*Of how we live by a different landscape*
Где море ***озаряет*** *нас,*	*Where the sea* ***illumines*** *us*
Где чертит на песке, ***как гений****,*	*Where, upon the sand,* ***like a genius****,*
Волна следы своих волнений	*A wave draws the traces of it perturbations*
И вмиг стирает, осердясь.	*And, in an instance, erases them, angered.*

(1976)

The works from the first years spent in Pärnu give evidence of establishing a connection between spatiality and the permeating motif of lightness, soaring, flying in Samoylov's poetry:

В Пярну легкие снега.	*In Pärnu, the snows are light.*
Так свободно и счастливо!	*It is so free and joyful!*

(1977)

One of his friends recollects how Samoylov once gladly remarked: *After all, we live much closer to the weather than Moscow does*[10].

Samoylov was a highly prominent figure in Pärnu. He was friends with school teachers and often met the students, particularly at the Estonian Lydia Koidula school, where there worked his Pärnu 'chronicler', Viktor Perelygin, teacher of Russian, who took hundreds of photos of the poet, his family and friends, and Valentina Perelygina,

his wife, also a teacher of Russian. An article in a capital city newspaper told of Samoylov's meeting with students which continued year after year: *These meetings turned into minuscule literary evenings*[11], where the students of classes with an in-depth study of Russian read poems and asked Samoylov questions, and he, coming back from yet another trip to Moscow, told them the news in the spheres of literature and culture.

Very many inhabitants of the town knew him, and he himself would proudly – though not without irony – say to his Moscow friends: *I am the poet, the only one in town. When I need something, I can turn directly to the higher-ups, and they will fix what I need*[12], never noticing that his words sounded somewhat ambiguously, and that he was allowed something prohibited to the inbred inhabitants of the town. One can also recall the anecdotic account, believed to be dated by 1980, of the pan-Pärnuan fame of Samoylov in the memoirs of a famous Russian actor, director and littérateur – Veniamin Smehov:

> *We showed up in Pärnu. Came by bus. It's night time. I am in a hurry, can't wait for my blessing. Suddenly, we realize: there's no way to get any alcohol, the shops are closed! On our way there's a café. Our union-internal Europe – an Estonian café… We came in, inquired, and what we got for an answer is no Europe or respect: 'We don't know Rashn language, have no cognac…' Right. Me, already hopeless: 'Sorry, maybe you happen to know where Toominga Street is?' Suddenly, there's a change, the Estonians lighten up nearly to a European level: 'Are you come to David Samoylov Rashn poet?' And the joy started bubbling.*[13]

At the same time, the new space affected his social position. In Moscow, some saw his departure as semi-emigration. The stagnation period with its double standards and doublethink could not but irritate Samoylov, and in this sense his moving to Estonia had, *among other things, freed him from the necessity to get dangerously involved in the public social life. As long as he lived in Moscow, it constituted a problem for him*[14]. Writer Mark Haritonov, the author of this reflection, recalls how Samoylov would not employ a human rights activist who returned from imprisonment as his literary secretary[15], and how many years later, already living in Pärnu, he enrolled another littérateur who had also served his sentence in a camp. To a great extent, this change was also spatial – as Joseph Brodsky keenly remarked, in the Empire, the climate is milder *in a province by the sea*.

Samoylov took pleasure in going to the Pärnu theatre *Endla* where performances were staged in Estonian, and he found volunteers to interpret. Expressing his joy over the staging of Yevgeniy Schwarz's *Cinderella*, he exclaimed: *It is not at all some provincial theatre in Russia that is bound by the regional Communist committee*. He praised the staging: *Very good, very rhythmic. Good costumes, colours*, as well as the young main director: *Ingo Normet is a very talented person. I have already seen three plays by him, and do not regret it in the least*[16].

Considerably more seldom did Samoylov socialize with the Estonian littrateurs, even though there was a shared creative seminar in the hall of the Estonian Union of Writers, where the Estonian side was represented by Jaan Kross, Ellen Niit, and Paul-Erik Rummo, but the Russian one – by David Samoylov and Svetlan Semenenko. Jaan Kross's family has entered Samoylov's early poems written already before moving to Pärnu. In *The Tallinn Ditty* this married couple of well-known Estonian writers is depicted as the friends of the poet:

Хорошо уехать в Таллин,	*It is nice to go to Tallinn*
Что уже снежком завален	*That's already heaped up with snow*
И уже зимой застелен.	*And already covered by winter.*
И увидеть Элен с Яном,	*And to see Ellen and Jaan,*
Да, увидеть Яна с Элен.	*Yes, to see Jaan and Ellen.*
Мне ведь многого не надо,	*I actually don't need much,*
Мой приезд почти бесцелен:	*My coming is nearly aimless:*
Побродить по ресторанам,	*To go to some restaurants,*
Постоять под снегопадом	*To stand in the snowfall*
И увидеть Яна с Элен,	*And to see Jaan and Ellen,*
Да, увидеть Элен с Яном.	*Yes, to see Ellen and Jaan.*

(1966)

Two poems, *A Drawing* (1962) and *Maria* (1966) are dedicated to the drawings of Kross and Niit's daughter Maria (who became an artist and a writer) and who was respectively 3 and 7 years old at the time of writing the poems.

However, during the years the poet spent in Pärnu, he had nearly no friendly relations with Estonian littérateurs, including those he mentions and whose works he translated. In Perelygin's painstakingly detailed 'photo chronicles', there remain only photos depicting the visit of Dagmar Normet (1921 – 2008), an Estonian writer of children's literature, who called on Samoylov's Pärnu residence. Few translations were made of his works into Estonian – by Jaan Kross, Ellen Niit, and the little known littérateur Ants Reoli who showed up at Samoylov's and suggested to translate his poem *Hannibal's Dream* dedicated to Pushkin' great grandfather who once upon a time served in Pärnu; and, having renamed it *Hannibal Pärnus* (Hannibal in Pärnu), he published collected works by the same title, which included individual poems by Samoylov.[17]

In 1990, a bilingual miniature booklet *David Samoylov: Bottomless Moments. Jaan Kross. Põhjatud silmapilgud* was published (Tallinn, Eesti Raamat, 1990; approved for publishing while Samoylov was still alive, on 21 March 1989). There, Kross wrote a few pages about Samoylov, and vice versa, Samoylov wrote about Kross. Independently of one another, they both mention their long-term acquaintance (of over 20 years), the coinciding year of birth and the issue of their first collections of poems. Both mention that previously, while Samoylov still lived in Moscow, they used to communicate much more. Kross does not explain this paradox, he merely states the fact: *Later, when he had moved to Pärnu, we started seeing each other quite seldom*[18]. Samoylov explains this by the lack of time:

> *When one is young, a lot of energy is left over for communicating. [..] Now I live closer to Kross, but meet him more seldom.*[19]

Samoylov with his Russian mentality is more emotional in his account of his relation to Kross, which creates an impression that they are soul mates: *The time grows thick and becomes narrow and tight. But inside me, there always sounds a 'note' of Kross*[20]. Kross is more reserved, just as an Estonian should be, and he evaluates rather the importance of Samoylov: *David has always been to me a person whose existence strengthens his friends' faith in the kindness and wisdom of the world*[21]. In these notes of his, Kross for the first time recounts a comic incident involving Samoylov:

> *His elegant humour: 'Jaan, come on, let's go and appear on television! Both of us! Side by side! Poets of the gre-e-at Russian and the ti-i-ny Estonian nation!' – And that is despite the fact that the height difference between us is nearly 20 centimetres – in my favour.*[22]

This incident was so memorable to Kross that he repeated in nearly word-to-word in an interview with the author of the current article held on 9 December 2003, adding only that this happened during one of their first meetings.

Alongside with the highly intensive work carried out in Pärnu (during his years in Estonia, Samoylov published 7 collections of poems (not including 6 volumes of Selected Works), the second edition of *The Book on Russian Rhyme* (1982), numerous forewords to the books by other authors, reviews, interviews, answers to questionnaires, individual memoirs, etc., he had been concurrently writing prose), he still found the time to translate and debate on the problems in translation. As it was common practice in the Soviet school of translation, Samoylov translated the works of the poets of the national Soviet republic based on the literal word-for-word translations in prose. This was also true of the Estonian poetry. In a simultaneously comical and serious article, Samoylov describes his translation work in the following manner:

> *<I> have always taken the translator's trade most seriously [..] and for a while, I had an absolute trust in the matrimonial virtues of translation, which are faithfulness and precision. However, a few years ago, one article has turned my translational world outlook upside down [..] I have realised that faithfulness and precision are a myth. And also that another kind of virtues is more suited to the translator, the military virtues: modesty and courage.*[23]

The literary word-for-word translation in prose did not rid him of the necessity for laborious search of equivalents for the unfamiliar concepts and phenomena in the Russian language. Describing, for instance, the work on the translation of a Latvian poet Rainis as 'exceptionally hard', Samoylov cites a following example for explanation:

> *Let us take, for example, a Latvian wedding. Its customs are nothing like those of a Russian wedding. And what one has to do is to reproduce it in Russian in such a way that it could be perceived and understood by a reader.*[24]

However, starting from the middle of the 1980s, it is hard for a Russian littérateur – if possible at all – to remain only a littérateur. *Perestroika*, having freed everyone from censorship, had also made everyone face the most complicated question which in the Soviet Union had been either hushed up or solved via an order 'from above' – first and foremost, the national question. This coincided with the ascent of national identity in the Baltic region, and Samoylov had entered the Lacanian mirror stage: he had to re-think himself in Estonia anew, had to draw up an ethical position for the conditions when *the Other comes onto the stage*[25]. He did not live to see Estonia's independence re-established in 1991, yet everything was going towards that in the 1980s, and he admitted Estonia was in its right there. However, he, who already in 1980 phrased his understanding of the contemporary history in a dispute with Leonid Batkin and Mark Haritonov as *an era where the countdown (for a 'common' person, of course) starts from a nation, and not humankind*[26], only saw around himself an attempt to *lock up inside oneself*. He immediately accepted the law on the status of Estonian as the state language, yet with a reservation:

> *The main language in Estonia has to be Estonian, yet the Estonian public opinion somewhat underestimates the role of the Russian language, not as a vernacular, but as a language of culture. [..] the details will be edited by real-life practice. It is important not to make haste in resolution of such questions.*[27]

The national question was being resolved for Samoylov first and foremost in the sphere of culture. Pondering in *The Memorial Notes* over the so-called Jewish question, he was customarily biased and near-sighted while speaking of the political solution. Considering the permission to emigrate to Israel to be a privilege of the Jewish over other peoples (and consequently, a prerequisite of xenophobia towards the Jewish from other nations), Samoylov poses rhetorical questions:

> *One of our nations is allowed to leave the motherland and set off to the ancient homeland. Why not allow, then, the Germans living in Russia since the times of Catherine to leave for Germany? Or allow the Kalmyks to wander back into the steppes of Mongolia? Or the Tatars to return to the Crimea?*[28]

These questions became an anachronism already at the time when the book was being published, as the Russian Germans flowed back to Germany and the Tatars started to return to the Crimea.

A totally different matter is when he poses virtually the selfsame question in the sphere of culture. In the same book, discussing fascism, Samoylov suggests a universal, though probably not an exhaustive definition:

> *A fascist is a nationalist who hates culture. Therefore, Marcinkevičius*[29] *and Jaan Kross are simply people who root for their country, whereas Kozhinov*[30]*, who wrote a squalid article on OPOJAZ*[31]*, is a fascist.*[32]

He had always wanted to be a bridge that connected cultures, something that did not go well during the years of *perestroika*, when each culture strived towards self-sufficiency. In a surge of romanticism, he even wanted to arrange to receive the USSR State Prize that he had been awarded on the territory of Estonia: *It will be a sign of reciprocal diffusion of the Russian and the Estonian literature, since the book has been published in Estonia, and in it, there resonates an 'Estonian note'*[33]. However, the statute never allowed for this to happen, and the diffusion of the Russian and the Estonian literatures did not occur.

Samoylov's poems of the 1980s reveal the poet's weariness and centripetal orientation towards the motherland. For the first time (later recurring more and more often) this motif appeared in 1979 in the collection of poems *The Bay*:

Тот же вялый балтийский рассвет.	*The same listless Baltic dawn,*
Тяжело размыкание век.	*Heavy is the opening of the eyelids.*
Тяжело замерзание рек.	*Heavy is the freezing of rivers.*
Наконец, наконец выпал снег.	*Finally, finally, came the snow.*
Я по снегу уже доберусь	*By snow, I will already take me*
Из приморского края на Русь [..].[308]	*From the seaside region to Rus' [..].*

The most dramatic period for Samoylov, judging from his poetry, was the year 1986, when so many poems had been written with the themes of exodus, death (both his own and the others'), and weariness as never before. The Pärnu period is marked here, first and foremost, by two poems which remained unpublished during the lifetime of the poet: *In Pärnu* and *So, the life has turned out well*. The former begins with a self-charac-

terisation: *Когда-то странный пилигрим, А, в общем, вечный домосед, Сюда я прибыл*[35] [Once a strange pilgrim, why, actually an eternal homebody, here I arrived.] The latter contains a confession: *В общем жизнь состоялась, Даже в городе чуждом и странном*[36] [So the life has turned out well, Even in a foreign and strange town.] This unexpected convergence through the epithet 'strange' is interesting, thus denoting the clear resemblance between the poet and the town.

In the conclusion of his brief article about Samoylov in their joint bilingual booklet of poems and translations, Jaan Kross acknowledged Samoylov's role as that of a translator of Estonian poetry and pointed to Estonia's role: *[..] it is lovely that Estonia, to which he bound his fate, gave him so many themes and motifs for all the creative works of the last decennium*. Once again, the already familiar from Samoylov's own aspirations motif of the bridge is articulated: *In this sense, his poetic works are the best conceivable example of bridging between cultures of different peoples*[37].

Samoylov had had the chance to read this brief article, but he did not live to see the book itself which was published almost immediately after his death. In one of the poems written in 1985, pondering about death, he wrote the prophetic lines: *Death is not terrible. There is an eminence to it.*[38] His own passing away completely verified these words: the poet died behind the scene of the Russian Drama Theatre in Estonia, having just made an introductory speech at the anniversary night inspired by himself, dedicated to the celebration of the centenary of Boris Pasternak. The doctor that was summoned from the auditorium managed to tear Samoylov away from the nothingness for a split instance with the help of cardiac massage. Samoylov looked at those standing over him and, apparently, trying to reassure the frightened family and acquaintances, he said: *All is well, folks…* And died. The explanation of this death can also be found in his poetry – in a short poem from 1984:

Где-нибудь возле стойки	*Somewhere near the counter*
Мы подводим итог.	*We sum up.*
Видимо, мы не стойки	*Apparently, we are not steadfast*
На переломе эпох.	*At the break of epochs.*

Having passed away, Samoylov remained in Estonia: his remains are buried in Pärnu Forest cemetery (Metsakalmistu). And his last words in *The Memorial Notes* are today none the less (and perhaps all the more) topical than at the time of writing them:

> *I want only this: love, tolerance and a universal idea. [..] If you want god, have him. If you do not, still, be tolerant and be a part of the universal idea of kindness. Everything else is verbiage, emptiness, deformity.*[39]

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[1] *Каждый человек проживает свой миг.* Беседа с Д. Самойловым И. и В. Белобровцевых, in: *Самойловские чтения II*. Таллин: Авенариус, 2006. – с. 187.

[2] Харитонов М. История одной влюбленности / *Знамя* № 3, 1996. – с. 154.

[3] Самойлов Д. Несколько слов об этой книге, in: *Улица Тооминга*. Tallinn, Eesti Raamat, 1981. Lk. 5.

[4] Apparently, this is why during the last year of her life Anna Akhmatova translated a few poems by Vaarandi (poems from the volume *Rannalageda leib* (The Bread of Coastal Expanses, 1965) translated by Akhmatova were published in the journal *Новый мир* № 1, 1968. – с. 89).

[5] Генис А. Довлатов и окрестности. Tere-tere – magazines.russ.ru/novyi_mi/1998/7/genis.html

[6] Венцлова Т. Литовский дивертисмент Иосифа Бродского, in: *Третья волна*. Ann Arbor, 1984. – с. 196.
[7] Леонтьев А. А. Основы психолингвистики. Москва: Смысл, 1997. – с. 179.
[8] Italics added here and ff – I. B.
[9] Самойлов Д. Несколько слов об этой книге, in: *Улица Тооминга*. Tallinn, Eesti Raamat, 1981. Lk. 5. – с. 6.
[10] Радзишевский В. Пярнуская элегия. / *Литературная газета* 1991, 24 апреля.
[11] Kirjanik kohtub õpilastega [The writer meets the students]. / *Rahva Hääl* № 7, 9.01.1980. Lk. 3.
[12] Харитонов М. История одной влюбленности / *Знамя* № 3, 1996. – с. 157.
[13] Смехов В. *Театр моей памяти*. http?//fictionbook.ru/autor/smehov_veniamin_borisovich/teatr_moeyi_pamyati/read_online.html?page=19
[14] Ibid. – с. 153.
[15] A Soviet writer, a member of the Union of Writers, could employ a personal literary secretary, paying himself for that person's work. In this way, one could help those people who have served a sentence because of fabricated false accusations, to get work and registration.
[16] The record from the archives of the author of present article.
[17] Samoilov D. *Hannibal Pärnus*/ Tlk. A. Reoli. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1983. 63 lk.
[18] Кросс Я. Я встретился с Давидом Самойловым..., in: Самойлов Д. *Бездонные мгновения*, in: Kross J. *Põhjatud silmapilgud*. Таллин: Ээсти Раамат, 1990. – с. 9.
[19] Ibid. – с. 69.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid. – с. 9.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Самойлов Д. «Мой первый гусь». / *Дружба народов* № 1, 1979. – с. 253.
[24] Перелыгин В. «Целуйте меня – я экологически чист!» Давид Самойлов. / *Молодежь Эстонии. Суббота* 2006, 11 марта. – с. 11.
[25] Эко У. Когда на сцену приходит Другой, in: Эко У. *Пять эссе на темы этики*. Санкт-Петербург: Симпозиум, 2000. – с. 14.
[26] Харитонов М. История одной влюбленности / *Знамя* № 3, 1996. – с. 168.
[27] Белобровцев В. «Куда же я уйду от русского глагола...». / *Советская Эстония (СЭ)* № 261, 1988. 13 ноября. – с. 7.
[28] Самойлов Д. *Памятные записки*. Москва: Международные отношения, 1995. – с. 451.
[29] Justinas Marcinkevičius, 1930 – Lithuanian poet, prose writer and playwright. An active member of the Science Academy in Lithuania. Numerous verses and a dramatic poem *Cathedral* (1977) have been published in Samoylov's translation.
[30] Kozhinov Vadim Valerianivich (1930 – 2001), Russian literary critic, historian of the national loyalist school. The reference here is made to his article *История литературы в работах ОПОЯЗа* (*Вопросы литературы* № 7. 1972.).
[31] OPOJAZ (ОПОЯЗ) – Общество изучения поэтического языка: Society for the Study of Poetic Language, a scientific association (1916 – 1925). The members of OPOJAZ saw literature as a 'craft', a formalistic technical activity founded on the use of devices and means that could be studied with high degree of precision. The theory of OPOJAZ has influenced the 'new criticism', structuralism and semiotics.
[32] Самойлов Д. *Памятные записки*. Москва: Международные отношения, 1995. – с. 431.
[33] Белобровцев В. «Куда же я уйду от русского глагола...». / *Советская Эстония (СЭ)* № 261, 1988. 13 ноября. – с. 7.
[34] Самойлов Д. «Тот же вялый балтийский рассвет...», in: Самойлов Д. *Стихотворения*. Санкт-Петербург: Академический проект, 2006. – с. 281.
[35] Самойлов Д. В Пярну. ...», in: Самойлов Д. *Стихотворения*. Санкт-Петербург: Академический проект, 2006. – с. 538.
[36] Самойлов Д. «В общем жизнь состоялась...» ...», in: Самойлов Д. *Стихотворения*. Санкт-Петербург: Академический проект, 2006.
[37] Кросс Я. Я встретился с Давидом Самойловым..., in: Самойлов Д. *Бездонные мгновения*, in: Kross J. *Põhjatud silmapilgud*. Таллин: Ээсти Раамат, 1990. – с. 10.

[38] Самойлов Д. «Лет через пять, коли дано дожить...», in: Самойлов Д. *Стихотворения*. Санкт-Петербург: Академический проект, 2006. – с. 533.
[39] Самойлов Д. *Памятные записки*. Москва: Международные отношения, 1995. – с. 456.

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MEMORY AS THE COMPONENT OF LITERARY CONTACTS AND PROCESSES

Nadezhda Fjodorova

NOTES ON RECEPTION OF A TEXT OF A DIFFERENT NATION (GEORG BRANDES ABOUT ANTON CHEKHOV)

Summary

George Brandes introduced Russian literature into European research and culture consciousness. His trip to Russia in 1887 resulted in producing the book 'Impressions of Russia'. This book gives rise to serious questions concerning the degree of adequate perception of a culture of a different nation. A person who has been brought up in a particular national nature, national culture, perceives the world of a different nation to a greater or lesser degree not only as other but even as 'alien'.

Key-words: George Brandes, Anton Chekhov, European research and cultural space, reception

*

Georg Brandes (1842 – 1927), the outstanding Danish literary scholar and critic, the author of the fundamental study *Main Currents in the Nineteenth-Century European Literature* (1872 – 1890), wrote much about Russian literature. It was Brandes who introduced it to European research and cultural space. In 1887, from mid-April till the end of July, he gave lectures in St. Petersburg and Moscow. His trip to Russia resulted in his book *Impressions of Russia* (1888) which consisted of two parts: *Observations and Reflections* and *Literary Impressions*. Part one provided a general overview of the history, life, and art of Russia. Part two was dedicated to Russian literature – from *The Word about Igor's Regiment* to Leo Tolstoy. Brandes' book is an important fact in the history of reception of Russian culture by Western Europe. Russia reciprocated Brandes with love and respect: almost all his prominent works were translated into Russian. The work on translation was especially intensive from 1882 to 1914. It is sufficient to say that in 1881 – 1893 *Main Currents in the Nineteenth-Century Literature* was published in 4 parts followed by publishing of his collected works comprising 12 volumes in 1902 – 1903 and his collected works in 20 volumes in 1906 – 1914.

However, our concern is not with Brandes himself but the reception of a text of a different nation and the opportunities and limitations of such a reception. There is no need to examine *Impressions of Russia*; it will suffice to examine the analytical review *Anton Chekhov* written in 1900 and published in Russian in 1904, most probably on the occasion of the writer's death. This small text provides a vivid example of both Brandes' methodology and his vision of Chekhov's world.

Brandes' article consists of two parts: 1) the conceptual image of Russia (the first two paragraphs) and 2) the system of argumentation, i.e. local examples from several (five) stories by Chekhov.

Hospital is the conceptual image of Russia proclaimed by Brandes and based on Chekhov's medical practice. *He knew his native land as few had known it and for him Russia was a great hospital, the patients of which were passing by him ward after ward*[1]. And it was not an ordinary hospital but a mental asylum; *ward after ward* was an obvious appeal to *Палата № 6* (Ward No. 6) by Chekhov, moreover, because *Ward No. 6* emerges as a subject of the second half of the article.

Russia as a hospital – this vision on Russia by Brandes has been undoubtedly dictated by Chekhov's professional medical practice. On the other hand, Chekhov's medical profession affected his methodology as a writer.

> *[..] there is something of the attitude of the doctor to the patient in his exceptional analysis; First of all Chekhov was aiming at an exact and clear revelation of the course of illness.*[2]

Chekhov's style is that of prescription excluding any kind of 'sentimentality'.

Further on Brandes sets forth his versions of Chekhov's stories. The first one on his list is the story *Неосторожность* (An Inadvertence, 1887). According to Brandes, it is a *funny story*

> *[..] about the widower Strizhin who returns home late at night absolutely drunk and wishing desperately for another drink. He knows that his sister-in-law keeps a bottle of vodka in the cupboard and tries to get it without turning the lights on not to disturb others. In the darkness he takes a big swallow of paraffin and feels as if hundreds of needles were piercing him and in horror wakes his sister-in-law up. She starts shouting at him: 'Do you know how much paraffin is these days?'*

She scolds him and feels sorry for the paraffin. Strizhin waits for his death with horror, but when he is still alive in the morning he feels proud of himself: the one who leads *a steady and regular life* is unaffected by any poison.

> *'No, – his sister-in-law sighs, – this means that the paraffin is poor quality!' And she starts lamenting again.*[3]

Naturally, the semantics of any retelling differs from the one of the text which is being retold. Some important circumstances are missing in Brandes' retelling as well. In the first paragraph Pyotr Petrovich Strizhin is introduced as a muddler *whose new galoshes were stolen last year*, and this predetermines the inevitability of the *paraffin* instead of *vodka* in its grotesque variant. On the other hand, he is a highly *attentive* and *shy* person that becomes rather evident in the context of the on-going events (*to avoid waking up the household, he took his things off in the lobby, made his way on tiptoe to his room, holding his breath, and began getting ready for sleep without lighting a candle*). In the second paragraph, Strizhin is characterized as a person who *leads a sober and regular life, his facial expression is sanctimonious, he reads nothing but spiritually elevating books*… And he's making his way to the cupboard not because he's having *an overwhelming craving for a drink*, but to suppress with vodka *a glass of wine, the taste of which suggested something midway between vinegar and castor oil* served at the christening party. And he is desperately afraid of *Dashen'ka* (*If I drink one glass of wine, she won't notice*; *After some hesitation, overcoming his fears, Strizhin went to the cupboard*). *Dashen'ka* really keeps Strizhin in awe: it is said twice in the story: *and she went on and on*; in fact, this is the final phrase of the story. Strizhin is not a drunkard

but a person intimidated by *Dashen'ka*: the 'subsidiary', official governs the subjective, keeps it in awe and is sure that she is the victim: *I am a martyr, so miserable, you monsters, may you suffer the same way in the world to come, accursed tyrants…* This is a reversed situation of everyday life.

The story is structured as a triad situation: 1) Strizhin as an individual; 2) Strizhin and *Dashen'ka* as the family world; 3) Strizhin and the external world which is represented by the doctors and the chemist.

> *Knowing that, when enraged, 'Dashen'ka' can't be quieted either by imploring or vows or even by cannon fire, Strizhin gave up in despair, got dressed, and set out to the doctor. But a doctor is at hand only when he is not wanted. After running through three streets and ringing five times at Dr. Tchepharyant's and seven time at Dr. Bultykhin's, Stryzhin raced off to the chemist's for help. There, having waited for long, a little dark curly pharmacist came out wearing a dressing gown, with drowsy eyes and such a wise and serious face that it was even frightening.*
>
> *'Can I help you?' he asked in a tone in which only very wise and dignified pharmacists of Jewish faith can speak.*

After having listened to Strizhin, the pharmacist started reading one book, then another. Finally he said:

> *You don't regard us, pharmacists, as human beings and disturb our rest even at four o'clock at night, though every dog, every cat can rest in peace… You don't try to understand anything, and you think we are not human and our nerves are like cords.*

The notorious episode with the imbibed paraffin demonstrates a kind of total alienation of the human being from oneself, from one's family world, and from the surrounding world.

Only one thing is left for the human and this prescription is declared by the ironic writer Chekhov to his readers:

> *Upon his return home, he* (Strizhin) *made haste to write: 'Let no one be blamed for my death', then he said his prayers, lay down and pulled the bedclothes over his head.*

In the morning he explains his survival to *Dashen'ka*: *The one who leads a steady and regular life, dear sister, is unaffected by any poison.*

Dashen'ka objects:

> *No, this means that the paraffin is poor quality [..] This means the shop assistant gave me instead of the best quality paraffin the one for three farthings. I am a martyr, so miserable, you monsters, may you suffer the same way in the world to come, accursed tyrants…*
>
> *And she went on and on…*

Chekhov's story is not an anecdote as it appears in Brandes' version. Instead it provides a picture of an absolutely alienated world where everyone is estranged from one another and the human is estranged from oneself.

Critics found the story *not bad*, the story of *harmless humour*, and in March, 1899 Leo Tolstoy read it to his family[4].

Brandes analyzes *An Inadvertence* and some other short stories of the 1880s (e.g. *Холодная кровь* (Cold Blood, 1887)) to achieve a clearly definite goal.[5]

> *Chekhov, like other intellectual people in Russia sees that the country is rich in life-giving sources, fertile forces, great concentration, inspiration and readiness to make sacrifice no less than other countries.*
>
> *Nevertheless, when everything in his country is wrecked and gets stuck instead of going further ahead, Chekhov does not try to find any explanation for this phenomenon in the social order or political conditions. He looks deeper. He sees the reason for the social and political order in the features of the Russian soul.*
>
> *He confirms the observations that might have been made by anyone who had ever been in such a place where people of different nationalities appear side by side (for example, on the boulevards of Paris). This observation can be formulated in the following way: all people walk while a typical Russian limps.*

> *There is inability to produce energy at the proper moment in upper circles as well. There is enough effort and thirst for activity, but, according to Chekhov, they are as unsuccessful as laziness and immobility of a commoner. [..] They are carried away by the ideal, but the ideal loses its value for them just after several years, and they stoop before another one. One aspiration is replaced by another, one attempt replaces another till the real force expires.*[6]

Brandes confirms this absence of energy and deep *self-denial* which make Russians different from other European nations by two famous works by Chekhov of the 1890s – *Ward No. 6* (1892) and *Душечка* (The Darling, 1899).

Ward No. 6 is one of the most tragic works by Chekhov. As it is usual for the 19th century, the story begins with the description of the place. It is a symbol and knowledge of life which is being lived here. Ward No. 6 is *a small lodge in the hospital yard surrounded by a forest of burdocks, nettles, and wild hemp. Its roof is rusty, the chimney is tumbling down, the steps at the front door are rotting away and overgrown with grass*. Inside *every sort of hospital rubbish lies littered about, mattresses, old tattered dressing gowns, trousers, blue striped shirts, worn out boots and shoes – all this garbage is piled up in heaps, mixed up and crumpled, moldering and giving out a sickly smell*. There are five people in the lodge. One is of the upper class, the rest are philistines. One of them is a Jew. The ward is guarded by porter Nikita, a retired soldier, a person with *the expression of a sheep-dog of the steppes*.

> *He belongs to those simple-minded, positive, prompt, and dull-witted people, who like order more than anything else in the world, and thus are convinced that* ***they*** *should be beaten. He beats everyone on the face, the chest, the spine, any other part of the body being sure that without this there would be no order here.*[7]

This is a kind of Russian socium, its microcosm. The main character is doctor Andrey Yefimitch, who came to town twenty years ago. He is clever and honest but *he lacks the strength of will and faith in his righteousness to organize an honest and intelligent life around himself. He is certainly unable to give orders, forbid, or insist*[8]. Finally his only interlocutor is one of his patients, Ivan Dmitrich. Through the young and energetic doctor's efforts, Andrey Yefimitch is locked up in ward No. 6 where he dies.

Having related the story of the doctor, Brandes comes to conclusion correspondent to his initial conception: *Nothing matters, heart sinks*.

But the *boring* and melodramatic story of Andrey Yefimovitch does not end for Chekhov with *renunciation* and being locked up in ward No. 6 as Brandes suggests. Before his death, he gets enlightened not only concerning his own life but the whole

Russian life that turns him into a tragic figure. His story is not just the story of a spiritual catastrophe, but the one of a spiritual revival as well, similar to the deathbed revival of Shakespearean Lear.

> *He bit the pillow with pain and clenched his teeth, and all at once through the chaos in his brain there flashed a terrible unbearable thought that these people, who seemed now like black shadows in the moonlight, had to endure such pain day by day for years. How could it have happened that for more than twenty years he had not known it and had refused to know it? He knew nothing of pain, had no conception of it, so he was not to blame, but his conscience, as inexorable and rough as Nikita, made him turn cold from the crown of his head to his heels. He leaped up, tried to cry out with all his might, and to run in haste to kill Nikita, and then Hobotov, the superintendent and the doctor's assistant, and then himself; but no sound came from his chest, and his legs would not obey him. Gasping for breath, he tore at the dressing-gown and the shirt on his breast, rent them, and fell senseless on the bed.*[9]

There is a token of the future, a token of the individual and the universal revival in this deathbed enlightenment of the doctor.

And finally, Chekhov's women, according to Brandes, differ from men; at the same time, they sacrifice themselves for men.

> *Chekhov's women display spiritual qualities, but they are almost always subdued by weak-willed, characterless and inconsistent men. They follow them in all their troubles with devotion and readiness to make sacrifice that characterizes them as born slaves. They are sheer compassion. Love has fascination for them if it entails sacrifice. They love mostly weak and unpractical men, and it's because such men need being looked up at.*[10]

Chekhov discerns in this mode of women's action a kind of heroism and selflessness; however, sometimes he makes such a conduct an object of ridicule, as in the story *The Darling*.

Brandes's characteristics of Chekhovian women is rather appropriate, but it is not complete. First of all it does not match up to the characteristics of Olga Semyonovna or the Darling. Brandes is right when he talks about the Darling's selflessness, but his statement that Chekhov makes it an object of ridicule seems erroneous. As in many stories by Chekhov, the focus in *The Darling* is on the evolution of the main heroine endowed with self-sacrificial nature. Her first three marriages are depicted with certain irony; to be more exact, it is not the marriages as such but her total dissolution in the businesses her husbands devote themselves to: 1) theatre 2) forest trade 3) veterinary (the very relatedness of these spheres is somewhat ironic). But her last love to her third husband's ten years old son Sasha is absolutely different.

> *Ah, how she loves him! None of her former attachments had been so deep, never had her soul surrendered so spontaneously, so selflessly, and so joyously as now that her maternal feelings were aroused. For this little boy with the dimple on his cheek and the big school cap, she would have given her whole life, she would have given it with joy and tears of tenderness. Why? Who knows why.*[11]

Where is the *ridicule* here? Brandes was known to have studied in detail both Russian history and Russian culture, he had friendly relations with Russian literati and journalists, e.g. V. Solovyov. Nevertheless, his *Impressions of Russia* are permeated by rather superficial statements and value judgments as well as widespread European clichés:

> *Uniformity is an important characteristic feature of Russia. This country is as uniform as it is huge. This is a dismal kind of uniformity.*[12]

St. Petersburg architecture *lacks the form that would strike your imagination. You first face a true art only when you stop before the daring monument to Peter the Great produced by Falkonet.*[13] Brandes cites a statement of his own: *[..] there was hardly an exaggeration in the statement in part one of 'Main Currents': one square meter of Roman Forum contains more history than the whole Russian state*[14]*. This is a huge country of winter where frosts will lead you to the state of obtuseness. This is the most obvious reason for the inclination of the Russian people to laziness…*[15], etc. Each of these statements by Brandes provides evidence of elementary ignorance both of Russian history and Russian natural landscape and its diverse forms.

But the point is elsewhere and it stands out in Brandes' judgments on Chekhov. Notwithstanding all of his tolerance and true striving for perceiving culture of a different nation, Brandes proves unable to perceive it adequately. A person who has been brought up in a particular national nature, national culture and religious paradigm, perceives the world of a different nation to a greater or lesser degree as *alien*. These are dialogic relations of a rather wide range: acceptance/non-acceptance, understanding/misunderstanding, etc. These factors are not external but profound mental ones. Intercultural contact envisages first and foremost two simple conditions: a degree of knowledge of the world that is different and a degree of tolerance withholding both parties from unconditional judgments.

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[1] Брандес Г. *Русские впечатления*. Москва: ОГИ, 2002. – с. 284.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid. – с. 284–285.
[4] Чехов А.П. *Полное собрание сочинений и писем в 30 томах*. Т. 6. Москва: Наука, 1976. – с. 635–636)
[5] Ibid. – ń. 371–387.
[6] Брандес Г. *Русские впечатления*. Москва: ОГИ, 2002. – с. 286.
[7] Чехов А.П. *Полное собрание сочинений и писем в 30 томах*. Т. 8. Москва: Наука, 1977. – с. 72–75.
[8] Ibid. – с. 82–85.
[9] Ibid. – с. 125.
[10] Брандес Г. *Русские впечатления*. Москва: ОГИ, 2002. – с. 286.
[11] Чехов А.П. *Полное собрание сочинений и писем в 30 томах*. Т. 10. Москва: Наука, 1977. – с. 102–113.
[12] Брандес Г. *Русские впечатления*. Москва: ОГИ, 2002. – с. 37.
[13] Ibid. – с. 40.
[14] Ibid. – с. 45.
[15] Ibid. – с. 49.

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Marja Jänis

MEMOIRS OF THE LATVIAN-BORN FINNISH FILM DIRECTOR TEUVO TULIO (TEODOR TUGAI)

Summary

Teuvo Tulio was a well-known Finnish film director of the 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s. His real name was Teodor Tugai and he was Latvian who had moved to Helsinki at the age of ten. For Finnish filmgoers many themes, scenes, and landscapes from his films exemplify typical film narration devices of the Finnish black-and-white cinema. Tulio's melodramatic films had been neglected and forgotten for a long time, but have now attracted new interest. His memoirs were originally published in Jaana, a women's magazine in 1974 and later republished in a new form in a book titled 'Tulio. Levottoman veren antologia' (Tulio. An Anthology of Restless Blood), a collection of writings and research on the director's life and films. Narration in Tulio's memoirs is surprisingly different from his films. This article tries to shed light on the memoirs and films of this rather mysterious film director.

Key-words: Teodor Tugai/Teuvo Tulio, auteur, melodrama, film noir, film making, Skerpeniek

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An interesting period from the point of view of cultural contacts between the Nordic and Baltic countries is the era between World War I and II when the Baltic countries and Finland gained their independence. My analysis of Finnish theatre contacts with the Nordic and Baltic countries[1] indicate that Finland had lively contacts with Sweden, Norway, and Denmark as well as with Estonia, but none with Latvia or Lithuania. However, it appeared that Teuvo Tulio, the prominent Finnish film director of that period, was of Latvian origin. His real name was Teodor Tugai (1912 – 2000). To the average filmgoer of the 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s, his films epitomized the Finnish national landscape, music and peasant life, and it was surprising to learn that they were directed by somebody who had spent his childhood in the Latvian countryside.

Tulio's films were popular from the 1930s to the 1950s, but the spread of colour films and realism in film narration made his melodramatic black-and-white films seem outdated and artificial in the 1960s and 1970s. Tulio's films had been long forgotten in Finnish film history, but recently they have started to attract a great deal of attention again, especially among film enthusiasts. Tulio can be called a real *auteur*, a concept that in film history is applied to directors whose way of making films is always recognizable, writes film scholar Markku Varjola.[2] Even the most famous contemporary Finnish film director, Aki Kaurismäki confessed that he was influenced by Tulio's melodramas. Tulio's films were rediscovered and scholarly interest was focused on his films and person. A collection of articles *Tulio. Levottoman veren antologia* (Tulio. An

Anthology of Restless Blood) about various aspects of Tulio's films together with his memoirs was published in 2002. In 2004 the Finnish Embassy in Latvia organized a large exhibition on Tulio in Rēzekne, Latgale Region, where Tulio had spent his childhood on his grandfather's farm in Skerpenieki, near the town of Rēzekne.

Reading Tulio's memoirs is surprising for those who have seen his films: they are remarkably different in style. An attempt to throw light upon this contradiction is the aim of this article. Description of Tulio's films in this article is based on research undertaken by several Finnish and foreign film scholars.

Tulio's films

Tulio's dramatic films use intensive black-and-white contrasts, shocking visual and musical effects and abound in scenes of fighting, love-making, and racing in dangerous situations. The dialogue is very artificial; the film narration is unrealistic and does not aim at verisimilitude. Tulio wanted to arouse the feelings of the spectators and direct their reactions.

Tulio's films can all be classified under the genre of melodrama, except for his 1939 farce *Vihtori ja Klaara* (based on McManus's comic strip *Bringing up Father*; also known as *Jiggs and Maggie*). Peter Brooks explains the rise of melodrama as the loss of the feeling of the sacred and tragedy, and the decline of such institutions as the church and the monarchy after the French Revolution.[3] Melodrama was born in theatre and literature in the 19th century together with the rise of bourgeois society seeking to establish a model of a world divided into good and bad and showing its moral imperatives, Sakari Toiviainen claims.[4] An interesting observation about the essence of melodrama was made by Adrian Piotrovsky[5] in 1924: in melodrama the bourgeoisie, the conquering class, established its victory over the aristocracy: the villain was the evil land-owner and the hero – the good working peasant in the 19th century; these figures were later transformed into the evil millionaire and the good socialist worker at the beginning of the 20th century. Piotrovsky notes that the moving forces behind the intrigue are accidental and conventional moral principles. With the development of arts during the 19th century, melodrama gave way to realism, especially in high literature and theatre. Calling something 'melodramatic' started to have a pejorative meaning; when applied to prose narration, drama, or film it means that the intrigue in this work is schematic and easily predictable, the characters are either good or bad, and the narration sentimental and full of shocking effects. In this evaluation the melodramatic work is compared with realism and being melodramatic is contradictory to what we know about reality. Melodrama, however, was the leading genre in the silent movie – the new form of performing arts, where the technical limitations of the stage and the verbal limits of the novel could be overcome and shocking effects created with few restrictions.[6]

Toiviainen assumes that Tulio acquired his *melodramatic imagination* as a result of his childhood memories, his *restless blood* (Toiviainen uses the title of one of Tulio's films), and family history. Melodrama is based on binary oppositions and the basic setting in melodramatic narration, whether literary or film, is the patriarchal family, where religion, society, and sexuality are intertwined in the triangle of man, woman, and child. In Tulio's later films, the fragility of this triangle is underlined as in *Mustasukkaisuus* (Jealousy) and *Rikollinen nainen* (A Criminal Woman), and *Olet mennyt*

minun vereeni (You've Gotten into my Blood), where the family idyll is destroyed and becomes its own grotesque caricature.[7]

Tulio's films are melodramas, especially in regard to women's fate in the society, after their men had left them: unmarried women with children, unhappy housewives, whores and alcoholics, but also independent women who fight for the right to decide over their own lives. In Tulio's early films, an innocent country girl is seduced by a man who is either a completely unreliable Don Juan-like hero, like Olavi in *Laulu tulipunaisesta kukasta* (Song of the Crimson Flower) from 1938, or belongs to a different social class, as in *Taistelu Heikkilän talosta* (The Battle for Heikkilä Farm, 1936), *Silja* (1937), and the 1941 *Unelma karjamajalla* (Dream in a Chalet). In his later films of city life, Tulio shows what became of the lives of the seduced women. The title of the film *Sellaisena kuin minut halusit* (Just as you Wanted me) from 1944 is a quote from a girl called Gaselli, seduced by Olavi in *Laulu tulipunaisesta kukasta*: she is now a whore in the city. This is the basic theme of Tulio's films: the fall of a woman. However, these women preserve a moral and mental dignity; even though they are driven to loneliness, prostitution, alcoholism, and madness by what men, disease, loss of a child, or poverty have done to them. Some of the heroines get married, but marriage is never a happy end: it ties the lovers into an unequal relationship. Lovers are devoted only to their passion outside wedlock. Getting married means double ties for a woman: first she has to obey her father, and later her husband.[8] Tulio's mission, according to Eva Maria Korsisaari, is to praise free women: they can be tempting or disgusting, desired or neglected, prophetic or blind, but their ability to love is the inspiring and hopeful element in Tulio's films.

The setting of his early films is the countryside, whereas in his postwar films it is the city and its outskirts. This is another binary opposition: the beautiful rural landscape, hills, rapids, large peasant houses and small huts, picturesque village people and strong rich landowners of the early films versus the sinful city with its factories, harbours, dark streets, and the elegant but uncomfortable homes of rich people of his later ones. The rural landscape is intuitively connected with the Finnish countryside, and many of the scenes have become cliché-like representations of it. The city scenes are linked with Helsinki. These settings are actually generalizations, not specifically identifiable with concrete places, as film scholar Peter von Bagh observes.[9] These typological settings were then repeated in Tulio's films. He repeated his themes, and concretely recycled part of his scenes and settings along with his themes in subsequent films, inserting existing pictorial and musical material from his earlier films into the new ones.

Juha Saitajärvi[10] has made a thorough study of music in Tulio's films. In dance scenes Tulio used Slavonic melodies like *Na sopkah Mantshzhurii*, a Russian army song from the early 20th century, which had been very popular in Finland. Lumberjacks shooting the rapids sang the same popular romantic song *Me tulemme taas* (We'll be Back) in all of Tulio's films. Tulio also made use of popular and classical music in his films. Seitajärvi points out the use of Johann Sebastian Bach's music: for instance, *Toccata* and *Fugue in D Minor* were used in scenes with storms. Other classical composers, whose music can frequently be heard in Tulio's films, are Ludwig van Beethoven and Frederic Chopin. In addition to using existing music, Tulio cooperated with contemporary Finnish composers like Leevi Madetoja and Tauno Marttinen.

Martti-Tapio Kuuskoski claims that Tulio's films trespass the limits of the genre of melodrama:

> *In Tulio's films a storm is a storm, not a representation of it. Passion is passion and grief is grief, not a description of passion and grief.*[11]

In an attempt to find international parallels to Tulio in film history, Varjola[12] points at Sergei Eisenstein and Alfred Hitchcock. They all aimed at creating the needed effects that would move the spectators' emotions. Tulio's dramatic use of lighting, dark, full of contrasts and angst can be compared with French *film noir*, German expressionism, and even Orson Welles' films.

Beautiful, blonde Regina Linnanheimo, with immensely expressive eyes, was the leading actress in Tulio's films, a friend from his school years and a life companion. We see her soft legs, hands, and shoulders in numerous love scenes. *In front of the camera Regina Linnanheimo gives a man her most precious treasure maybe more often than anybody else, but the repetition does not diminish the effect of the accomplishment of the act*[13], Peter von Bagh notices rather ironically. According to von Bagh, recycling the material, repetition of thematic, visual, and auditive elements partly explain why filmgoers stopped wanting to see Tulio's films. At the same time he must admit:

> *Tugai was born with a film reel in his hands. He became perhaps the greatest pioneer in modern Finnish film. In everything. Rhythm is the decisive element. His films are never boring.*[14]

Tulio made his last film when he was only 44 years old and lived a hermit-like existence for 40 years. As Edgardo Cozarinsky[15] observes, it is easy to understand why young, cynical intellectuals in the 1960s could laugh at these films, citing the artificial dialogue and imitating Regina Linnanheimo's expressions of desire, hatred, and madness.

I remember being among those who laughed at Tulio's films in the 1960s. They seemed so dark, unreal, and excessive in emotion. Their uniqueness was discovered later. Reading Tulio's ironic and witty memoirs has increased my interest in his personality and films.

Tulio's memoirs

Memoirs belong to a diverse genre of non-fictional narration about oneself. Fjodors Fjodorovs[16] calls this genre *ego-literature*. Leona Toker reminds us that factographic literature (memoirs, autobiographies, travelogues, diaries, letters, notebooks, historical compilations, etc.) requires an understanding from the reader that not only are the characters historically identifiable people, but also all the narrative details relate to actual events, locations, and *realia*.[17] This kind of literature demonstrates selectivity, since memory sieves and composition involves choices between what to include and what to leave out. Marja Rytkönen[18] in her study on Russian women's autobiographical texts notes: *if a text claims to represent the facts about something, this does not mean that these facts are not formed, narrated, produced in a certain manner:* ***someone*** *has moulded and represented them* ***somewhere***[19]. Either the inner or outer happenings of the life story of the author can be the centre of the narration, but nevertheless the genre of autobiography is a construction of the past and claims certain factuality. Rytkönen cites Kuznetsov who states*: казалось бы, выражение Маяковского 'расскажу о времени и о себе' и есть универсальная формула мемуаров*[20] [It would appear that Mayakovski's expression *I will tell about the time and myself* is the universal formula of memoirs.]

Zoja Vatnikova-Prizel makes a distinction along these lines between *летописание* (epic account in time), where the author concentrates on events he participated in and witnessed, and *автобиографическое* (autobiographical), which deals with the author's personality, inner world and environment, and in this case the *о времени* (about time) acquires the second position: *о себе и о времени* (about myself and time)[21].

It would be difficult to call the memoirs of Teuvo Tulio an autobiography; they are not an account of his inner life. They construct the image of a person who wants to explain how he made his films. Obviously Tulio had no literary ambitions. He did not set the memoirs down himself, but told them to a journalist from the women's magazine *Jaana* and published in that magazine in 1974. They were published in 2002 in the anthology of articles on Tulio in a slightly edited form.[22] In contrast to his films, Tulio's narration in his memoirs is very matter-of-fact, funny, and detailed. He does not reflect on the themes of his films. They contain interesting stories about everyday problems in film-making and how they were solved. He gives very appreciative and sometimes very funny accounts of people he worked with. The feelings, hopes, and disappointments of the memoirist are not foregrounded. Nor does he comment on any difficulties in acquiring a position in Finnish cultural life with his foreign background. The chronology follows the history of his making his films, not his own life, an exception being his childhood and school years.

The description of his childhood in Latvia is vivid and full of details, like those of many prominent film directors.[23] Teodor Tugai was a son of a Turkish Latvian father whom he never knew and the daughter of a well-to-do farmer from the village of Skerpenieki. His maternal grandfather was also Turkish, his grandmother had Polish origins. He understands that his mother was forced to marry his father – the daughter of a rich farmer was not allowed to fall in love at all, since the parents were expected to decide about her marriage. Tulio assumes that even his father was married against his will. His mother left little Teodor at his grandfather's farm, after he was born in a train en route from Riga to Saint Petersburg. Tulio describes how surprised he was to realize that his grandmother, whom he called *mamma*, was not his mother, but it was the beautiful young lady called Helena, who occasionally visited the farm and her son. She had tried to make a career as a ballet dancer in St. Petersburg with no great success. *She was not talented enough to raise her legs*[24] – this is how the son described his mother's attempt to make a career according to a family friend, Annikki Suni. Suni, however, recollects how all Tulio's friends remember the love and respect he paid to his mother (Helena Garsin 1893 – 1945), and remembers him visiting her grave regularly in Helsinki. She married a Finnish businessman and took her son to Finland and Helsinki in 1922. However, Teodor spent his summer holidays in the 1920s at his grandfather's farm in Skerpenieki even when living in Helsinki. His mother put an end to these visits when it appeared that Teodor had forgotten the little of the Finnish language he knew during his summer holidays.

Life was simple but very interesting in the Latvian countryside. His grandfather's farm was 25 kilometres away from the nearest railway station. Despite the negative comments on his grandfather's patriarchal manners, Teodor seems to have respected him. The grandfather adored his grandson and wanted him to succeed him on the farm. Tulio recalls following his grandfather around like a dog.

To Tulio, the Latvia of his childhood was multireligious, multicultural and multinational. Although the farm was well-to-do, his grandparents participated in all the work. Grandmother was busy feeding the working people of the farm – *there could be about thirty people at the table when summer work was at its height*.[25] No prayers were said at the table, since grandfather was a Muslim and grandmother Catholic and *who knows what the religion of the farm hands was*.[26] He remembers that grandmother went to church on Sundays and grandfather accompanied her, although he did not go to church, but to see his friends – mostly Jewish shopkeepers who had their Sabbath on Saturdays, kept their shops closed on Sundays, and were happy to get visitors. About twice a month grandfather got visitors and Tulio mentions in particular the variety of nationalities: Turkish, Latvian, Polish, Russians, and Jews.

Moving to Helsinki was a great change in Teodor's life. Despite having lived in the countryside, he knew many languages: Latvian, German, English, Russian, and Yiddish, but no Swedish or Finnish. He studied in the German school, *Deutsche Schule*, in Helsinki. In Tulio's words, it was an international school – like Latvia –, where children of diplomats used to go. City life was exciting: young boys of different parts of the city formed gangs and fought with each other. Hanging around in the harbour, competing in who dares to stay longest on the floating ice in spring, skating and dancing are described in detail.

Tulio started his film career as an actor in a film directed by his friend Valentin Ivanoff, the son of a Russian merchant in Helsinki. Valentin was seventeen at that time and Teodor was fifteen. Ivanoff later became the famous Finnish film director Valentin Vaala; he maintained that he was the youngest film director in film history, when they made their first film together. These schoolboys made a melodrama called *Mustat silmät* [Black eyes] in 1929, and Tulio played a young gypsy. They were so enthusiastic that they had managed to get financing, cameras for the film, and the Helsinki gypsy community to act in group scenes. The film was commercially rather successful: *better than many others that had been made with big money and good professional actors*.[27] Gypsy life was the theme of the second film *Mustalaishurmaaja* (The Gypsy Lover), in 1929 as well.[28] The cooperation between Vaala and Tulio lasted for four films. The economic depression of the 1930s affected film-making and made it difficult to finance new projects. Valentin Vaala was invited to work at the large Finnish film company Suomi-Filmi. He became one of the most productive and successful film directors in Finnish film history from the 1930s to 1960s.[29]

The young Tugai, who had just started his film career, was more at a loss and was employed by a Norwegian film company. The aim was to make a sequel to an international success called *Laila*, a tale about Lapland, by the Danish film director Moye Schneévoit. The new film was to be made in four languages: Swedish, Danish, German, and English. Tulio was to play the role of a Same man, owing to his exotic looks, and work as an interpreter making use of his knowledge of several languages. Tulio describes with wit and enthusiasm the journey by boat from Bergen to the far North, past Nordkapp to Kirkenes, and the problems the film group encountered when nothing went as planned: no real snow, no reindeer around because of the exceptionally early spring. The film group stayed and waited for new instructions and the grandiose plan ended in a much more modest film called *Fredlös* (Outlaw). Tulio writes about film-making in the northern conditions pointing out many funny details: dogs, big German shepherds, were supposed to act as wolves, but they were too friendly and wagged their tails, and weights had to

be tied to them. Harsh conditions led the members of the film group to heavy drinking, walking on the ice, and escorting the pretty local girls to far-away villages.

In 1935 Teodor Tugai became the film director Teuvo Tulio and he directed his first film *Taistelu Heikkilän talosta* (The Battle for Heikkilä Farm). He writes:

> *I had grown up on my grandparents' farm in Latvia and everything was familiar to me: strong characters, wild horse riding, life in the farm house. City dwellers do not understand the great meaning of the house for the people of the countryside. It was clear to me that my parents had been married to each other as part of the plan to unite the neighbouring farms, and without asking their consent. I could easily understand that the daughter of the Heikkilä farm could not marry a farm hand. I knew this was a theme that I could handle, a theme that offered such filming possibilities that, to my knowledge, had not been used in Finland. It gave room for fantasy.*[30]

The project was financed by a Finnish businessman Abel Adams, originally Aapeli Korhonen, who had immigrated to America and returned with his pockets full of dollars and a better-sounding name. Adams bought a movie theatre and later financed several of Tulio's films. After the success of the film Tulio said:

> *I wanted to be alone. To rid myself of everything. But already I felt inside that I had succeeded, that I could continue. I had become a film director and a producer who was even accepted by his rivals. The actor known as Teodor Tugai in Vaala's films had become Teuvo Tulio.*[31]

From his Nordic joint project experiences Tulio got the idea that films could be for two markets at the same time. His first film in two copies – one with Finnish dialogue and the other with Swedish – was based on the Finnish Nobel prize-winning writer F. E. Sillanpää's novel *Silja, nuorena nukkunut* (The Maid Silja). The actors were all amateurs except for the male protagonist. It was very economical: the amateurs employed in this film could speak the dialogue in two languages, the scenes could be filmed one after another, first in Finnish and then in Swedish, and the amateurs had time to film at any time of the day or night, unlike professional actors who also worked in theatres. When talking about this film, Tulio mentions his assistant Jon Tshivtshis, who had lived in Latvia and with whom he enjoyed speaking his mother tongue.

In *Silja*, for the first time, he conceived a love scene that has been repeated over and over again in Finnish films: two young people make love in a hay barn. Tulio's erotic love scenes were too much for the Finnish censors, and the director was forced to cut many of them. He comments quite bitterly – one of the few very critical comments about Finnish manners in his memoirs: *Cruel scenes, violence, and blood can be shown, the slow and painful death of a bleeding victim can be shown, but love between two people, tender caresses and kisses, erotic of course, were considered shameful and indecent*[32]. The version for the Swedish market with Swedish dialogue had no cuts, as Swedes were more tolerant of love scenes than Finns. The Swedish film researcher Per Olav Quist gives a different opinion: not *Silja*, but Tulio's later films were shown with radical cuts in the love scenes: Tulio's film narration and use of language were too provocative for the Swedish guardians of morality, and consequently most of his films were cut by the censors.[33] Tulio remembers that Sillanpää, who even wrote part of the manuscript for the film, liked the film very much. The scandal around the love scenes was also a blessing

for the film: everybody wanted to see it. Unfortunately *Silja* was destroyed in a fire at the Adams Filmi archives and only still pictures are available today.

The setting of Tulio's first films was the Finnish countryside. *Silja* was followed by a film based on Johannes Linnankoski's book *Laulu tulipunaisesta kukasta* (Song of the Crimson Flower), a story of the love affairs of Olavi, a Finnish lumberjack. Olavi was famous for being able to shoot the rapids on a log. The rapids and the stuntman to shoot them were found. To get spectators to see the event, a small announcement was placed in the local newspaper: the audience can see the shooting of the rapids free of charge. The owner of a local bus had seen this as a way of making money. For a small fee he promised a drive people to the place where the rapids were to be shot. About two thousand people came to enjoy this entertainment.

The last of the films in the countryside was *Unelma karjamajalla* (Dream in a Chalet) in 1941. It was based on a play by Henning Ohlsson which had been immensely popular in Finnish theatres in the 1930s.[34] The film is remarkable not because of its story but because of the dramatic music and scenes with flowers and animals. When the hero is filled with desire for a woman, he jumps on a horse or takes a carriage and drives madly. The domestic animals in Tulio's films are Finnish: hens, cows, pigs, lambs, and horses, not the Latvian geese and turkeys that he mentions in his memoirs. However, animals play a very significant role in *Unelma karjamajalla:* at the beginning, before the story even begins, we have already seen a frog, a butterfly, a bee, a cat, a pig, and cows.

During the wars between the Soviet Union and Finland Tulio made documentary and propaganda photos and films. In his memoirs, he gives a vivid account how he was hiding in a ditch with two of his colleagues; they were shot to death in an attack but he miraculously stayed alive. Other memories of these dramatic years are rather trivial: people he met and his vain attempts to take photograph of Finnish Marshal Carl Gustav Mannerheim during his visits to the battlefields. Tulio paid a high price for the war: he lost his favorite male actor Kille Oksanen, but admits that his fallen friends and colleagues paid a higher one. Tulio became a citizen of Finland in 1944.

His first film after the war was *Sellaisena kuin minut halusit* (Just as you Wanted me), about a village girl who after having a baby out of wedlock in the city and subsequently deserted by a rich lover becomes a prostitute. Tulio notes that the theme is eternal but he believed in his original way of telling the story. In his memoirs, he describes in detail how they managed to film it despite the postwar shortage of film, food, and energy. The next one, *Rakkauden risti* (Cross of Love) in 1946 was filmed on an island with a lighthouse and Tulio describes the technical difficulties they encountered.

Religion and religious items are plentiful in Tulio's films. He was a Catholic, and even describes how he used his contacts with the priest of the small Helsinki Catholic congregation to get black velvet for *Vihtori ja Klaara* (Bringing up Father), a cruel farce about family life in 1949. In his later years, according to Annikki Suni[35], Tulio said that the most important things in his life were *religion and sex*. Suni remembers how in his films even evil people wore crosses around their necks.

Tulio's films were very popular in the 1940s and 1950s, more precisely, between 1936 and 1956. In the Finnish film history, this period is called the *Classical or Golden Age* or the *period of films made in studios*[36]. Tulio continued making films without the support of film companies but with no success. Toiviainen calls him a *persona non grata* in the Finnish film industry in the 1960s and 1970s. However, some of Tulio's films

were sold and shown in different countries. Tulio ends his memoirs by remembering how he was told about people who remembered having seen his films in Brazil, Japan, and even Capetown. He tried to find the representative of the German film company that had paid for the exhibition rights to his films in Germany. The man remarked that he had sold the rights to a company that had later gone bankrupt and thus no royalties were paid to Tulio for showing his films. A representative of Paramount Pictures ordered a manuscript from Tulio about lumberjacks who shoot rapids. This person died before the project could be realized. Tulio, however, maintains that the basic idea of his film was used in *The River of No Return*, with Marilyn Monroe and Robert Mitchum playing the lead roles.[37]

Annikki Suni's memoirs offer a glimpse of Tulio's feelings about his position in Finnish film circles as well as about his relationship to Latvia. Suni translates French literature into Finnish and was a loyal family friend of Tulio and Regina Linnanheimo, his life companion and the leading actress in his films. Friends called Tulio *Fedja*. His life style was ascetic, but he was always elegant and had very good manners. He moved from one apartment to another in Helsinki and received mail via *poste restante*. He loved beer, which, in his own words, he had learnt to drink in childhood. He never visited Latvia, not even after Latvia got its independence, but listened with great interest to what Annikki Suni told him after her visit to Latvia in the early 1990s. In the last two years of his life he was hospitalized with back pains and was almost blind. Suni remembers how she visited him and told him about the new interest in his films.

> *When Aki Kaurismäki uttered his beautiful words about Tulio being his ideal, I read the text word for word to him and saw a contented smile spread on those lips that had repeated for thirty years: 'what I did was shit'.*[38]

There is very little comment in Tulio's memoirs on the last decades of his career – not even the last films he made – except for saying that times had changed and there was no need for melodrama. His last film *Sensuela* was banned by the censors in the 1970s. Tulio died in 2000, almost thirty years after he had dictated his memoirs.

Conclusion

The new interest in Teuvo Tulio's films is obviously due to the interest in melodrama in cinema. The deeper meaning and inherent possibilities of melodramatic themes and film narration provide a counter-argument to those who have claimed that the purpose of melodrama as a genre is to secure the social order of bourgeoisie society and classify people into good and evil characters. In Tulio's films, the woman is the object of a man's desire and a victim of his will, but – as Per Olov Quist remarks[39] – there is also an appeal to women to throw off the power of men. Quist compares Tulio's films with those of Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and writes that Douglas Sirk, Fassbinder, and Tulio managed to make melodramas with an emancipatory effect. As to melodramatic film narration, new digital techniques provide it great possibilities. It is tempting to imagine what Tulio could have made if he had had these new techniques at hand when he made his films.

The contradiction between the narration in Tulio's films and his memoirs puzzles anyone trying to get an idea of his identity. It is worth noting that in Sweden the director

is listed as *Teodor Tugai,* so he did preserve his name and identity outside Finland. Tulio/Tugai's life and films also provide an interesting material for considering the contribution artists with different cultural backgrounds have made to the artistic and cultural life of their country of immigration, and the problems they encountered.

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[12] Varjola M. Tulion näkemys ja merkitys, in: *Tulio. Levottoman veren antologia.* (Ed. Sakari Toiviainen). Helsinki: SKS, 2002. – p. 186.
[13] Von Bagh P. Viina, vittu ja virsikirja eli Hääyö jota meille ei annettu, in: *Tulio. Levottoman veren antologia.* (Ed. Sakari Toiviainen). Helsinki: SKS, 2002. – p. 212.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Cosarinzky E. Tulion elokuvat. (Translated by Satu Elo.), in: *Tulio. Levottoman veren antologia.* (Ed. Sakari Toiviainen). Helsinki: SKS, 2002. – p. 381.
[16] Fjodorovs F. Memoirs in the system of ego-literary genres. Presentation at the conference *The memoirs of the 20th century: Nordic and Baltic experiences*. Oslo, May, 2008.
[17] Toker L. Towards a Poetics of Documentary Prose – from the Perspective of Gulag Testimonies, in: *Poetics Today*, Vol. 18, 2/1997. – p. 191.
[18] Rytkönen M. *About the Self and the Time. On the Autobiographical Texts by Ė. Geršteјn, T. Petkevič, E. Bonnėr, M. Piliseckaja and M. Arbatova*. Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2002. – p. 28.
[19] Emphasis original.
[20] Кузнецов М. М. *Мемуарная проза. Жанрово-стилевые искания современной советской прозы*. Сборник статей. Москва: Наука, 1971. Quoted via Rytkönen, ibid. – p. 33.
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[22] Teuvo Tulio, Elämäni ja elokuvani, in: *Tulio. Levottoman veren antologia.* (Ed. Sakari Toiviainen). Helsinki: SKS, 2002. – pp. 23–157.
[23] See, for instance, such memoirs of film directors as: Ingmar Bergman, in: *Laterna magica*. Helsinki: Otava 1987; Federico Fellini, in: *Fellini.* Helsinki: Love kirjat 1980; Jean Renoir, in: *Elämäni ja elokuvani,* Helsinki: Love kirjat, 1980.

[24] Suni A. Fedja, ystävämme, in: *Tulio. Levottoman veren antologia.* (Ed. Sakari Toiviainen). Helsinki: SKS, 2002. – p. 159.
[25] Tulio T. Elämäni ja elokuvani, in: *Tulio. Levottoman veren antologia.* (Ed. Sakari Toiviainen). Helsinki: SKS, 2002. – p. 39.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid. – p. 55.
[28] As Sakari Toiviainen notes, using gypsies suited the genre well: in Finnish perception and popular forms of art, gypsies were linked with a hot temperament, easily involved in everything demanding and devouring passion, had strict communal rules and perceptions of honor. Toiviainen S. *Suurinta elämässä. Elokuvamelodraaman kulta-aika.* Helsinki: Valtion painatuskeskus 1992. – p. 233.
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[30] Tulio T. Elämäni ja elokuvani, in: *Tulio. Levottoman veren antologia.* (Ed. Sakari Toiviainen). Helsinki: SKS, 2002 ibid. – p. 24.
[31] Ibid. – p. 33.
[32] Ibid. – p. 83.
[33] Quist, Per Olov. Rakkauden risti. (Translated by Tiina Erkintalo), in: *Tulio. Levottoman veren antologia.* (Ed. Sakari Toiviainen). Helsinki: SKS, 2002. – p. 362.
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Anna Stankeviča

'THE ALLIED – THE ALIEN' IN CARL GUSTAV MANNERHEIM'S *MEMOIRS*

Summary

'Memoirs' by Carl Gustav Mannerheim (1867 – 1951) first saw the light in 1952. Among the literary memoirs the Finish marshal's reminiscences take a special place – they are not simply the memoirs of private life, but they turn to be the exposition of the central moments of the European historical process, watched by a soldier, a politician, a statesman. The artistic world of 'Memoirs' provides a chance to observe the distinctive formation of the author's personality: through official and claimed to be absolutely objective narrative structure of 'Memoirs' it seems possible to watch the process of a person's self-identification. The invariable opposition 'allied-alien' in his picture of the world obtains different variable forms, such as 'barbarism – civilization', 'east-west', etc. The idea of Finnish safety was the basis of all Mannerheim's diplomatic, political and military actions.

Key-words: Mannerheim, memoirs, personality formation, 'allied – alien', mental map, European historical process

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Memoirs by Carl Gustav Mannerheim first saw the light in 1952; having been translated into many European languages, they gave an impetus to thorough studies of the great politician and commander's image.[1]

Among the literary memoirs, the Finish marshal's reminiscences take a special place – they are not simply the memoirs of private life, fatal meetings and significant events, but they turn to be the exposition of the central moments of the European historical process, watched by a soldier, a politician, a statesman. The book is not homogenous inwardly: its first part can be characterized by definite subjectivism, with rather scanty disseminations of details about the author's personal life. The second part of the memoirs, which relates to the Finnish period of C.G. Mannerheim's life, presents bare consequent listing of facts with minimal reference to biographical events. This peculiarity can be explained, firstly, by the fact that the newly-born Finnish state became the main object of Mannerheim's care and it filled all his life. Secondly, it is necessary to emphasize one more important fact – the last part of the memoirs was not written, but dictated by Mannerheim, who had been seriously ill by that time. The last chapters, which were included into the book, almost fully belong to the pen of his assistants; that is why the final part of *Memoirs* reproduces only bare enumeration of events, characters and different kinds of statistic data.

The artistic world of *Memoirs* provides a chance to observe the distinctive formation of the author's personality: through official and claimed to be absolutely objective narrative

structure of *Memoirs* it seems possible to watch the process of a person's self-identification – Mannerheim's one, in this case.

While speaking about the peculiarities of *Memoirs*, the author remarks:

> *A private person, who looks back to the past, can easily see the facts, which favored the formation of his way of life. [..] The whole nation [..] can hardly ever fulfill such a task of self-analysis [..]. When the question is about a small country, the same as Finland, it seems to be desirable and even necessary for all citizens [..] to learn how to realize responsibility and those duties, which they face because of their political and social position.*[2]

Thus, Mannerheim's 'I' is closely connected, even entailed with the Finnish 'we':

> *[..] in the background of my life's memoirs I consider it necessary to speak about my own experience, about those newest events in the history of Finland, which I was permitted to influence.*[3]

We suppose, the phenomena of Mannerheim's personality formation can be 'read' in parallel with the construction of Finnish mental map.[4]

The history of Mannerheim's family prepossessed the problems of self-identification to become actual just since his youth: Carl Gustav came from German-Swedish family, he was born in the Great Princedom of Finland, and his ancestors were closely connected with Russia. The future marshal made his choice very early; the young man felt to be a Finn, and all his life Mannerheim acted circumspectly to a preliminary condition: whether it was appropriate or not to the high standards of Finnish freedom and wealth. Thus, when Mannerheim decided to enter Nicolas Cavalry School in St. Petersburg (1887 – 1889), he took into consideration the following:

> *My decision was, beyond any doubt, from patriotic point of view, because the relations between Russia and the autonomous Great Princedom of Finland were good those days. They were based on the Finns' trust to Russia, which raised from liberation actions by Alexander I.*[5]

He considered it *to be an honor* to serve in Dragoon regiment as its *[..] honorary commander was Her Majesty Empress Mariya Fyodorovna*[6]. She, *a daughter of the Danish king Christian IX, was always in sympathy with Finland, and we, the Finns, called her by a northern female name – Empress Dagmar*[7].

It is possible to mention, that during his Russian period of life (before Russo-Japanese War 1905 – 1905) Mannerheim felt, if not definitely Russian, then, at least, as a person who was very loyal to the Russian world. He considered it an honor to participate in the coronation of Nikolai II; he married a Russian woman[8] and made close friends with such Russian masters of art as the painter Valentin Serov and ballet dancer Tamara Karsavina. In his *Memoirs* whole pages are devoted to rapturous descriptions of Russian choral music and celebration of Orthodox Easter.

Mannerheim's picture of the world is rather homogenous: even when he writes about Finland and Poland, which were a part of Russian Empire those days, his tone of narration is very quiet as such a structure of the world does seem to break the norms. At that time Mannerheim's memoirs did not contain even a slightest sign of the opposition 'allied – alien'.

Everything changed completely after the Russo-Japanese War, when Russian Empire lost its reputation as an invincible, harmonically organized and in this case eternal state

in the opinion of many contemporaries. As a result, Mannerheim's world assumed certain discreteness. More and more often there appeared thoughts about *hated russification of Finland*, about *national oppression*[9]. The Polish started to be apprehended as fellow-sufferers: *As a Finn and convinced antagonist of russification, I thought I understood the feelings of the Polish…*[10]

Just that very period can be characterized by the appearance of the opposition 'East – West' as Russian chaos started to be opposed to the *western order*[11]. Moreover, if West meant Europe, then East was represented by Russia and the territories to the east of the country: *[..] in the East the Russians managed to compensate their failures they got in Europe*[12].

Eastern expedition made by Mannerheim in 1906 – 1908 became a special stage in the formation of his views. On the one hand, having been sent by the Russian emperor, Mannerheim did great work for the Russians: after riding about 14000 km, Mannerheim's expedition made detailed maps as well as evaluated the condition of troops, railways, industry and mining in China. 1200 artifacts, about 2000 manuscripts, 1353 photos were brought from there and the phonetic dictionary of folk languages of Northern China was compiled. However, the inner dynamics of the young officer's awareness was not so complete as he was harassed by kind of a cognitive dissonance. For instance, while talking to the Dalai Lama, Mannerheim felt to be Russian and even on behalf of the Russians assured His Holiness that *[..] sympathies of Russian people are on his side and these sympathies have not decreased since then*[13]. In another situation he names himself *a Finn, who travels under the protection of Russian government*[14]. Mannerheim mentions that after attending Russian and British councils in Kashgar, he feels allied both to Russian and Western representatives. Finally, in order to travel freely in the country, he obtained a Chinese passport and formally turned to be a Chinese:

> *Then I was named Ma-ta-han, that means 'horse, galloping through clouds'. This name aroused warm reaction in the officials who were checking my documents.*[15]

In general, Mannerheim perceives Chinese exotics as something strange and obscure, that is why the question, which was asked in one of Chinese newspapers: 'Who really was this foreigner, who was taking photos of bridges, marking roads on the map and, as a rule, stopped in the places, which were important from the military point of view?' – can express, quite fully, Mannerheim's own doubts.

After the future marshal's return from the expedition, the invariable opposition 'allied-alien' in his picture of the world obtained a variable form of 'barbarism – civilization': *The life of a civilized person brought me the feeling of relief and I enjoyed this holiday* (in Helsinki) *much more than other ones*[16]. By the way, in different periods of his life, various vectors of the mental map (Russia, Germany, Britain and even other Scandinavian countries) were labeled as barbaric by Mannerheim but he invariably included Finland into the central locus of 'civilization'.

Mannerheim participated in World War I and, as the majority of historians consider, he was a valorous warrior and was awarded Georgiy's cross and arms.

Having taken the oath, Mannerheim demonstrated military valor; nevertheless, it seems to have been a hard time to him, as he was feeling an agonizing process of severance with Russia. On the one hand, the fact that the general kept a silver medal of the parti-

cipant of Nikolai II coronation in his breast pocket and considered it to be his amulet seems to be rather demonstrative: his link with Russia was almost sacred. Mannerheim's remark in *Memoirs* proves it: *Failures led to an intense rise of patriotic feelings and this gave a hope that all congenial forces, having been unclaimed before, would unite for Motherland salvation*[17]. On the other hand, during the military campaign Mannerheim felt some bitter disappointment. Here we can mention conflicts with Keller, Rauh, Krasnov and other commanders, whose lack of military talent and responsibility once again unmasked deep processes of crisis in Russian society in general and in the army in particular. After a serious disease (provoked by nervous shocks as well) at the end of 1917 Mannerheim resigned and left Russia. Thus, he completely broke up with Russia and never named it Motherland later.[18] From 1918 and up to his last breath Mannerheim felt himself a Finn, and only a Finn. Even speaking about the division of his nation into 'reds' and 'whites', Mannerheim always names it not as the stand, but as a delusion; the compatriots who believed in Bolshevism were allied all the same, so they deserved respect: *They [..] demonstrated desperate bravery and defiance to death*[19]. But the category of 'alien' in every certain situation finds various configurations. It starts with the demonstrative stand between Russia and Finland:

> *[..] our country had wider opportunities to save its culture and social system than Russia. There I watched only lack of belief and passiveness, in Motherland I felt people's strong desire to fight for freedom.*[20]

Mannerheim did not consider Denikin who was a worthy man and officer to have the same views as he had, to be 'allied', because Denikin had not agreed with sovereignty for Poland and Finland. Mannerheim thought it was the reason why Denikin had not received the necessary support and had been defeated.

In this context, the Germans became the allies or 'the allied' for the Finns, as the Germans *disarmed the last Russian military units* in the Aland Isles[21]. The telegram sent to German government by Mannerheim speaks about the necessity of alliance on the basis of partnership; here Mannerheim says: *On the behalf of the Finnish army I can declare that we are greeting brave German battalions in our country and are ready to express thanks on behalf on the whole nation*[22]. Mannerheim, the politician of that time, can be characterized as a man who thought only in the frame of the paradigm 'advantageous-disadvantageous' for Finland; even the seemingly undisputable idea of sovereignty for other nations whose territories were a part of the former Empire is affirmed according to the interests of Finland:

> *War for liberation in Estonia won our sympathy; moreover, it was in the interests of Finland: it was tempting to see the southern shore of the Finnish Bay in friendly hands. In addition, the given help would demonstrate the whole world that Finland became a stable force on the north of Europe and it was worth recognizing its independence.*[23]

Inter-Scandinavian relationships are an absolutely special theme; Mannerheim is very definite in their description: *Finland is orienting to the Scandinavian countries which are connected with our country not only by history, but also by the economic policy, culture and general outlook, based on them*[24].

On the one hand, the motif of Scandinavian closeness as a western one is usually repeated in the opposition 'West-East', which worried the future politician in the youth;

now it takes a logically complete form: *Firstly, the new form of culture came to us from Sweden, but, being dependent on another eastern nation, we have to be the farthest outpost of western spirituality*[25]. On the other hand, when he speaks about the Aland Isles, the territory claimed to be Finnish and Swedish at the same time, his system of evaluation changes greatly:

> *Turned to be in such a difficult position, Finland could wait for help, first of all, from Sweden, for which it had served as a shield that protected it from eastern invasion for six hundred years. Nevertheless, during military operations Sweden invaded the Aland Isles, although they had been an integral part of Finland for many hundred years.*[26]

Mannerheim names the Swedes occupants and aggressors; against the background of a small peaceful Finland, they look like real barbarians.

When France and Britain expressed their readiness to support Sweden in its argument for the Aland Isles, Mannerheim's tone of narration changed immediately: from the category of friendly or allied, these countries were transposed into the category of 'aliens'.

The history of Finland, which gained its own place on the map of Europe, is reflected in Mannerheim's spiritual peripetia as a distinctive parallel process. The second significant stage in this process started at the beginning of Winter War in 1939. At that time Mannerheim was a wise politician who understood clearly his responsibility for the future of his country and nation in the coming severe wars, so the tone of the narration became warmer; strong objection and simplicity in evaluation disappeared. Only Finland remained an invariable and absolute value for the marshal.

When Mannerheim was signing the treaty of peace after Winter War, his appeal to the nation became an original apotheosis of the world 'Finno-centrism'.

While speaking about Russia in the memoirs of that period, the author divides the notion of nation and state: absolutely denying the Soviet Union as *the state with [..] rotten moral kernel*[27], Mannerheim with unfailing sympathy and respect narrates about Russian soldiers and their heroic valor: *The explanation should be found in the hard fight of Russian people with nature, the fight which in time turned into an incomprehensible for the Europeans ability to suffer and stand poverty, into passive bravery and fatalism, which influenced and continue influencing political development*[28]. Later some personal feelings stopped Mannerheim from sending Finnish troops to Leningrad, seized in the circle of blockade.

Feeling close to all Scandinavians, Mannerheim feels extremely distressed that his country does not get the support from neighbors, moreover:

> *Sweden, Norway and Denmark claimed, they would not participate in any sanctions against the Soviet Union. [..] Scandinavian countries abstained from voting on the question of aggressor's expulsion from the League of Nations.*[29]

Mannerheim was rather bitter about the insincerity of the most of political rituals. Thus, for instance, before Britain claimed war to Finland on 2nd December 1941, both states had exchanged sharp notes, but Churchill wrote to Mannerheim a friendly message.

Hard times for Mannerheim were also the times of alliance with the Germans during World War II and the following alliance with the Soviet Union and the war of liberation in the north of Finland from Hitlerites.

The idea of Finnish security was the basis of all Mannerheim's diplomatic, political, and military actions. Probably, by the beginning of World War II, Mannerheim's personal mental map had already been formed, and its shapes never changed. But Europe and the world in general had to be changed:

> *World nations are on the threshold of new times. Another world is rising from the horrors of the war [..] which, I can say with confidence, will bring progress and new achievements. The time will be hard for nations till the day comes which will unite nations in military agreement and lay the basis for peaceful labor and mutual understanding.*[30]

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[1] Up to now, 702 Mannerheim's biographies have been produced. Just after the publishing of *Memoirs,* their readers divided into two generally uncompromising camps: the first ones saw the author as a romantic, a great person, a knight and creator; the others focused on exposures: Mannerheim in their interpretation is an adventurer, rascal, and time-server (Вайну Х. Многоликий Маннергейм. / *Новая и новейшая история* № 5, 1997. – с. 43). Remarkably, both of them usually based their opinions on contemporaries' indirect evidence. For instance, Mannerheim's reputation as a Don Juan and a perfect connoisseur of women's beauty was made by his female admirers and it was mentioned in his friends' diaries, Yelizaveta Shuvalova and Polish countess Lyubomirska. Moreover, the Russians were exasperated with the information that during World War II Mannerheim seemed to offer the Germans to wipe Leningrad off the face of the earth. The information appeared in the notes of a German researcher, who, supposedly, had read about it in the diary of one of Hitler's adjutants (Вирмавирта Я. Карл Густав Эмиль Маннергейм. / *Вопросы истории* № 1, 1994. – с. 56).

[2] *Memoirs* by C.G. Mannerheim are cited from the following edition: Маннергейм К.Г. *Мемуары.* Москва: Вагриус. 1999. – с. 503–504. Translated into English by J. Brakovska.

[3] Ibid. – с. 504.

[4] Mental cartography is defined as *abstract notion, which includes such mental and spiritual abilities that give us the opportunity to collect, regulate, remember, remind and convert the information about the surrounding space. [..]* Mental map is *created by a human description of the part of the surrounding space. […] It reflects the world in the way the human imagines it* (Шенк Ф.Б. Ментальные карты: конструирование географического пространства в Европе от эпохи Просвещения до наших дней. / *Новое литературное обозрение* № 6 (52), 2001. – с. 42).

[5] Маннергейм К.Г. *Мемуары.* Москва: Вагриус. 1999. – с. 11.

[6] Ibid. – с. 14.

[7] Ibid. – с. 15.

[8] Mannerheim's wife was Anastasiya Arapova, general Nicolay Arapov's daughter.

[9] Маннергейм К.Г. *Мемуары.* Москва: Вагриус. 1999. – с. 28.

[10] Ibid. – с. 46.

[11] Ibid. – с. 29.

[12] Ibid. – с. 30.

[13] Ibid. – с. 41–42.

[14] Ibid. – с. 33.

[15] Ibid. – с. 34.

[16] Ibid. – с. 45.

[17] Ibid. – с. 59.

[18] Nevertheless, according to the memoirs of contemporaries, he spoke the language of his motherland (Finland) with many errors.

[19] Ibid. – с. 123.

[20] Ibid. – с. 85.

[21] Ibid. – с. 98.

[22] Ibid. – c. 108.
[23] Ibid. – c. 156. Underlined by me – A.S.
[24] Ibid. – c. 212.
[25] Ibid. – c. 161. Underlined by me – A.S.
[26] Ibid. – c. 176.
[27] Ibid. – c. 368.
[28] Ibid. – c. 312.
[29] Ibid. – c. 324.
[30] Ibid. – c. 494–495.

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Taina Vanharanta

ELVI SINERVO'S CULTURAL INFLUENCE AS A TRANSLATOR OF LITERATURE

Summary

The Finnish writer and translator Elvi Sinervo (1912 – 1986) was known as one of the founder-writers of the Finnish literature group named Kiila.[1] *During World War II, E. Sinervo was imprisoned together with some other members of the group Kiila. She was to stay imprisoned for about three years*[2]*, and later during that period she had the opportunity to study French, English, and Russian*[3]*. Already as a school girl she was able to understand German*[4]*.*

After the war, in the middle of the 1940s, Sinervo was released from prison, and, because of her good knowledge of languages, she would be asked to travel all over the world to represent the Finnish writers[5] *who wanted to develop international connections in the spirit of world peace.*

During those meetings, Sinervo came to know a great many writers and other artists who came to mean a lot to her and to other Finns who did not understand any other languages than Finnish. Bertolt Brecht and Anna Seghers, for instance, were important writers whose books she translated into Finnish. Sinervo also worked abroad as a foreign correspondent[6]*, and especially in the 1970s she was to translate many Scandinavian novelists.*

Key-words: Elvi Sinervo, translation, literature, languages

*

The Finnish writer and translator Elvi Sinervo was born in 1912, and died in 1986. Her father was a craftsman, a blacksmith, and her mother belonged to a wealthy Swedish-speaking Finnish family; her maiden name was Wallenius. Already as child, Elvi Sinervo was interested in literature, and her favorite writer was the Russian author Maxim Gorki[7] whose novel *Mother* she later translated into Finnish from German and Swedish versions because at that time she had not yet learned Russian. Unfortunately, the manuscript was lost and it was never published in Finnish in Elvi Sinervo's translation[8] but in 1944 in Juhani Konkka's translation from Russian.

Sinervo was known as one of the founder-writers of the Finnish literature group named *Kiila* (The Wedge). The members of the group *Kiila* (among others Viljo Kajava, Arvo Turtiainen, and Raoul Palmgren) were working, for example, to promote knowledge abroad of those writers who went into exile during World War II, among them Bertolt Brecht, Heinrich Mann, and Anna Seghers from Germany[9].

Together with her husband, who was doctor and a Member of Parliament, Sinervo was the leading member of a new society of friendship between Finland and the Soviet Union; through it they wanted to promote cultural interchange between both countries[10].

However, because of the critical situation during World War II, both of them were imprisoned together with some other members of the group *Kiila*. The official reason given was instigation to treason. She had never thought about becoming imprisoned for promoting cultural interchange but because there were those persons in the society who wanted to unseat the Finnish Government she was imprisoned, too[11].

Sinervo was to stay imprisoned for about three years, and later during that period she had the opportunity to study languages – French, English, and Russian – but Russian had to be studied in secret because Finland was at war with the Soviet Union. Already as a school girl she was able to understand German, as German was the first foreign language which Finns would learn at school at that time. She also translated a number of books and wrote plays and poems, which were smuggled out from prison by a prison wardress[12]. Later the poems were published in the form of a book called *Pilvet* (The Clouds, 1946), which received a great amount of media publicity. What follows is an example from *Pilvet*, the third stanza from *Cell Song* (translated by Cid Erik Tallqvist)[13]:

Do but judge me, O, ye blind men,
I know the law well.
What I did, life tasked me with it,
To my lot it fell.

The original poem is called *Koppilaulu*[14]:

Neljä seinää ympärillä,
vapaa ihminen.
Olkipatja. Peltituoppi.
Vaate raitainen.

Silkkisiipipääskyn lento
pilviin kohoaa.
Jostain laivan lähtöhuuto
korvaan kumahtaa.

Tuomitkaa, te sokkosilmät.
Itse tiedän lain.
Minkä tein, sen tehtäväksi
elämältä sain.

Vesituopin huulilleni
nostan, ihminen.
Elämältä malja tämä.
– Juon sen kiittäen.

In her last interview, which she gave to an Estonian journalist in 1986, Sinervo said that *Pilvet* was one of her most important works. She also wanted to give the journalist a piece of paper – her poem *Pilvi* but she could not find it and that is why she gave him instead another poem written in prison on a piece of old toilet paper:

> *Tahtsin sulle näidata vanglas WC-paberil 'väljaantud' 'Pilvi', see on mul veel alles. Ent miskipärast ma ei leia, ilmselt on mõnes kastis, me pole pärast kolimist seniajani köiki kaste lahti teinud. See-eest leitsin juhuslikult selle.*
>
> *Ja ta ilatab mulle öhukese koltunud paberilehe, millel on väikeste tähtedega midagi kirjutatud. Aeg on tindi poolenisti kastutanud.*[15]

One of the central themes of *Pilvet* is love, the other is motherhood, and both of those themes are emphasized in Sinervo's later poetry, too. The novel *Viljami Vaihdokas* (William the Changeling, 1946), which is regarded as Sinervo's major work, reflects the postwar optimism unlike Mika Waltari's *Sinuhe, egyptiläinen* (The Egyptian), which reflects the postwar disillusionment[16]. *Viljami Vaihdokas was a 'Bildungsroman' in the tradition of London, Gorky, and Martinson*[17] and was translated to Latvian, Estonian, Swedish, and German.

After the war, in the middle of the 1940s, Sinervo and her husband who had managed to avoid execution were released from prison. Now they were able to work freely for the promotion of peace. Sinervo continued to write and she was also active in the Finnish Pen group, and, because of her good knowledge of languages, she would be asked to travel all over the world to represent the Finnish writers who wanted to develop international connections in the spirit of world peace.

During those meetings, Sinervo came to know a great many writers and other artists who meant a lot to her and other Finns who did not understand any other languages than Finnish. Bertolt Brecht and Anna Seghers, for instance, were important writers whose books she translated into Finnish. She also translated Heinrich von Kleist's *Michael Kohlhaas* and *Die Marquise von O.* and Franz Kafka's *Amerika*. She translated works by the Cretan writer Nikos Kazantzakis via German because she did not understand Greek. She translated Arthur Miller's *Focus* and the letters of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, too, who – allegedly – sold the secret of the nuclear bomb from the USA to the Soviet Union[18]. She wanted to publish the letters in Finnish in a book form, but no publisher was to be found for it. The Rosenbergs were executed in 1953.

Especially in the 1970s, Sinervo was to translate many Scandinavian novelists, for example Martin Andersen Nexö's *Erindringerne* (Reminiscences) and *Pelle Erobreren* (Pelle the Conqueror) from Danish. Works by Swedish writers which she translated were, for example, Ivar Lo-Johansson's *Lyckan* (Bodies of Love), Per Olov Enquist's *Magnetisörens femte vinter* (The Magnetist's Fifth Winter), and Kerstin Ekman's *Häxringarna* (Witches' Rings) and *Springkällan* (Spring). In Norway she had a good friend, the theatre director and actor Hans-Jakob Nilsen, who produced a new modern version of *Peer Gynt* which brought him a great amount of publicity. They met and befriended each other during one of the peace conferences in Europe, and after that they would be in correspondence during the ten years that followed, until Hans-Jakob Nilsen's death – his last letter is dated by February 1957[19].

Sinervo was in a regular contact with a great number of writers nearly all over the world – in Europe, the USA, and South America. Plays, poems, and novels were sent to her which she translated into Finnish, and simultaneously she would send her own poems and plays abroad to be translated into various languages. Her poems and plays have been translated to at least 14 languages including every Baltic and Nordic language. One of her plays was published in the French magazine *Les temps modernes* whose editor-in-chief was Jean-Paul Sartre[20].

Sinervo also worked abroad as a foreign correspondent that enabled her to write about Eastern Europe, for example Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Hungary. Sinervo wrote about foreign people and countries, and later her main task was to promote peace in the world by writing and speaking at conferences.

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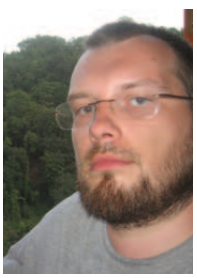
CONTRIBUTORS

ESTONIA

Irina Belobrovtseva
Dr. philos., professor
Tallin University Department of Russian Literature
Tallin, Estonia
venefil@tlu.ee

Aurika Meimre
PhD Professor and Director of the Institute of Slavonic Languages and Cultures of Tallinn University
Tallin, Estonia
aurikameimre@yahoo.com

Anneli Mihkelev
PhD in Semiotics and Theory of Culture, researcher, assoc. professor
Under and Tuglas Literature Centre of the Estonian Academy of Sciences University of Tallin
Tallin, Estonia
millenna@hot.ee



Aare Pilv
Mag. Art. in Estonian Literature, researcher
Under and Tuglas Literature Centre of the Estonian Academy of Sciences
Tartu, Estonia
aare.pilv@mail.ee

FINLAND

Natalia Baschmakoff
Dr. philos., professor
Joensuu University
Joensuu, Finland
natalia.baschmakoff@joensuu.fi

Marja Jänis
Dr. philos., docent (adjunct professor)
Joensuu University
Joensuu, Finland
mjanis@joyx.joensuu.fi

Taina Vanharanta
Phil. Lic., researcher
University of Vaasa
Vaasa, Finland
taina.vanharanta@uwasa.fi

LATVIA

Maija Burima
Dr. philol., professor
Daugavpils University Institute of Comparative Studies
Daugavpils, Latvia
maija.burima@du.lv

Nadezhda Fjodorova
Dr. philol., docent
Daugavpils University Department of Russian Literature and Culture
Daugavpils, Latvia
fjodor.fjodorov@gmail.com

Fjodors Fjodorovs
Dr. habil. philol., professor
Daugavpils University Institute of Comparative Studies
Daugavpils, Latvia
fjodor.fjodorov@gmail.com

Ilze Kačāne
Dr. philol., researcher
Daugavpils University Institute of Comparative Studies
Daugavpils, Latvia
ilze.kacane@du.lv

Ilona Ļaha
Dr. philol., researcher
Daugavpils University Institute of Comparative Studies
Daugavpils, Latvia
ilona.laha@du.lv

Alīna Romanovska
Dr. philol., researcher
Daugavpils University Institute of Comparative Studies
Daugavpils, Latvia
alina.romanovska@du.lv

Anna Stankeviča
Dr. philol., assoc. profesor
Daugavpils University Department of Russian Literature and Culture
Daugavpils, Latvia
annastankevica@inbox.lv

LITHUANIA

Asta Gustaitiene
Dr. of human sciences, researcher
Vytautas Magnus University
Kaunas, Lithuania
astaorama@gmail.com

Inga Stepukonienė
Dr. of human sciences, associate professor
Vytautas Magnus University, Department of Lithuanian Literature
Kaunas, Lithuania
vaiinga@yahoo.com

NORWAY

Bente Aamotsbakken
Dr. philos., professor
Vestfold University College
Tønsberg, Norway
bente.aamotsbakken@hive.no

SWEDEN

Jørgen Bruhn
Ph.d., assoc. professor
Department of Comparative Literature
Växjö University
Sweden
Jorgen.bruhn@vxu.se

Daugavpils Universitātes Akadēmiskais apgāds «Saule»
Izdevējdarbības reģistr. apliecība Nr. 2-0197.
Saules iela 1/3, Daugavpils, LV–5400, Latvija

Iespiests SIA «Madonas poligrāfists» —
Saieta laukums 2a, Madona, LV–4801, Latvija.