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INDIVIDUALITY AND A COHERENT PLACE: REPRESENTATION OF IDENTITY WITHIN THE IMAGE OF HOME

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ABSTRACT

The article explores the recurring need to solidify a personal identity in a coherent space and attempts to show how each individual meaning of home, such as privacy, identity or familiarity, can be interpreted as physical, psychological and social constructs and be related to the wider concept of a familiar place. To achieve this, the article applies the phenomenological approach of the Husserlian theory of homeworld, analysing home as a multidimensional concept and depicting different aspects of it. The cultural memory of a nation is revealed through the personal context and complex emotional states. The author analysed – Algirdas Jeronimas Landsbergis (1924–2004) – was a playwright, prose writer and journalist who was forced to flee Lithuania shortly before the second Soviet occupation. His short stories reveal the creative existence of a forced migrant, closely related with the formation of the image of home. This article focuses on the dominant and recurrent ideas of home in three of Landsbergis's short stories: "Dangūs tuštėja, dangūs pildosi" [The Skies are Emptying, the Skies are Filling up], "Duetas moters balsui ir smuikui Venecijoje" [Duet for Female Voice and Violin in Venice] and "Karveliai virš stogų" [Pigeons over the Rooftops].

Keywords: image of home, identity, forced migration, meaning of home, homeland and identity

INTRODUCTION

The development of identity is shaped by environmental stimuli and encompasses key geographic, cultural and cross-cultural identifiers: community, race, ethnic group, cultural region, geographical country, etc. Identity refers to a sense of self that is achieved through harmony with one's environment and others. From the psychological point of view, this internalised and identifiable self – which is the core of human individuality – is understood as a product of the formative stages of identity formation reflecting an internalised set of family and environmental norms and values. It is arguable that the success of this process is one of the essential elements of the formation of human personality, and its necessity and essentiality for a person's psychological health reveals the issue of internalisation. Due to the possible incompatibility with the inherent community environment, in this article, the concept of home is considered to be a field of meanings encompassing the experiences associated with the basic place of human relationship formation. Home is seen as a space of personal identification. It implies a sense of security, permanence and coherence which is not necessarily linked to the geographical and intercultural aspects of identification mentioned above. Security, permanence and coherence are all units of environmental stimuli determining the process of identity dissemination, and inevitably linked to it.

This article explores the issue of the relationship with home along with the need to belong in the aspect of identity in the short stories of Algirdas Landsbergis. The short stories “Dangūs tuštėja, dangūs pildosi” [The Skies are Emptying, the Skies are Filling Up], “Duetas moters balsui ir smuikui Venecijoje” [Duet for Female Voice and Violin in Venice] and “Karveliai virš stogų” [Pigeons over the Rooftops] were chosen for analysis.

Algirdas Landsbergis is an expatriate writer who emigrated from Lithuania in 1944 under the threat of Soviet occupation. The author spent his entire life living abroad, influenced by the existential currents of the literature and philosophy of the time. Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus and Stearns Eliot shaped the author's natural worldview and universal wartime experience, and became the basis for conveying the search for Lithuanian identity and place in the radical situations of exodus. This aspect of Landsbergis's work is particularly pronounced; themes such as settling down, finding and creating one's own place, and the fundamental notion of home are highly relevant.

Separation from home, indigenization and identity are all phenomenological occurrences. The main axis of the article is the phenomenal need to fit in, the importance of home, the experience of place and the emotions and experiences it evokes. For this reason, Husserl's phenomenological homeworld theory is applied to explore the emotional, intellectual and sensual stimuli for identity formation associated with the space of home, as well as the dissipation of space in the encounter with, or the separation from, the place considered home.

HOME: THE MOST IMPORTANT CARRIER OF EXPERIENCE

The phenomenological approach considers an individual subject as living and acting in the world, and relating to it through experience. The concept of the "lived world", like many concepts in phenomenology, was formulated by Edmund Husserl. He believed that the way we perceive the world is a reflection of ourselves (Landgrebe 1940, 39). A phenomenological perspective is therefore thought to conceptualise the natural world and to provide insight into how this world is structured and experienced by consciousness.

The Husserlian distinction between the familiar and the unknown, the world of the home (the "*lebenswelt*"), and the world of the strange (the "*umwelt*") was a proposition derived from an observation that the concept of the lived world was too abstract (Husserl 1989, 234). Husserl uses the term *lebenswelt* to express the way in which the world always appears in a familiar context (Ibid., 235). The world, for Husserl, is constituted by normality and abnormality, and it necessarily reveals itself in the relation of closeness and distantness. This description of the world through familiar and unfamiliar places indicates that space is not homogeneous and is largely dependent on the personal experience. Thus, a subjective perspective, bodily experience, space and place become the main characteristics determining the relationship between the individual and the world. As the paper explores the relationship between place and personal identity, the world is seen not only as an objective, physical phenomenon but also as a plane of cognition and experience in which human beings are operating (Jackson 1996, 29).

From a phenomenological point of view, place can be defined as any environmental locus that gathers all human experiences,

actions and meanings spatially and temporally (Seamon 2013, 150). As David Seamon observes, by this definition, the concept of a place can range from a favourite chair, an outdoor sitting place or a well-used room or building to an urban neighbourhood, a city as a whole, or a geographic region (Seamon 2018, 3). The reconstruction of place, in line with Husserlian philosophy, treats the past not as a dead set of facts but as a set of living problems in dialogue with the present (Moran 2013, 72). Thus, places are the pre-given, unreflected-upon environmental contexts that sustain particular lifeworlds and homeworlds – the locales, settings, resting points and pathways that provide the environmental, spatial and temporal grounding for one's every day, taken-for-granted experiences, understandings and actions (Seamon 2018, 3).

Emmanuel Levinas noted that the alterity of the world becomes an opportunity for self-identification through home and dwelling: "To exist henceforth means to dwell. [...] it is a recollection, a coming to oneself, a retreat home with oneself as in a land of refuge, which answers to a hospitality, an expectancy, a human welcome" (Levinas (1961) 2007, 156). So home is the core condition creating a possibility for personal interiority. Levinas also indicated that "home would serve for habitation as the hammer for the driving in of a nail or the pen for writing" (Ibid., 152). Therefore, home is "extraterritorial", meaning that it is excluded from territorial jurisdiction: "The interiority of the home is made of extraterritoriality in the midst of the elements of enjoyment with which life is nourished. [...] It is produced in the gentleness or the warmth of intimacy, which is not a subjective state of mind, but an event in the oecumena of being – a delightful "lapse" of the ontological order" (Ibid., 150). Based on the insights of Levinas, the space of the home is defined as a place of personal identification, determined by the place's relation to the identity of the self and the expression of the conceptuality of experience.

According to Esin Hasgöl, environment can be understood as a physical property, but its meaning can also be defined in terms of the communication between the subject and their surroundings (environment) (Düll 2020, 39). A person's identity can usually be described analysing three reoccurring notions: roles, patterns and activities (Heimsath 1977, 54) associated with the home place. Since the home is an expression of the personality (both in relation to the past and the present), the roles, recurring trait patterns and associated activities are thought to be a reflection of the person's own sense of self. Since phenomenology rejects preconceptions, human experience, objects and phenomena are described as they

appear to the consciousness. The phenomenological perspective allows for the identification and analysis of spaces as they appear to the perceiving consciousness of the protagonist. Based on this approach, a double action is carried out: the identification of the relational place and the disclosure of the expression of personal identity.

HOME AS A PLACE OF PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION IN SHORT STORIES BY A. J. LANDSBERGIS

This article is based on the idea that places are characterised by not only tangible, sensorially identifiable aspects of space but also invisible yet consciously experienced and perceived ones. Place identity (personal identity with a place) arises because places – as bounded localities imbued with personal, social and cultural meanings – are an important basis on which an identity is created, maintained and sometimes transformed. The article perceives the home from two different perspectives: as a physically defined place or as a dynamic, emotionally based symbolic area within the consciousness.

In Algirdas Jeronimas Landsbergis's short stories, the idea of home is not fixed in time but rather fluid, dependent on the protagonist's ever-changing stages of life, family structure, and general circumstances. The emotional dimension of the concept of home is undeniably linked to the subjective emotional outlook, memory and experience. As a diasporic author, Landsbergis particularly focuses on the links between place and communal, familial and national characteristics. The spatial inaccessibility of a premise becomes a recurring consequence of deportation, repression and expatriation. The motif of change is one of Landsbergis's most striking authorial features. The change of the place in which one is acting is considered to be parallel to the change of values and personal state of mind. Running away from threats, looking back to the past, searching for a place where one can feel at home (or resume the former experience of this feeling) becomes vital for Landsbergis' protagonists. In the author's texts, identity becomes a dynamic product of the interaction between the consciousness and structured perception, memory, physical and social structures and the processes of influence constituting the social context.

Based on Husserl's theoretical approach, this study distinguishes three elements of the relationship between locational characteristics and personal identity: the demographic characteristics of the home, the personal identity of the acting agent, and the relationship between the dissemination of the personal identity and the location of the home. In order to determine the relationship between home and identity, two relevant characteristics of the place analysed are distinguished: its existence on the plane of reality and its direct influence on the process of personality formation of the acting experiencer. The aim is to determine whether the identity answers the question "Who am I?" by answering the question "Where do I belong?"

The protagonist of the first short story, "The Skies are Emptying, the Skies are Filling Up", is Adele, a Lithuanian-American who settles in a Sicilian metropolitan area and is surrounded by foreigners and their culture. The short story begins by establishing the inherent dissonance between the protagonist and the place she physically resides in. Adele believes in the possibility of maintaining her Lithuanian-ness by living elsewhere, but her feelings of home, place, and identity are associated solely with Lithuania:

She looked up. Yes, and that precisely circumscribed expanse of sky, studded with television antennas, different from the more spacious sky in Lithuania above the rooftops, was part of her longing and the strangeness that surrounded her. (Landsbergis 1992, 209)

The ritualistic act of the protagonist's repeated gaze to the sky while standing on the porch can be seen as searching for the promise of return, as it is accompanied by a poetic association implying a positive connotation of a distant homeland. From a phenomenological point of view, Adele's movements are the holders of meaning, expressed through experience in the metaphysical statics of space. This allows the reader to understand that longing is not only a psychological experience but also includes bodily experiences, the connection of the physical body with the notion of place, resulting in the irresistible urge to find coincidences that bring the new home closer to the "real" one. When finding no real connection to the physical plane of place – America – Adele transforms the space of her home into a sublime medium of Lithuanian customs, ethics and mindset, and imprisons herself in it.

Adele feels particularly insecure in a multicultural and multireligious urban area as the previously prioritised social ties that had prevailed in her original home environment lose their importance. The significance of Lithuania as a home is evident in the opportunity to share common values. For Adele, the Lithuanian devotional community's Sundays are the core of her personal identity, pride and honour: "The ribbon of Sundays continued through her childhood and infancy, one of the few threads and strands of her life that had not been torn by expatriation" (Ibid., 210). It is of interest to note that Adele sees nothing but the influence of folk traditions on people's mutual identification in the Lithuanian community. Having lost the community that shaped her during her youth, she starts to search for new vantage grounds. In both Lithuania and America, Sundays offer Adele the chance to be seen and to present a social image – what she calls the "Sunday round" (Ibid., 209). For Adele, this artificial image-making is acceptable, it is a part of her perceived through details.

Without any spiritual contact with the place she is living in, Adele experiences America through her own physicality and also that of others: she observes the sweaty bodies of the local Afro-American workers and condemns the possessive and physical manner of her new Lithuanian neighbour's communication with his wife. At the same time, she looks down on his wife from above, as a member the local urban American culture, considering her uncovered, insufficiently restrained, and lacking Lithuanian-style modesty. Adele dehumanises her neighbour, deeming her to be a fake woman with an artificial appearance, assuming that her lush, beautiful, blonde hair is merely a wig.

It should be added that connections with the past are also sought through the corporeal – through wearing a dress from Lithuania, clutching a prayer book, looking up to the sky when homesick. Adele constantly tries to recreate past bodily experiences associated with Lithuania. This need to feel and experience the place of home also supports Husserl's theory; for Adele, Lithuania is perceived as home because of the bodily experience and the communion felt through it. A place is a *tabula rasa* until the people who act in it have created meaning. The only link between place and the body is the material touch which encodes the secret of the feeling of home.

Adele also considers her growing daughter, Danguolė, as her own flesh and blood, and thus a kind of extension of herself, of her own personal identity. She is most concerned about her daughter's maturing body, her physical corporeality, which will inevitably

“belong to some strange boy who will embrace her waist with a possessive wave like that bearded Lithuanian across the street” (Ibid., 20). Adele is a homemaker representing the family element. Her social space is strictly limited within the confines of the church, child-rearing and home. The German model *kinder-kuche-kirche* was used during the German Empire to describe the inherent role of women. Nowadays, it usually has a pejorative connotation describing what is seen as an outdated model of women’s role in modern society. Adele’s association with the element of home and her status as a mother can also be seen as a result of the manifestation of corporeality. Her children – who are directly connected and come into this world through the transformation of their mother’s body – are her gateway to the world, her connection to it. Since the values of the surrounding society clash with those of Adele, the burden of self-identification of the mother is placed on Danguolė.

Adele does not want to adapt or settle down; she tries to raise her daughter according to the rules she brought from her previous environment. Although she is subconsciously aware that her daughter needs to socialise, to create her own identity, to “start learning to earn money” (Ibid., 211), she nevertheless cannot suppress the need to confine the daughter to the intermediate transitional living space of the maternal home. Danguolė is connected to the new social space which becomes a milieu for growth, psychological maturation, socialisation and self-awareness; meanwhile the things that her mother has instilled in her begin to seem unfamiliar and artificial. Danguolė’s personality serves Adele as an extension of her “self”, a means of fulfilment. In a sense, Danguolė’s corporeality “enfleshes” Adele’s identity, linking it to something other than herself.

Adele’s personality is best reflected in her little room, which embodies the most important highlights of life:

Adele was proud of her little room, where she kept her sewing machine and her burial board, but which was always clean. Once dedicated to their baby son, who died before he was a month old, the room still held the solemnity of a distant event. Adele glanced fleetingly at the flower pots in the windows, at the green edge of her territory. (Ibid., 211)

One of the ways in which identity is linked to a place is through a sense of security, the sense of a sanctuary creating a favourable environment for the true personality to emerge. An

inability to settle down and re-establish the security of home in a community leads to a sense of meaninglessness in life, to reduced activity and weakened personal ties. Adele experiences all of this outside the walls of her little room, but within it she feels as if she were in a fortress protecting her from the blasphemy that exists outside the walls.

It is arguable that Adele, as the protagonist, is characterised by a world-rejecting point of view. The need for assimilation arises from the stimuli of the inner subconscious but is confronted with conscious actions which deny the possibility of such an event in an unfamiliar environment. Adele tends to shut herself in, thus gradually seeking an ever smaller and smaller domestic unit where she can feel safe from the external threats and dangers. For her, home is a feeling of security – or rather a distorted notion of security – a place where the community adheres to acceptable ethical rules, conforms to the expected standards of belief, where family members are directly obedient. The inability to discard these attitudes leads to a sense of homelessness and a constant turmoil of conflicting emotions, which prevents Adele from discovering a “self” that exists beyond faith or motherhood.

The narrative of “Duet for Female Voice and Violin in Venice” is presented in the form of a letter written by the protagonist. The letter is addressed to a deceased former teacher and tells the story of an unrequited love that leads the protagonist to an epiphany and helps him to understand the meaning of the fundamental events of his life.

The representation of the storyteller consists of a mixture of various elements. As the protagonist was growing up, his self-identification was largely determined by others: parents and the priest of the Displaced Persons camp saw the protagonist as a future Jesuit priest, and he felt he was following a path he was destined to. In his youth, the formation of self-awareness was based on the opposition of good and evil, exclusively oriented towards the category of the good based on the church and priesthood. The most vivid memories that reveal the process of personality formation relate to the 11-year-old protagonist’s departure from his homeland with his family to a refugee camp in postwar Germany. The extension of national identity becomes an interpersonal space realised through the local cultural environment – family, kinship and the local community. The ritualistic nature of everyday activities creates an inarticulate sense of belonging – of being at home – and thus national identity is perceived as innate, ascribed

and expressed in everyday life through obedience to the norms of the community.

Excessive submissiveness to family and community results in his school in Pfingstoberheim becoming a special space–time for the protagonist, a childhood “paradise”. He writes that “From the time I was an infant, I was surrounded by a loving circle of people of all good will: my parents, brothers, sisters, cousins and all the other regular attendees of the Masses I served”; describes himself as “the perfect altar boy” and speaks of “my desire to please my family” (Ibid., 192). At school, one must learn discipline, an order which is different from the domestic and the authority of teachers. The main values here are the subjects being taught, the knowledge that needs to be accepted, understood, and revised. Here, one learns about the world outside the community where the learner’s knowledge and efforts are valued more than obedience. It is a new experience that the protagonist accepts and preserves in his own way; he “inscribes” it in his inner world, in the space of his personal experience, and ties it to his own image of self.

It is interesting to note that the protagonist’s corporeality unfolds only through a relationship with a significant place. Being in a space of personal identification enables the protagonist’s body to relax and consciousness to open up to experiences that were previously stifled by submissiveness to the rules of those around him. The externality of place and its imagery suddenly become interior and turn into aspects of personal identity expression. It is only at school that the protagonist experiences and endures the bodily experience of place: the smell of lilacs, the sounds of trams, the aromas of the corridors (Ibid., 191). For the protagonist, school becomes a place of transition between family and society, a place of false identity and the possibility of the self and therefore the first place with which the process of personality formation is associated:

Through the open windows, a language unintelligible to the house sprang up [...] I breathed in the aroma of the corridor again – children, mould, lilacs – and I heard the streetcar gnashing its teeth as it curved around the corner of the gymnasium street. (Even now, well into my studies, the words and concepts I first heard in that gymnasium building are still marked like scratched coins by the sharp sound of the tram). (Ibid., 191)

Perhaps this is the reason that school is the only place in the short story remembered with such emphasis on the details of the surrounding environment.

Germany is soon left behind, and the impact of the protagonist's artificially imposed identity once again becomes so strong that it overwhelms any need for personal identification. He is reluctant to make decisive decisions for himself – he chooses church due to his family's wishes, whereas he chooses to leave church because of a woman. He sees himself only as others see him. Even after the decision to leave the priesthood, his desire to live up to the expectations imposed on him is still there:

I kept hearing a voice inside me whispering that I didn't really want to leave the Church, but I hoped that the Church would change so quickly that eventually it would be able to embrace Claudine and I. In the meantime, I'm going to take a holiday.... (Ibid., 193–194)

This reveals that the protagonist's personality is not formed naturally but is based on the desire to please, to conform to the standards that have been set.

As C. Heimsath suggests, home is usually associated with certain roles, actions or repetitive and habitual patterns of behaviour (Heimsath 1977, 54). For Adele, the heroine of the short story analysed previously, the association with home is expressed through the maternal role, while for the protagonist of "Duet for Female Voice and Violin in Venice", it is a complex mix of repetitive processes based on instilled family values. To Claudine, he is a devoted husband ("my first steps in my marital life seemed so clumsy that I automatically took all the blame"; "My guilt was so deep that I took it all on as part of my repentance" [Landsbergis 1992, 194]); to his parents and relatives, he is a humble son. For him, therefore, being at home means total dedication, sacrifice and commitment.

It is soon revealed that the marriage to Claudine lasted only five months, after which she asked for a divorce. The time, the home that has been created with his wife in America becomes a kind of "valley of dolls" based on lies, on his wife's phoney behaviour. Their communication seems like that of a cheap romantic novel: "After she left, I found that novel, Valley of the Dolls, behind the sofa, and I read the whole thing in one long sitting, hoping to understand her better. From that book, her mind spoke to me, her world, her whole being" (Ibid., 194). This is the

first time that the pressure of the environment becomes palpable, destroying all links between the protagonist and his surroundings: “Stunned, guilt-ridden, I would have crawled into a shell or fallen into ecclesiastical repentance” (Ibid., 194). He becomes a stranger to the life he has chosen.

He soon discovers that his wife has lied and has a lover, the family dentist, with whom she is planning a trip to Europe, paid for with the protagonist’s credit card. He channels his confusion and purposelessness into an urge to avenge himself on her by interrupting her trip. However, the trip acquires a real meaning: for the first time, in a new environment, he notices people and their behaviour, relaxation, openness to the surroundings, their connection to home and nationality. Here, the body’s autonomous action is combined with conscious awareness: “The city began to signal me, to tempt me with lights, signs, hints of melodies, as if it knew my anguish” (Ibid., 198). Guided by his body, the protagonist travels through the streets of Venice, which his body does not recognise but his consciousness familiarises as a space that feels close to home. The fragments of overheard conversations convey Landsbergis’s intention to portray the context of sincere encounters as the core of the experience of home – the protagonist’s experience of meeting Venice becomes grounded in a specific sensual experience: “They shone, as if enveloped in the happiness I had sought in vain; the child’s blond hair glistened in the sun; the wife snuggled against her husband” (Ibid., 198). Body and consciousness once again become open to new experiences and environmental stimuli.

At the end of the short story, the protagonist’s self-realisation is connected to the Venetian “stage”, “the Venice of the heart” (Ibid., 196), “where all the strings came together, everything was revealed, and you entered the stage again” (Ibid., 205). He writes that the “crystalline strings connected Venice to my childhood, to the post-war German town” (Ibid., 203). The bodily experiences of the other become the protagonist’s opportunity for knowledge: the Venetian concert, which takes place outside his body, opens up the meaning of his impulses, gives meaning to past experiences.

For a place to be experienced, there must be a moral or social historical significance and a human being who perceives meaning. For the 12-year-old version of the protagonist, security and home were represented by the melody of the teacher’s violin which he heard at school: “It encompassed and sang my happiness and from that evening onwards it has stayed with me all my life” (Ibid., 205). He realises that he loved his wife because of the melodiousness of

her voice, as it was the only link to a place in which he felt at home. This is why the fear of losing Claudine was so intense: she represented everything that he could have never afforded to have. Venice has the capacity to recreate the state of the past, the comfort of home, and so it is here that the protagonist has an “epiphany, a moment of holy clarity” (Ibid., 205), a realisation of what has been missing and sought after all this time. The placelessness of his “me” and the perceived need for identity finally prompt him to search for home and self.

He associates home with the world he lives in and the feelings and experiences it evokes. In this way, he expands the notion of home beyond the confines of the physical space: “I no longer believe in hell, but I know where paradise is: where her voice, heard for the first time, meets your violin phrase on that special evening of my childhood” (Ibid., 205). After the epiphany, the home becomes the space of life, the existential substance of creativity. The environment in which the protagonist is acting changes the lived experience as a space of existential identification. Home is still associated with total devotion as the melody that brings back the feeling of home encourages complete abandonment of the past and a joyful welcome of a future that is true to the protagonist’s personality.

In “Pigeons over the Rooftops”, Landsbergis portrays eighteen-year-old Petras Budėnas – that is, Peter. He escapes the war in Lithuania and, after staying in a German Displaced Persons camp, he decides to travel to a distant unknown America. Soon after his arrival, Peter begins to feel the disparity between himself and his new home: “Everybody speaks English as one. The streets are roaring, shaking. [...] Everything murmurs, flickers, everything gets in the way”, “Colours bite the eyes” (Landsbergis et al. 2006, 64). The geographical dimension of the short story is highly pronounced. America is a new space which is first experienced metaphorically – as existing, visible, real, concrete and tangible. However, as it seems meaningless, so he begins to search for the criteria for assimilation. The trauma of leaving one’s native home seems to be repressed, but the reflections reveal a very close relationship with the past – i.e., the homeland in Lithuania. Peter’s life is brought into the era of homelessness, and soon comes the realisation that a person makes his own home, makes his own safe place in the surrounding chaos. Thus, the end of homelessness can only be achieved by realising the meaning and significance of *place*.

It should be noted that Peter's corporeality is only related to the space of the United States and has no connection with memories of Lithuania. The US milieu is narrated through the perspective of Peter's awareness, as it manifests itself in his consciousness and is experienced by his physical body:

Peter's eyes were *most drawn* to the pigeon houses. A man on the other side of the street opened one, and a white group filled the space like a blizzard. *It appeared as if* the snow was falling in large chunks through the sooty curtains and fire ladders. [...] *The sky rang and melted*, and a stream of pigeons drew the grey of the petrol tanks and spread into the mix of houses. (Ibid., 63; authors' emphasis in italics)

As the phrases marked in italics show, the body's sensations are reflected in its relationship with the environment and its attributes.

The geographical dimension of the short story is intertwined with the element of mythical symbolism. The recurring image of an angel emerges as Peter talks about places: "The earth was new, full of mystery and strangeness. [...] he could not tell whether it was Michael or Lucifer" (Ibid., 66). Primarily, the angel symbolises America: "Yes, an angel. With a painted face, an invisible heart, mysteriously strange, but an angel. She is an angel!" (Ibid., 72). However, the angel's association with the former land of his parents is also recognisable as it is mentioned in reference to Lithuania. Thus, it is possible that the primary source of the angel's image is the native land, religious imagery, the organ, grandparents, parents, the church: "Angel is more than the earth" (Ibid., 64). This leads to the hypothesis that the meaning of the angel as a symbol is variable. Its meaning depends on the place within the protagonist's reach, the environment that he seeks to understand and experience. The need to be assimilated is also associated with a certain aggression – the angel is not meant to be understood and tamed but rather to be overcome, fought, "wrestled with": "If my great-grandparents were to rise from their graves right now [...] If they could see through the seas how I wrestle with an angel, they would be surprised" (Ibid., 65). Since returning to the place that shaped the protagonist – his homeland – is not possible, his subconscious suggests that the old must be killed, defeated, so that a new representation can emerge.

The protagonist's consciousness reflects the separation between America and Lithuania, the contrast between rural and

modern urban culture: "Everything is different. A plank, floating in the harbour, also different from those in Germany and Lithuania. The colours devour the eyes" (Ibid., 63). Having become part of modern society, Peter feels as if he has been thrown into the world, a homeless man plagued by the ignominy of social ideology's rebirth. American urban culture in particular diverges from the continuity of traditional rural culture and the meaning of kinship, both linked to the notion of land: "beyond the seas was his land, where his great-grandparents lay buried with their kind, patient eyes" (Ibid., 65). The motif of land is usually considered one of the essential signs of national self-understanding, synonymous with home and inseparable from a person's roots, language and culture: "The land quickly sits in the palm of one's hand and, somehow, in one's heart" (Ibid., 65). Peter's Lithuanianness is conceived as a specific identity that has been displaced in a foreign land but is always brought back by memories and is thus doubly affected by the process of losing home. The condition for the construction and reconstruction of identity is, therefore, the presence of home and homeland. For Peter, the necessity of home embodies the special attraction of a particular place: "The earth quickly burrows into the palm of the hand and somehow into the heart" (Ibid., 65). The land of Lithuania is seen as a metaphysical object connected to the body and its experiences. This is probably because the young man's diasporic identity has been shaped by others presenting the homeland to him not as a dear place but as an idea that has no connection with *his* personal identity. Peter is aware that it is experienced by others as an emotional and spiritual presence, and therefore he clearly recognises that it is not part of his identity, but more of an artificial preference imposed by those around him.

It is of interest to note two emerging planes of place as a significant spatial identification: Lithuania as a natural, national authenticity and America as a disintegrating, once romanticised fiction. Peter emphasises the past, his childhood home, which emerges as a counterweight to the present. He desperately resorts to a psychological compensation that establishes identity. Due to experiencing a sense of not fitting in, he searches for common points of contact with anything familiar. However, both places are devoid of any real sentiment of home, thus creating confusion and forcing Peter to leave his current space and embark on a search. The decision creates a moment of perfect fullness:

Peter laughed in the face of the city. He knew, he heard. [...] there was meaning and rhythm in the movement of people.

The lights were ringing in all the tones of the organ. There was plenty of heaven and it was waiting for the music. [...] The buildings were singing. You could hear the heart of the city beating. Immeasurable spaces loomed before his eyes and he understood their language. Everything was one. His blood was connected to the earth, the sky and the angel. (Ibid., 72)

The most important spatial points and places are connected by music and the colour white:

And in a distant village church, his great-grandfather pressed the keys with passionate fingers.

His body quivered like a string and his eyes watered with happiness. He looked up to the adjacent roof and tried to see something white. (Ibid., 72)

White can thus be interpreted as a color accompanying initiation into adult life: settling in a place; assimilating it; combining sensation, hearing, vision, empathy and perception experienced in places significant for one's self-identification. The music, accompanied by the colour white, connects Peter's artistic identity with his future in America.

The question of identity reveals the futility of the process of identification. This feeling is only liberated by understanding the need to take responsibility for one's own identity and to interpret it properly, which is the essence and freedom of local autonomy. It is here that the vulnerability and fragility of the identity begins – without a home, a safe haven that allows for freedom of expression and identification, it is powerless to flourish.

CONCLUSION

Social exclusion is thus caused not by the personal desire to take on the role of a social recluse but rather by economic, political and cultural barriers which create imbalance between the acting agent and the acting space. Emotional reactions to the loss of a home are manifested at the cognitive, physiological, emotional and behavioural levels. The characters are afflicted by homesickness for their former or possible future home, which leads them to self-reflexive experiences and a sense of not fitting in.

In these short stories, the sense of home materialises in a sense of loss. As noted above, the exclusive prioritisation of certain

spatial features essentially refers to their association with personal characteristics. It can be argued that Adele learns about the world through the body as a dimension of her own experience, the plane of the physical being. Her relation to the new place is antagonistic. She lives in America but her home is in Lithuania, a place to which her personal identity is linked. Self-identification in this short story is not self-reflexive since national and cultural traits are personalised and accepted as units of self-expression.

For the former Jesuit priest, the image of the domestic space is revealed as an objective phenomenon, an intermediate variant between the constructed image brought from childhood and adolescence and the mosaic of places in everyday life. His home is an image of childhood security, a space for self-realisation, self-expression and creativity. The space of the home is intricately multidimensional; domestication takes the form of the fulfilment of the spatial equivalent necessary for personal expression.

Peter tries to embrace and assimilate the new place in a dual sense – both as a metaphysical phenomenon and as a plane of cognition and experience. The world for him is an open playground, an adventure, a path to the “self”. However, it is clear that self-identification through the home space is linked to the space of America rather than to Lithuania. The challenge of reconciling the new place with the protagonist’s personal identity highlights Peter’s need for self-awareness and identity maturity, which previously seemed impossible within the confines of his homeland and loved ones.

Despite the differences in protagonists, the authors of this article consider them actively self-reflexive, evaluating the past vicissitudes of life and projecting a desired future, influenced by social transformations. The element of voluntary separation from home does not exist in the short stories and it appears to be only ostensibly voluntary – the home is left because of the war, the sense of an impending threat. However, distance from the “familiar” opens up the possibility of true self-identification and demonstrates it to be critically necessary for the development of each protagonist’s identity. The recurring need to solidify a personal identity in a coherent space remains the main creative aspect binding the stories together. The recurring need to solidify a personal identity in a coherent space remains the main creative aspect binding the stories together. The development of personality without a domestic space which reflects and embodies it might not be impossible.

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