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Ievads. Kanona ekoloģija: Aspazija, Rainis un literārā cirkulācija

Šis "Letonica" numurs tapis Aspazijas un Raiņa 160. jubilejas gadā, desmit gadus pēc plaši atzīmētās 150. jubilejas, kad ar izstādēm, koncertiem, teātra iestudējumiem, īpašiem izdevumiem un muzeju ekspozīcijām tika paātrināta tā sauktās dzīvās klasikas aprīte. Klasika ir "dzīva", ja to māca skolā, iestudē teātrī, tulko, citē publiskajās runās, pārstāsta muzejā, pārrunā medijos, izmanto jubileju rituālos. Šī lietošana rada jaunus lasījumus un funkcijas (piemēram, pilsoniskas, feministiskas, estētiskas), un tās laika gaitā mainās – tas, ko viena paaudze nolasa kā politisku simbolu, cita pārlasa kā estētisku eksperimentu utt.

Šādas jubileju kulminācijas ir nozīmīgas, taču vēl vērtīgāka ir apzināta un regulāra atgriešanās pie šo autoru veikuma, ik pēc desmit gadiem pārlūkojot, kā šodienas akadēmiskajā vidē un sabiedrībā skatāmies uz šāda mēroga personībām. Šo nepieciešamību turpināt Raiņa un Aspazijas dzīves un darba izzināšanu uzsver arī Gundega Grīnuma, grāmatas "Viņpus Alpiem" ievadā atgādinot, ka "2015. gads reanimēja XXI gs. latvieša interesi par abiem nacionālās literatūras klasiķiem" (Grīnuma 2017: 7–8), un izgaismo nepieciešamību pievērst uzmanību ne tikai kanonizētām tēmām, bet arī tām niansēm, kas ilgstoši palikušas ārpus uzmanības loka, piemēram, tik dažādajām paralēlajām Raiņa un Aspazijas biogrāfijām politiskās emigrācijas laikā Šveicē. Kādi fakti vai interpretācijas ir pārrakstītas, ko esam pievienojuši un ko – varbūt neviļus – atstājuši ēnā? Un cik daudz mūsu pašu skatījumu nosaka zināšanas par laikabiedriem un priekštečiem, gan tiem, kas stabili atrodas kanonā, gan tiem, kas apzināti vai neapzināti ir marginalizēti, tomēr uzturējuši ekosistēmu, kurā Rainis un Aspazija kļuva redzami. Tieši to aktualizēja arī 2024. gada 26.–27. septembrī notikusī starptautiskā

konference "*Rainis and Aspazija among Contemporaries in the European Cultural Context*" ("Rainis un Aspazija starp laikabiedriem Eiropas kultūrtelpā") Raiņa un Aspazijas vasarnīcā Majoros, ko organizēja LU Literatūras, folkloras un mākslas institūts, Raiņa un Aspazijas muzejs un Memoriālo muzeju apvienība.

Šī krājuma teorētiskais ietvars ir kanona ekoloģija – nevis nemainīgs "lielisku personību un tekstu" saraksts, bet dzīva, mainīga vide, kurā tekstu un personību iekļaušanu, interpretāciju un apriti nosaka sociālie, politiskie un institucionālie apstākļi (Davis, Zald 2009), kā arī mazo literatūru dinamika un to mijiedarbe ar tulkojumiem, kultūras pārnēsēm un recepcijas procesiem (Lukas 2023). Šajā vidē darbojas "vārti" – lēmumu punkti, kuros izšķiras, kas tiek iekļauts aprītē, un "vārtsargi" – cilvēki vai mehānismi, kas šos lēmumus pieņem (Guillory 1993). Tie ir skolotāji, redaktori, žūrijas, kuratori, komisijas, tulkotāji un arī algoritmi, kas nosaka tekstu pieejamības uztveres trajektorijas (Shoemaker, Vos 2009; White 1950). Viens no šāda skatījuma atslēgas tekstiem ir 2024. gada konferences plenārreferāta autora slovēņu literatūrzinātnieka Marijana Doviča pētījums par "nacionālajiem dzejniekiem" un "kultūras svētajiem", kas parāda, kā šīs figūras kanonizējas ne tikai ar estētisku novērtējumu vai biogrāfisku slavu, bet caur rituāliem, piemiņas praksēm, izglītības un mediju infrastruktūru (Dovič, Helgason 2017).

Kanona ekoloģijā arī pētnieki kļūst par vārtsargiem: lēmumi par to, ko iekļaut pētījumos un bibliogrāfijā, ko recenzēt un izdot, kā sakārtot arhīvu aprakstus vai veidot kursu lasāmvielu, tieši ietekmē to, kas kļūst redzams nākamajām paaudzēm. Līdzdalība konferences programmās, institucionālos projektos un digitālās infrastruktūrās nav neitrāla. Šis žurnāla numurs seko tieši vārtiem un vārtsargiem – kā tie paver, aizver vai pārzīmē ceļus, pa kuriem Rainis, Aspazija un viņu laikabiedri pāriet pāri valodām, režīmiem, paaudzēm.

Paraugoties uz publicētajiem pētniecības rezultātiem pēdējā desmitgadē par Raini un Aspaziju Latvijā un ārpus tās, redzam arvien plašāku pieeju, kas atbilst kanona ekoloģijas teorētiskajam ietvaram – tekstu un autoru aprite tiek skatīta kā dinamiska sistēma, kur līdzās estētikai darbojas arī ideoloģiskie, institucionālie, dzimtes perspektīvas un tehnoloģiskie nosacījumi. Vairāki darbi atsedz Raiņa un Aspazijas ideoloģisko mobilizāciju dažādos laikmetos: kā viņu tēli izmantoti padomju un starpkaru periodā, rādot kultūras svētuma un politiskās funkcionalitātes saspēli (Kušnere 2021, 2023), kādi bija padomju laika piemiņas rituāli un diskursi, kas pārakstīja autoru biogrāfijas atbilstoši režīma vajadzībām (Zelče 2021). Šo pieeju papildina skatījums uz Raiņa vietu literatūras politizācijā Nobela prēmijas kontekstā (Lavins 2024). Biogrāfijas un vēsturiskās atmiņas dimensiju pārstāv pētījumi par Raini Šveices trimdas laikā (Herman 2018) un abu autoru darbību Satversmes sapulcē (Freibergera, Kalniņa 2023). Tie apliecina, ka "dzīvais kanons" pastāv arī caur personisko

piemēru un politisko klātbūtni. Raiņa tiesību filozofijas analīze rāda Raiņa domāšanas saikni ar Eiropas klasisko tradīciju (Lazdiņš 2022), tāpat Raiņa idejas un darbi var tikt interpretēti starpkultūru izglītības skatījumā, piemēram, sasaistot tos ar Āzijas garīgās tradīcijas uztveri (Kļaviņš 2024).

Šo tematiku papildina kultūrfilozofisku sakaru meklējumi ar Gēti, Šilleru un Nīči (Senkāne 2020, 2021). Jāizceļ Ilonas Mieziņas publikācijas un promocijas darbs par garīgajiem meklējumiem un reliģijas klātesību Aspazijas dzejā (Mieziņa 2024). Dzimtes perspektīva un sieviešu rakstniecība ir aktuāls lauks Aspazijas pētniecībā (Eiduka 2023; Burīma 2017; Szopiński 2015), atklājot emocionālās un publiskās balss veidošanos. Literāri estētisko aspektu pārstāv pētījumi par ekspresionismu un grotesku Raiņa dramaturģijā (Šiliņa 2015, 2022), bet teātra un vizuālā reprezentācija skatīta sasaistē ar Raiņa un Aspazijas 150. jubilejas iestudējumiem (Rodiņa 2017), kur vizualitāte uzsverta kā būtisks kanona uzturēšanas mehānisms.

Digitālo humanitāro zinātņu jomā nozīmīgs ir Latvijas Nacionālās bibliotēkas projekts "Rainis un Aspazija" (RunA), kura ietvaros izstrādāti saistītie dati, epistulārā mantojuma analīze un jauni pētniecības rīki (Goldberga u. c. 2018; Apenīte u. c. 2022; Kalviša, Kalniņa 2021; Bojārs u. c. 2020). Šie rīki paplašina kanona ekosistēmu, padarot pieejamu npublicēto materiālu un saikņu izpēti. Tulkojumu un transnacionālās aprites tēmu pārstāv vairāki pētījumi: par Raiņa darbu recepciju Ukrainā (Shchukina 2021), Polijā (Wojciechowski 2020), Vācijā un Lietuvā (Daugirdaitē 2016; Kacane 2019), kā arī Aspazijas tulkojumiem ukraiņu (Pupurs 2023) un krievu valodā (Daņilins, Pavlovs 2024). Šie piemēri ilustrē to, kā autori dažādos laikos kļuvuši pazīstami ārpus Latvijas, pielāgojot gan žanrus, gan politisko interpretāciju režģus. Kopumā jāsecina, ka pētniecība pēdējos desmit gados turpina būt daudzslāņaina, starpdisciplināra un transnacionāla, atspoguļojot tādas šī speciālā numura tematiskās līnijas kā ideoloģiskie tīkli, tulkojumu ceļi, dzimumu loma, laikabiedru pārskatīšana, kas paplašina izpratni par abu autoru vietu Eiropas kultūras ekosistēmā.

Likumsakarīgi, ka pirmais šajā rakstu krājumā ir Marijana Doviča raksts "*National Poets in Small European Literary Culture*", kura uzstādījums skaidri parāda, ka "nacionālā dzejnieka" funkcija nav tikai estētiska vai biogrāfiska, bet ir institucionāli veidota, politiski nolasāma un laikam līdzī mainīga – nereti pietiek, lai sabiedrība "domātu", ka autors raksta tautas vārdā, un tas iedarbina kanonizācijas ciklus. Šis ietvars ļauj Raini un Aspaziju ieraudzīt plašākā Eiropas salīdzinājumā, kur arī līdzās darbojas gan kanonizēšanas rituāli, gan to kritiska pārrakstīšana (piemēram, jubileju atzīmēšana vai ignorance un skolu programmu maiņa).

Benedikta Kalnača pētījums "*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Nietzsche in fin-de-siècle Latvian Literary Culture*" parāda, kā latviešu literārā vide ap 1900. gadu intensīvi pārveidoja un pielāgoja Eiropas idejisko mantojumu. Gētes un Nīčes darbi

kalpoja kā nozīmīgas atsauces, kas nostiprināja estētisko kritēriju sistēmu un iedarbināja plašākas publiskās debates par modernismu. Kalnačs atklāj, ka Rainis, Aspazija, Poruks un Blaumanis ne tikai tulkoja šos autorus, bet arī aktīvi pārvērtā viņu idejas, iemiesojot tās latviešu kultūras kontekstā. Apolloniskā un dionīsiskā spriedze kļuva par noderīgu instrumentu, lai formulētu vietējo modernisma virzienu. Šeit skaidri izpaužas "kanoniskās ekoloģijas" princips – ārēji kultūras impulsi kļūst par daļu no iekšējās sistēmas, kad tos iedarbina un nostiprina konkrēti institucionāli mehānismi – prese, teātris un literārās biedrības.

Gata Ozoliņa raksts "Rainis Otrās atmodas kontekstā" izseko, kā Rainis dažādos vēstures lūzuma brīžos – sākot ar poēmu "Daugava" (1919) – tiek mobilizēts kā simbolisks resurss, ko dažādi režīmi un sabiedriskās kustības pielāgo savām ideoloģiskajām vajadzībām. Raksts parāda, kā Raiņa darbība Šveicē kļuva par priekšnosacījumu vēlākai simboliskai izmantošanai, īpaši Otrās atmodas laikā. "Daugavas" straujā recepcija, tās sasaistījums ar nacionālās pretošanās kontekstu un turpmākā piemiņas politika liecina par to, kā politiskie satricinājumi ietekmēja Raiņa vietas interpretāciju kultūrā. Tajā pašā laikā tieši institucionālās struktūras, piemēram, piemiņas rituāli, izglītības saturs un komiteju darbība, nodrošināja šo nozīmju saglabāšanos pāri paaudzēm.

Denisa Hanova un Valda Tēraudkalna pētījums *"Roses for the Lord of Storms": Analysis of Aspazija's Lyrics for the Authoritarian Leader of Latvia* skaidri apliecina, ka "dzīvais kanons" neveidojas kā lineāra attīstība, bet gan caur pārstrukturēšanu un nozīmju pārrakstīšanu atkarībā no konkrētā laika ideoloģiskajām vajadzībām. Aspazijas daiļrade Kārļa Ulmaņa autoritārā režīma apstākļos tika pielāgota tā retorikai un simboliskajai sistēmai, piemēram, tāda ir "Himna Vadonim" (1936) vai apbalvošanas un interviju diskurss. Šie piemēri rāda, kā valsts ceremonialitāte, kultūrpolitika un mediji rada jaunas interpretācijas nišas, kurās iedzīvojas atšķirīgs, bieži vien ideoloģiski akcentēts Aspazijas tēls.

Kristiānas Ābeles raksts "Tālas noskaņas vārdos, krāsās un līnijās: Rainis, Aspazija un divi latviešu gleznotāji" par vizuālās kultūras horizontiem ap Raini un Aspaziju dokumentē, kā periodika, grāmatu vāki un skatuves vizuālie risinājumi (Voldemārs Zeltiņš, Vilhelms Purvītis u. c.) patiesībā ir "kanona inženierija" – tie piešķir formu un ritmu tekstu dzīvei sabiedriskajā telpā. Teātra iestudējumu dekorācijas "Uguns un nakts" kontekstā, mākslinieku un redaktoru korespondence, kā arī žurnālu ikonogrāfija rāda, ka kanona ekoloģijai izšķiroši ir starpmediju ceļi: profesionālie mākslas lauki, periodikas prakses un kopienu gaidas, kas vienlaikus selekcionē un izceļ.

Birutes Avižinienes pētījums *"Lithuanian Contexts of Aspazija's Historical Drama 'Vaidelote'"* par Aspazijas "Vaidelotes" lietuvisko recepciju precīzi atsedz transnacionālo apriti: korespondence starp Raini un Eduardu Volteru, tulkojuma kavēšanās un

pielāgošana amatierteātra iespējām, diasporas teātra biedrību loma Rīgā un Jelgavā. Rakstā secināts, ka Vaidelote lietuviešu skatuvē ienāca vienkāršotā un amatieru teātra iespējām pielāgotā formā, tomēr atstāja nozīmīgu ietekmi uz lietuviešu vēsturiskās drāmas attīstību.

Enes Rētas Sūvikas raksts "*The Young Estonia Movement and Literary Landscapes of an Emerging Nation*" par literāro grupu "Jaunā Lgaunija" kanona ekoloģijai pievieno ekokritisku skatījumu. Autore analizē, kā 1905.–1915. gadā notiek pāreja no reālistiska utilitārisma uz simbolisma un dabas–rakstības jutīgumu, atklājot nacionālās ainavas iztēles veidošanos. Pētījums īpaši akcentē mitrāju motīvu, tautsaimniecības un mītisko kodējumu kā sava veida "vides sugas", kas kļūst par identitātes balstiem un šķērso Baltijas telpas robežas. Analīze parāda, ka "Jaunās Lgaunijas" pieci albumi atspoguļo ne tikai estētiskus un stilistiskus pārveidojumus, bet arī literāro ainavu pārskatīšanu, kur purvs un akači tiek konstruēti kā igauņu simboli un vēlāk arī kā kultūras identitātes centrālie elementi.

Elles Mari Talivē raksts "*Young Minni Kurs-Olesk: the Formation of a New Woman Behind the Scenes*" par Aspazijas un Raiņa laikabiedri igauņu rakstnieci, tulkotāju un sabiedrisko darbinieci Minni Kursu-Olesku izgaismo feministisko un sociālās reformas kustību pārklāto telpu: Londonas Politehnikums, Toinbihola, atturības biedrības un sociālā darba organizācijas, kas 20. gadsimta sākumā darbojās kā mobilitātes infrastruktūra un radīja iespējas veidoties alternatīvām autoru pozīcijām ārpus centrālā literārā kanona. Kursas-Oleskas ceļš un viņas kontakti rāda, kā sieviešu organizāciju un sabiedrisko diskusiju forumi, veidojot pārrobežu tīklus, ieviesa Baltijas intelektuālajā vidē jaunus rīcības modeļus un paplašināja sieviešu publiskās balss iespējas.

Ramunes Bleizgienes pētījums "*From Amusements to Love: Forms of Women's Emancipation in the Early Works of Šatrijos Ragana*" par lietuviešu rakstnieces, skolotājas un kristīgās intelektuāles Šatrijas Raganas (īstajā vārdā Marija Pečkauskaite) agrīnajiem darbiem uzsver emociju un kopējas piedzīvotības nozīmi nacionālisma iekšējā apropiācijā. Viņa rāda, kā līksmība literatūrā tiek saistīta ar piederības un vienotības izjūtu, bet mīlestība – ar dzīves piepildījumu, kas vienlaikus saskan ar laikmeta priekšstatiem par sievietes lomu un tos arī izaicina. Feministiskā fenomenoloģija ļauj saskatīt, piemēram, kā nelegālā prese, ģimenes ideāli un jaunais "nacionālās ģimenes" modelis darbojas kā afektīvs pamats, kas ietekmē literārās kanonizācijas procesus.

Solvitas Lapiņas pētījums "Aspazija un 1936. gadā izdotā enciklopēdija "Mūsu laika ievērojamās sievietes"" precīzi parāda, kā biogrāfiskās vārdnīcas un enciklopēdijas darbojas kā kanona "pieminekļu arhitektūra" – atlasa, strukturē un nostiprina autoru vietu kultūras atmiņā. Vienlaikus tās atsedz sieviešu redzamības

mehānismus – fragmentārus, bet noturīgus ceļus, pa kuriem Aspazija saglabājās “dzīvā kanona” apritē pāri dažādiem politiskajiem režīmiem un nacionālajām robežām.

Noslēgumā atgriežoties pie kanona ekoloģijas teorētiskā uzstādījuma, jāuzsver, ka “klasika” ir tikai viena no plašākas kanona sistēmas, ko veido dažādas formas, konteksti un savstarpējās attiecības. Šis krājums parāda, ka Rainis un Aspazija nav uztverami tikai kā izolēti literārie ģeniji, bet gan kā daļa no plaša kultūras procesa, kurā svarīga loma ir teātrim, vizuālajai kultūrai, enciklopēdiskajiem ierakstiem, tulkojumiem un starptautiskai aprītei. Process ietver arī traucējumus un pārmaiņu ciklus – režīmu maiņu, piemiņas politiku, jubileju mobilizāciju –, kas regulāri pārzīmē kanona aprises. Šāda pieeja palīdz saprast, kāpēc Rainis un Aspazija nostiprinās kanonā nevis vienreiz par visām reizēm, bet gan caur mainīgām reprezentācijām, iestudējumiem un interpretācijām, kuru kontūras kļūst īpaši izteiktas, raugoties pāri nacionālajām robežām.

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“National Poets” in Small European Literary Cultures

“Tautas dzejnieki” mazo Eiropas tautu literārajās tradīcijās

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Summary

National poets are a phenomenon highly pertinent to many literary cultures in Europe and also beyond. The importance ascribed to the individuals labeled with this particular qualifier has varied considerably from case to case. However, the institution of the national poet contributed significantly to the formation of individual literary cultures throughout the so-called long 19th century and has often persisted to the present day. This article looks at the national poets in various European literatures and offers some insights into the relationships between their lives, their works, their cults, and their function in nation-building. The particular focus is on small and (semi-)peripheral literary cultures (such as Hungarian, Bulgarian, Polish, Montenegrin/Serbian, Latvian, Ukrainian, Catalan, Irish, Icelandic, Slovenian, and Czech), where the role of venerated poets seems to be particularly prominent. In smaller literary cultures, the institution of the national poet offered a promising way to secure at least a modest place in the gallery of the "great immortals", the canon of the emerging *Weltliteratur*. In turn, the national poet had to comply both with the expectations of their particular national community and those of the "law-giving Other", the international canon of world literature. This is one reason why the unique position of the national poet of a particular culture was not necessarily occupied by the poet that dealt with national issues in the most ardent manner.

Kopsavilkums

Tautas dzejnieku fenomens ir raksturīgs daudzu Eiropas un ne tikai Eiropas tautu literārajām tradīcijām. Tas, cik liela nozīme katrā konkrētajā gadījumā piešķirta ar šo nosaukumu apzīmētajām personībām, mēdz ievērojami atšķirties. Tomēr tautas dzejnieka jēdziens ir lielā mērā veicinājis nacionālo literāro tradīciju attīstību tā dēvētā garā 19. gadsimta laikā un nereti ir saglabājis līdz pat mūsdienām. Šajā rakstā aplūkoti tautas dzejnieki dažādās Eiropas valstīs un sniegts ieskats dažās kopsakarībās starp šo personību dzīves gājumu, darbiem, kulta statusu un lomu nācijas attīstībā. Galvenais uzsvars ir likts uz mazajām un (semi) perifērajām literārajām tradīcijām (piemēram, ungāru, bulgāru, poļu, melnkalniešu/serbu, latviešu, ukraiņu, katalāņu, īru, islandiešu, slovēņu un čehu), kur godājamu dzejnieku loma šķiet īpaši būtiska. Mazo tautu literatūrām tautas dzejnieka jēdziens dāvāja cerību nodrošināt sev kaut vai nelielu vietu starp "nemirstīgajiem dižgariem" topošajā pasaules literatūras kanonā. Tautas dzejniekam pašam savukārt nācās atbilst gan savas nacionālās kopienas prasībām, gan tām, kuras uzstādīja "likumdevēji Citi" starptautiskajā kanonā. Tas ir viens no iemesliem, kāpēc tautas dzejnieka specifiskajā lomā ne katrā kultūrā nokļuva tieši tāds dzejnieks, kas visaktīvāk rakstītu tieši par nacionālo tematiku.

"A national poet must write poetry that closely identifies with the nation's cause – or is thought to do so" (Neubauer 2010: 11). This is how John Neubauer characterizes the relation between national poets and their poetry in the first paragraph of his influential introduction to *"Figures of National Poets"*, the section of the *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe* devoted to national poets. In this article, I explore the various implications of this succinct statement – including its apparent obviousness – and especially scrutinize its coda "or is thought to do so". I start by discussing the institution of the national poet in the context of emerging national and international canons. I then go on to chart an overview of the national poets of small European literary cultures for which this phenomenon seems to be particularly pertinent, before finally examining a series of intriguing (poetic) statements by selected national poets.¹

My research draws on the invaluable insights of scholars such as Virgil Nemoianu, John Neubauer, and Marko Juvan on the topic of national poets. However, I also make use of the results of studies on nationally motivated pan-European commemoration of writers (Leerssen, Rigney 2014; Dović 2015) and on the (cultural) canonization of poets, writers, and other artists in the context of Romantic nationalism. Indeed, research on the posthumous "careers" of significant national poets from various regions of Europe has shown that many of them occupy the social role of "cultural saints" (Dović, Helgason 2017, 2019). From a comparative perspective, their lively commemorative cults and the ways in which they were canonized are strikingly similar. During the canonization process, these poets were often referred to as "national" and were considered to have contributed enormously to the national cause. Compared to their illustrious afterlives, however, the lives and works of the future national poets seem quite varied. Their poems, for example, reveal a diversity of ideas that do not always coincide with the ideals of the leaders of national movements, their most fervent promoters. In this respect, several questions arise regarding the way these poets envisioned the nation and its future, expressed their belonging to the national community, or longed for its emancipation. The aim of this article is therefore to point out, on the one hand, the diversity of the poets labeled

1 A brief note on the concept of "small literary cultures": among the competing terms such as 'minor', 'dominated', '(semi-)peripheral' or 'small' I finally opted for the latter. For a recent attempt to define "small literatures", see Glesener et al. (2025). The apt expression "literary culture", which refers to a broader cultural field, comes from the four-volume *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe*, as explained by its editors Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer (2004).

“national” in small European literary cultures (not only in terms of their biographies, personalities, political views, and actions, but also in terms of their poetics and the way they treated national themes in their poetry) and, on the other hand, the unity of their social function and structural position within society.

National poets, national literatures, and the emerging canon of world literature

When did national poets appear, and why? According to Virgil Nemoianu, there is an important new dimension that characterizes the canonization of poets designated by this adjective (as opposed to the earlier cases):

What happens in the eighteenth and in the early nineteenth century is the emergence and/or consolidation of the nation-state, which feels that it has to legitimize itself by a number of features that some call institutional, others simply ideal. Even in cases when such nation-states do not yet exist (in fact *particularly* under these circumstances), validation of an ethno-linguistic (“national”) group by a personal and autonomous literature is seen as indispensable. (Nemoianu 2002: 249)

The need for original cultural production (often in swiftly developing vernacular languages) became a pressing concern within the emerging national movements. Among the reasons for such a shift, Nemoianu emphasizes the need not only to reach a high level of cultural sophistication but also to demonstrate this level to others. These circumstances welcomed the emergence of the institution of the “national poet”. As a Romantic alternative to the classical and neoclassical traditions, the major achievements of national poets were regarded by nationally oriented intellectuals as the new “classic” masterpieces entitled to join the modern European canon, which began to be formed in the vernacular languages during the late Middle Ages. This was especially important for smaller nations without statehood and with discontinuous historical traditions: equipped with a national poet, a nation was able to take part in the international literary exchange on equal terms. A national poet came to function as what Anna Makolkin calls a “name-sign”, an iconic representation of a specific nationality – both for the nation in question and for a foreign observer.²

In this context, Nemoianu characterizes the establishment of a national poet as a useful shorthand for the literary accomplishments of the nation, “a summary of its achievements” (Nemoianu 2002: 254). From the perspective of small literary

2 In an excellent semiotic analysis of “heroic biographies” of Taras Shevchenko, Anna Makolkin explains that the poet’s name “abbreviates, simplifies and reduces the notion of Ukraine and Ukrainian culture to a single sign” (Makolkin 1992: 1). Her conclusions could easily be generalized to all literary cultures with strong cults of national poets.

cultures, the institution of the national poet offered a promising path toward securing at least a humble corner in the gallery of the "great immortals", the canon of the emerging world literature (*Weltliteratur*): "Yes, the western 'decisional centers' [...] were saying: we will make room for you, but not too much; what we need is a token representation, an 'ambassador' to our courts, a recognizable sample of your endowments and achievements" (Nemoianu 2002: 254).

Building on Nemoianu's theory, Marko Juvan notes that the institution of the national poet "operates on the threshold between an individual national literature and the general space of the 'world republic of letters'" (Juvan 2012: 596). At the same time, the national poets were able to strengthen the sense of cohesion and identity within the emerging national communities and, on the other hand, to help them cope with "the anxieties caused by competing European nationalisms" (Juvan 2012: 593). With this second emphasis, Juvan places national poets firmly in the broad context of the emerging world literature with its centers and peripheries. From this perspective, it is also much easier to understand the fact that in dominant cultures the commemorative culture was less focused on nation-building than in the dominated ones. Obviously, the question of the national poet became pivotal especially for the newcomers on the "scene dominated by major European literatures whose widely spoken languages, extensive cultural influence, and long-lasting historical continuity embodied standards against which the development of all newcomers was measured" (Juvan 2012: 596–597).

Although this international and competing dimension of the figure of the national poet seems to be decisive, a comparative look at the canonization of individual national poets reveals interesting analogies. Even if these poets differed considerably in terms of their biographies and careers as well as the themes and styles of their writings, they were all canonized according to similar patterns: "From this perspective, it appears that even most remote European literatures, during their nation-building, adapted to their particular needs the same matrix, which was diffused all over Europe and disposed with roughly identical goal-oriented repertoire of cultural practices, forms, and representations" (Juvan 2012: 598).

However, those that supported the canonization of national poets – usually writers and other intellectuals that were strongly committed to the cultivation of the national language and literature, and in later phases also political leaders that advocated national awakening – found themselves in a rather difficult situation. They had to look in two partly contradictory directions during the "construction" of national poets because they "sought to be desired and recognized by two unequal Others" (Juvan 2017: 12) – by the nation they were trying to establish, and by the core of the emerging world literature system that represented cultural prestige:

On the one hand, nationalist writers assigned the role of the Other to a particular imagined community they were planning to establish through their intellectual and political work. Thus, they strove to stoke enthusiasm among the majority of the population, which was indifferent to nationalist ideology, for a cultivated public use of their vernacular and their literary publications, which were intended to imagine and lend ideological coherence to the quasi-collective subject they called a “nation.” On the other hand, however, nationalist groups of writers directed their desire to be desired and recognized towards the very center of cultural and political domination that played the role of universal, law-giving Other. (Juvan 2017: 12)

It is certainly worth keeping this crucial insight by Juvan in mind when asking the next question, which arises of its own accord: Who are the national poets, and where are they most strongly represented?

National poets in small European literary cultures

In fact, it is hardly possible to find a single literary culture in Europe that has not at some point flirted with the notion of the national poet.³ In some cases, however, this idea was developed more intensely and elevated to a veritable institution. Research to date leaves little doubt that it is precisely the smaller, subordinate, and (semi-)peripheral European literary cultures in which the institution of the national poet has flourished the most. In such cultures, the national poet has posthumously often been turned into an unsurpassed figure, an individual elevated above all other writers, if not all public figures altogether. In such literary cultures, the concept of the national poet is well known, widespread, and accepted. Practically everyone claims to know who their national poet is, and the institution of the national poet occupies an exalted position in the national pantheon.⁴

It is therefore not surprising that the literary cultures with the most prominent national poets are not the major, dominant European literatures with centuries-old traditions (possibly based on a rich imperial history), but rather the smaller, often dominated literary cultures that were intensely engaged in the processes of cultural cultivation and nation-building in the era of Romantic nationalism: they strove to develop and establish their own language, literature and culture while fighting for

3 A preliminary attempt at an overview of the national poets of Europe can be found in the introductory article to the thematic section “National Poets and Romantic (Be)Longing”, which was published in *Arcadia* (Dovič 2017: 3–6). However, the findings of that time can now be considerably supplemented on the basis of new insights.

4 For a comparative discussion of national pantheons of Europe, see Dovič (2023: 8–18). Again, research on the structure of national pantheons seems to be a highly promising topic, especially for smaller cultural communities.

cultural and political autonomy. This conclusion can be corroborated by the questionnaires drawn up as part of the project *National Poets and Cultural Saints of Europe* (2014–2017).⁵ Admittedly, specifying the most notable cases is a rather arbitrary (and therefore controversial) endeavor. However, there is a large number of national poets from small European literary cultures that stand out in many respects. The following two dozen cases seem to be among the most interesting:⁶

1. Scottish: Robert Burns (1759–1796) [5]
2. Danish: Adam Oehlenschläger (1779–1850)
3. Irish: Thomas Moore (1779–1852)
4. Polish: Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855) [5]
5. Greek: Dyonisios Solomos (1798–1857)
6. Slovenian: France Prešeren (1800–1849) [5]
7. Icelandic: Jónas Hallgrímsson (1807–1845) [4]
8. Czech: Karel Hynek Mácha (1810–1836) [5]
9. Serbian/Montenegrin: Petar II Petrović Njegoš (1813–1851) [3.5/5]
10. Ukrainian: Taras Shevchenko (1814–1861) [5]
11. Hungarian: Sándor Petőfi (1823–1849) [5]
12. Flemish: Guido Gezelle (1830–1899) [3.5]
13. Galician: Rosalía de Castro (1837–1885) [5]
14. Georgian: Ilia Chavchavadze (1837–1907) [5]
15. Estonian: Lydia Koidula (1843–1886) [4]
16. Catalan: Jacint Verdaguer (1845–1902) [5]
17. Albanian: Naim Frashëri (1846–1900)
18. Bulgarian: Hristo Botev (1848–1876) [5]
19. Slovak: Pavol Országh, pen name Hviezdoslav (1849–1921) [5]
20. Romanian: Mihai Eminescu (1850–1889) [5]
21. Lithuanian: Jonas Mačiulis, pen name Maironis (1862–1932) [4]
22. Latvian: Jānis Pliekšāns, pen name Rainis (1865–1929) [5]
23. Armenian: Hovhannes Tumanyan (1869–1923)
24. Jewish: Hayim Nahman Bialik (1873–1934) [5]

The above list deliberately does not include national poets from established literary cultures such as Italian, English, French, Spanish and Portuguese, where the role of national poets was ascribed to poets from more distant literary eras who were already internationally canonized as the European “literary greats”. The Russian and German cases are not listed either, as these literatures cannot be considered small –

5 With the help of a questionnaire distributed to selected (literary) experts from various literary cultures in Europe, the aim was to investigate which poets are considered “national” and what rank they occupy in a particular literary culture. The completed questionnaires for 26 literary cultures are publicly available on the project website (<https://cultural-saints.zrc-sazu.si/en>). Unfortunately, the collection is not complete.

6 The poets are sorted by their year of birth. The number in square brackets indicates the respondents’ assessment (if available) of the prevalence of the concept of the national poet in the given literary culture (the scale ranges from 1–5, with 5 meaning “very high”).

although in both cases there are poets that can qualify as “national” and even conform to the pattern typical of small literary cultures, such as the Russian Romantic poet Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837). Apart from this, the situation in German literary culture is somewhat unclear due to the competition between Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749–1832) and Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805), whose cult was truly dominant throughout the 19th century (cf. Dingeldein 2017). The question remains to what extent Danish, Polish and Ukrainian literary culture can be considered small. However, in selecting a single candidate from the Romantic period (Oehlenschläger, Mickiewicz, Shevchenko), they followed a pattern typical of small literary cultures, and in the Polish and Ukrainian cases in particular, the cults of national poets developed under conditions of foreign political domination.⁷

Finally, the list does not include those small literary cultures in which the institution of the national poet seems to be somewhat weaker and it is not entirely clear who would be the national poet – either because there are several contenders for this position (if the candidate has not been so widely and enthusiastically canonized), or because the concept of the national poet is simply not so widespread.⁸

7 In an attempt to define a small literature, Jeanne E. Glesener, Marko Juvan and Benedikts Kalnačs emphasize that not only the size of the nation, but also the historical (post)imperial / (post) colonial situation is among the key determinants (Glesener et al. 2025).

8 I add a brief comment here about the small literatures that are not on the list. In Swedish literary culture, the poet and composer Carl Michael Bellman (1740–1795) is often referred to as the national poet, with some competition from the poet and bishop Esaias Tegnér (1782–1846), author of the famous Romantic national epic *Frithjofs Saga* (1825). In Finnish literature, the situation is complicated by a linguistic dilemma: Johan Ludvig Runeberg (1804–1877), who wrote in Swedish, competes with Aleksis Kivi (1834–1872), who wrote in Finnish. In Norwegian literature, the Romantic author Henrik Wergeland (1808–1845) and the Nobel Prize winner Bjørnstjerne M. Bjørnson (1832–1910) share the podium. In the Faroe Islands, the poet and sailor Nólsoyar Páll (1766–1808) partly fits the profile, but he is seen more as a national hero. In Luxembourg, where the concept of the national poet is widely known, there is no clear favorite: the position is shared by a “triumvirate” of Edmond de la Fontaine, pen name Dicks (1823–1891), Michel Lentz (1820–1893), and Michel Rodange (1827–1876). The situation also seems to be undecided in Croatian literature: the Baroque poet Ivan Gundulić (1589–1638) from Dubrovnik, who was canonized in the 19th century, competes with a number of later poets among whom none could actually be called a national poet. The situation is somewhat different in Macedonian and Belarusian literary culture, which do not seem to have developed strong national poets, and the same applies to Austrian literary culture. And what about small literary cultures without their own state? In French Provence, the candidate is (or was) undoubtedly Frédéric Mistral (1830–1914), but the term is not universally recognized. In Basque literary culture, the Romantic bard José María Iparraguirre (1820–1881) competes with his much older poetic compatriot Bernard Etxepare, the author of the first book in Basque (1545). The Frisian situation with Gysbert Japicx (1603–1666) and the Greek part of Cyprus with Vasilis Michaelides (1849–1917) are also very special.

What conclusions can be drawn from simply looking at the above list? Let us first consider where the prominent national poets come from. Are there regions that stand out in terms of the geographical distribution of the phenomenon? As Neubauer (2010) has already noted, there is a striking density of strong cases in East-Central Europe. However, this is by no means their exclusive domain. Supercanonical individuals of this kind can also be found in other parts of Europe: in literary cultures such as Icelandic, Galician, Scottish, and Ukrainian, as well as Georgian and Armenian.

What about the generational structure? Is it possible to determine a period in which a typical national poet has lived and created? The years of birth and death suggest that the majority of the most honored national poets of the European (semi-)periphery were active in the 19th century. Ignoring the somewhat earlier Burns, one sees that the first and perhaps the most prominent group of national poets was active in the first half of the 19th century (from Mickiewicz to Petőfi). The second large group of national poets (from Gezelle to Eminescu) was most active in the second half of the 19th century – and only a small number of poets (from Maironis to Bialik and Hviezdoslav) were most active in the first decades of the 20th century.

When did these poets come to be regarded as “national”? The first group of national poets, where probably some of the most prominent examples are found, was canonized in a posthumous process that reached its peak in the second half of the 19th and early 20th century. Unsurprisingly, this climax roughly corresponds to the phase of the “mass movement” in which the majority of the population already harmonized with the goals of the nationalists – the so-called Phase C, according to Miroslav Hroch’s well-known account of European national movements (Hroch 1993: 6–7). In the second group and even more so in the somewhat belated third group, however, canonization sometimes took place parallel to the lives of the individuals: commemorative cults and prestigious titles, which were only awarded posthumously to the poets of the first group, could thus be bestowed on individuals from such cultures while they were still alive.

What about the gender structure? It is virtually impossible to overlook that the list shows a grave imbalance in terms of gender: it contains only two women. Rosalía de Castro, a prominent icon of Galician culture and author of the famous collection *Cantares Galegos* (Galician Songs, 1863), can arguably be considered a true national poet, whereas the position of her Estonian counterpart Lydia Koidula, otherwise a major figure of the Estonian national movement, is partly threatened by other prominent poets such as Juhan Liiv (1864–1913) and Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald (1803–1882), the author of the Estonian national epic *Kalevipoeg*.⁹

9 For the Galician and Estonian cases, I rely mainly on the questionnaires (Råbade 2017; Talviste 2017).

What position do these individuals have within their respective cultural (national) communities? What place do they occupy in the national pantheon in comparison to other great artists, national leaders, politicians, religious figures, and kings? This question becomes quite complex, especially when one tries to answer it on a comparative level. However, the data obtained from the questionnaires allow some cautious and broad observations. There are few cultural communities in which the national poet seems to be the most revered and towering figure, eclipsing all other figures from the nation's past: Slovenian, Ukrainian, and Latvian are among them. In most cultures, however, this is not the case. Sometimes a religious figure (such as St. Sava in Serbia), a political revolutionary hero (e.g. Vasil Levski in Bulgaria), or a king or other historical ruler (as in the Flemish or Georgian case) appear to be more revered. Sometimes great political leaders and "fathers of the nation" are more prominent, such as Jón Sigurðsson in Icelandic, František Palacký and Tomáš Masaryk in Czech, Lajos Kossuth in Hungarian, and Theodor Herzl in Jewish literary culture.¹⁰ Similarly, prominent national linguists (Vuk Karadžić in Serbia) and "awakeners" (Ľudovít Štúr in Slovakia) can beat national poets, as well as other artists of great international fame (e.g., the composers Bedřich Smetana and Antonín Dvořák in the Czech case, and the painters Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck in the Flemish).¹¹

Is it possible to identify a set of common characteristics of the national poets that made their canonization possible? As can be seen from the data collected so far, the lives (*vita*) and careers of the national poets were extremely diverse, as were their poetic works (*opera*) and the scope and nature of their activity (*acta*) outside the strictly literary field.¹² Some were "just poets", others were also diligent and intense practitioners of the "cultivation of culture" (Leerssen 2006: 566–574), and some of them were even heroes that literally sacrificed themselves in the (armed) struggle for national liberation. Equally large diversity characterizes their political orientation: it ranges from conservative (many national poets were priests) to moderately liberal to decidedly left-wing. It is obvious that the unity of the group can be found neither in the lives nor in the works of the individuals. Rather, it is based on the structural similarity of their canonization and veneration – processes that were passed on from culture to culture and spread throughout Europe in the form of an epidemic that culminated from the mid-19th century until the end of the World War I. The peaks in

10 "Father of the nation" is another category quite pertinent to many small literary cultures (cf. Dović 2023: 16–18). It would certainly require further comparative research.

11 The comparative study of European "national pantheons" and their structure is certainly a very promising field, but also a complex and slippery one – especially from a methodological point of view.

12 On the categories *vita*, *opera*, and *acta*, cf. Dović and Helgason 2017: 78–81.

the intensity of veneration of national poets are thus more or less contemporaneous in most literary cultures, regardless of the period in which the person chosen for canonization lived.¹³

Finally, if the canonization of a particular national poet within his or her native literary culture was obviously successful (enormous prestige within the respective community), the question remains how successful their “worlding” was – the attempt to exhibit the candidate in the gallery of poetic greats and to present him or her as a major figure within the global hyper-canon of *Weltliteratur*. In other words, did the strategy so aptly described by Nemoianu, Neubauer, and Juvan actually work? In most cases, the answer is negative. The individuals on the list above, no matter how excessively revered at home, have not really made it internationally – perhaps with the exceptions of Burns, Mickiewicz, and Shevchenko. The strategy has indeed failed. However, the reasons for this are complex and far beyond the scope of this article.

The traits of the national in the works of national poets

On this basis, the original question of the extent and manner in which the national is inscribed in the works (*opera*) of the national poets can now be revisited. Do national poets treat national themes in a similar way? Is it possible to find a general pattern that can be compared to that of commemoration and canonization? We shall see that there can be no single answer. As an extreme case, one can consider poems that passionately support national liberation or even call for an uprising and armed struggle. At least two national poets, the Hungarian Sándor Petőfi and the Bulgarian Hristo Botev, actually sacrificed their lives for the national cause (after which little ingenuity was required to present them as saints/martyrs of the nation). Their poems often follow this image. Consider, for example, one of Petőfi’s most intriguing revolutionary visions, “*Talpra magyar*” (Rise You Magyars, 1848):

Rise you Magyars, your country summons!
Here’s the moment, now or never!
Shall we be slaves or free men?
This is the question—you must choose!—
By the God of the Magyars
we swear,
we swear, slaves
We no longer be!

(Neubauer 2010a: 49, transl. by John Neubauer)

13 In other words, the Romantic genius from a peripheral literary culture becomes an object of mass adoration practically at the same time as a long-deceased poetic icon with an already established cult (e.g., Dante and Petrarch in Italy, Shakespeare in England, Camões in Portugal, etc.).

The poetry of Hristo Botev, a committed revolutionary who dedicated his life to the national liberation struggle, can be similarly combative. Botev often dreams of heroic death: in his uncompromising "*Moyata molitva*" (My Prayer, 1873), he predicts his own demise on the battlefield:

Make powerful this hand of mine
for the rising of the slaves;
I'll join them at the battle line
that I may find my grave.

(Penčev 2010: 119, transl. by Kevin Ireland)

Ironically (or perhaps typically), Botev's "prophecy" actually came true: in 1876 he died in a battle with the Ottomans, leaving behind the enigma of his last moments (including the fact that his corpse was missing, which again resembles the Hungarian case). This enigma was cultivated on a large scale in one of the most persistent posthumous cults of cultural saints in the region (Penčev 2010: 125–127). In the case of Botev and Petőfi, all elements of the biography (*vita*) coincided perfectly with their respective canonization as national poets, martyrs, prophets, and saints.¹⁴

If not the national poets themselves, their poetry might become a powerful weapon in national struggles. A prototype national poet of the region, the great Polish Romantic Adam Mickiewicz, wrote his early masterpiece, "*Oda do młodości*" (Ode to Youth), in 1820. Although the poem was banned by the Russian censor in Vilnius for its patriotism, it was widely read and circulated in illegal manuscripts, becoming a kind of anthem of the generation and adopting a pivotal role during the (unsuccessful) Polish insurrection against the occupying Russian forces in November 1830.¹⁵ Especially its two final verses appeared frequently on the walls of Warsaw in those turbulent days and powerfully inspired the national uprising:

Hail, Dawn of Liberty! Oh, Long live Thou!
Thou carriest the Redeeming Sun so bright.

(Zawadzki 2007: 53, transl. by Jarek Zawadzki)

The case of Petar II Petrović Njegoš is in many ways more complicated. In his famous epic poem *Gorski vijenac* (The Mountain Wreath, 1847), the poet resolutely summons his disheartened compatriots to an armed uprising that would finally put an end to centuries of Ottoman rule. This is a memorable response from the determined hero Vuk Mićunović to the somewhat hesitant Prince-Bishop (*vladika*) Danilo:

14 On Petőfi, see Neubauer (2010a) and Hites (2017); on Botev, see Kambourov (2017).

15 On Mickiewicz, see Koropeczky (2008).

What misfortune has come over you now
that you do wail like some sad cuckoo-bird
and drown yourself in our Serbian troubles?
Is today not a festive occasion
on which you have gathered Montenegrins
to cleanse our land of loathsome infidels?

(Njegoš 2000, transl. by Vasa D. Mihailovich)

The Mountain Wreath, written by a person who is both a national poet and a secular and religious ruler, is definitely a national epic – and the writing of such a work is definitely a strong attribute in the canonization process. However, from today's perspective, it also seems to be a deeply problematic poem. It contains the idea of a potentially genocidal cleansing that has become controversial, especially in the context of the Balkan wars at the end of the 20th century. Furthermore, there is an ongoing and fierce dispute over the question of Njegoš's nationality: is he a Serbian or a Montenegrin national poet?¹⁶

In his famous *Daugava* (1919), the much-celebrated Latvian "people's poet" Rainis – who belongs to the third, latest group of national poets – envisioned the great Latvian river as a powerful symbol, a national "river of destiny". The appeal of his patriotic verses prophesying an independent Latvia became manifest during the Latvian War of Independence (1918–1920), when the defenders of Riga were deeply inspired by the poem. Seven decades later, such an appeal resurfaced in the course of the Baltic "singing revolution" (1987–1991). In the arrangement by the composer Mārtiņš Brauns, the mighty choral song "*Saule, Pērkons, Daugava*" (Sun, Thunder, the Daugava) became a major musical symbol of (non-violent) resistance against the Soviet rule during this period.¹⁷

Latvia was put down by the Sun,
Where the ends came together.
White sea, green land.
Latvia had the key of the gate,
Which Daugava will protect.

(Kudiņš 2019: 34, transl. by Jānis Kudiņš)

The famous "*Zapovit*" (Testament, 1845) by the Ukrainian national poet Taras Shevchenko is another fine example of overtly nationalist poetry – even if the unity

16 On the complex case of Njegoš, see Slapšak (2010) and Baskar (2019).

17 As Neubauer (2010: 16–18) has already noted, practically all national poets in East-Central Europe were widely appropriated not only by the nationalists, but also by the communists. Rainis, as an outspoken leftist, was no exception. His cult flourished during the Soviet era, but the nationalist traits in his *opera* played an important role in the fall of the communist regime in Latvia (cf. Kalnačs 2017; Zelče 2020).

of this poet's life, deeds, and (artistic) works is perhaps less obvious.¹⁸ In this poem, the lyrical subject clearly places the new deity, the Nation, above the Creator God:

When I am dead, bury me
In my beloved Ukraine,
My tomb upon a grave mound high
Amid the spreading plain,
So that the fields, the boundless steppes,
The Dnieper's plunging shore
My eyes could see, my ears could hear
The mighty river roar.

When from Ukraine the Dnieper bears
Into the deep blue sea
The blood of foes ... then will I leave
These hills and fertile fields –
I'll leave them all and fly away
To the abode of God,
And then I'll pray ... But till that day
I nothing know of God.

(Shevchenko 1977: 198, transl. by John Weir)

Whenever the poetry of a national poet contains such overt statements, the adjective "national" seems to have a solid basis in the works – regardless of the fact that there may be other, more complicated and ambiguous poems within the given opus. (Indeed, the legacies of the national poets – including Petőfi, Botev, Shevchenko, and especially Njegoš – are very complex and offer numerous interpretative possibilities.) However, canonization tends to avoid the complex reading of texts and instead builds on a series of easy-to-understand, simplified patterns that one might call "mantras".

The Catalan national poet Jacint Verdaguer, author of the national epic *Canigó* (1886), also penned the famous collection *Pàtria* (Homeland, 1888) where he treated the national past and present in a dreamy, nostalgic mode of *enyorança* (longing). Among the most remarkable pieces are his lengthy ode "*A Barcelona*" (To Barcelona) as well as one of his most beloved poems, "*L'emigrant*" (The Emigrant), an expression of a longing for the native soil. The poem opens with the famous verse "*Dolça Catalunya*", widely known and sung to the present day:¹⁹

18 On Shevchenko and his cult, see Makolkin (1992) and Noack (2019).

19 The musical arrangements of poems were instrumental in maintaining and reproducing the canonical status (*cultus*) of national poets over long periods of time. In Verdaguer's case, another such poem is his hymn to the Virgin Mary entitled "*Vírola*", the verses of which are still widely known and sung by Catalans. On Verdaguer as a national poet and cultural saint, see Sunyer and Subirana (2019).

Sweet Catalonia,
Land of my heart
To be far from you
Is to die of longing.

(Verdaguer 2007: 203,
transl. by Ronald Puppo)

However, even the more subtle or restrained articulations of national (longing) can be sufficient for a writer to become a national poet. One of the features often found in the works of national poets is the appropriation or even invention of the (national) past, and several national poets have indeed written great national epics, works that are considered constitutive of their national literatures. In any case, the glorification of a nation's past greatness is a common strategy on the basis of which a simple prophecy can reconnect the past with the future. Take, for example, Thomas Moore's "*Erin, Oh Erin*" (1810):²⁰

The nations have fallen, and thou still art young,
Thy sun is but rising, when others are set;
And, though Slavery's cloud o'er thy morning hath hung,
The full noon of freedom shall beam round thee yet.
Erin, oh Erin, though long in the shade,
Thy star will shine out when the proudest shall fade.

(Moore 1832: 72)

Another example is Jónas Hallgrímsson's "*Ísland*" (Iceland, 1835), in which the "Bard of Iceland" laments the lost days of fame, the dwindling glory of the ancestors:²¹

Iceland, frost-silvered isle! Our beautiful, bountiful mother!
Where are your fortune and fame, freedom and happiness now?
All things on earth are transient: the days of your greatness and glory
flicker like flames in the night, far in the depths of the past. ...
Oh, it is bitter to stand here, stalled and penned in the present!
Men full of sloth and asleep simply drop out of the race!
How have we treated our treasure during these six hundred summers?

(Ringler 2002: 101, transl. by Dick Ringler)

In the case of Hallgrímsson, his activities at the level of *acta* – that is, outside the purely literary sphere – were also crucial in making this poet an icon of Icelandic

20 During the canonization of Moore in the late 19th century, it was stressed that he had proved that "Erin deserved her place, historically, culturally, and morally, among the nations of the earth" (Kelly 2014: 93).

21 On the nationalist dimensions of this and some other poems by Hallgrímsson, see Egilsson (2011: 135–142).

nationalism. Other national poets, however, may not have been as directly involved in the efforts of their communities' national movements. For France Prešeren, the undisputed Slovenian national poet, poetry was the only means of (national) expression. In his magnum opus *Krst pri Savici* (The Baptism on the Savica, 1836), the Slovenian equivalent of a national epic, Prešeren also evokes the myth of the ancestors that lived in independence and glory in the times before the (violent) Christianization in the 8th century. After that, the situation looks rather bleak:

Old pillars of Slovenedom are cast down,
And all our laws on ancient habit based;
All bow before Bavarian Tesel's crown,
The sons of Slavdom 'neath his yoke are placed,
And haughtily the aliens strut and frown
Within our homeland, by bright fortune graced.

(Prešeren 1999: 119,
transl. by Henry Cooper and Tom Priestly)

However, the traits of national ideology cannot really explain Prešeren's unrivaled position on the Slovenian Parnassus. In general, Prešeren's complex poetic opus is not explicitly nationalist, but instead inspired by Romantic cosmopolitanism and humanist universalism. In this respect, there are other Slovenian poets whose poetry at first glance seems to better fit the ideal of the national poet – at least from the point of view of the Slovenian nationalists of the generation after Prešeren that became aware of the pressing need to establish and maintain a cult of the national poet. In the eyes of many, a subtle poet of disillusionment like Prešeren, whose work was primarily characterized by love poetry, was simply not fervent enough – and such suspicions were regularly voiced in the early phase of his canonization (Dovič 2010: 104–105). In Romania, too, Mihai Eminescu was initially attacked for his “poisonous version of anti-national pessimism” (Mihăilescu 2010: 87). In the end, however, both Prešeren and Eminescu were unanimously elevated to the prestigious throne of the national poet. This apparent controversy can be well explained by the observations of Nemoianu and Juvan: as (subaltern) candidates for the hypercanon, national poets first had to be recognized as “great”, classical and exemplary – and only then could they become “national”.

Perhaps the most radical illustration of this point is provided by the Czech national poet Karel Hynek Mácha. His major lyrical-epic poem *Máj* (May, 1836) was written at a time when the Czech literary establishment already expected poetry to express a resolute national consciousness. Ironically, Mácha seems to be the least “national” of the many enthusiastic Czech poets of the time. An exception might be the introductory verses to *May*:

The Czechs are a good nation!
Anyone unfortunate, moaning in need,
should turn to a Czech;
he will give speedy help.

(Pynsent 2010: 57,
transl. by Robert Pynsent)

However, interpreters have never agreed on the real intention of this four-verse jingle, which stands in sharp contrast to the whole of *May* and to Mácha's poetry in general. Could it be that Mácha was simply making fun of the nationalists? Even without deciding on one of the explanations (cf. Pynsent 2010: 57–58), it is clear that there is nothing explicitly national in *May* – but it is certainly an excellent and extremely complex work of art. It seems that it was not the national zeal (which was obviously lacking), but the later critical reassessment of Mácha's poetry as esthetically highly relevant (it should not be forgotten that the poem was initially fiercely denigrated by the nationalists) that was decisive for his elevation to the status of the national poet.

In this respect, Mácha's case is similar to that of Prešeren, in which the mantra of a Slovenian poetic genius, worthy of standing alongside Dante, Schiller, and other European classics, was remarkably influential and resonates even today. Such an assessment of Prešeren's role was initiated by the poet and critic Josip Stritar in his 1866 preface to the first posthumous edition of Prešeren's poetry. Although this essay marked the beginning of the canonization of the Slovenian national poet, the peculiar argument developed by Stritar seems to be a genuine *signum temporis* and could be applied to many other cases:

Every nation has a man whom it imagines with a holy, pure nimbus above his head. What Shakespeare is to Englishmen, Racine to Frenchmen, Dante to Italians, Goethe to Germans, Pushkin to Russians, and Mickiewicz to Poles – so is Prešeren to Slovenians [...]. If nations were to be assembled on the Judgment Day to demonstrate how they had managed their talents and how every one of them had participated in universal, human culture, the small Slovenian nation could prove itself confidently among others with one small book, Prešeren's *Poems*. (Stritar 1866: 15, 48, transl. by the author of this article)

Conclusion

So what can one ultimately say about national poets, about this "peculiar way of viewing literature", as Virgil Nemoianu (2002: 255) has so aptly put it? Evidently, national poets are a phenomenon closely associated with nation-building in general: it was the national movements of the 19th and early 20th centuries that invented and canonized them, making them into a genuine literary

institution that often lasted well into the new millennium.²² More specifically, however, it should be considered a phenomenon intimately linked to Romantic nationalism. It is not just that the invention and canonization of national poets fits well with the general historical development of this characteristic type of national thinking (Leerssen 2014: 5–12). It is the specific connection between the arts and the nation, between poetics and politics, so characteristic of the national poets, that makes them appear as one of the most distinctive features of Romantic nationalism.

Although there are some deviations from the pattern, it is fairly safe to assume that the phenomenon of national poets, invented to represent a nation both to itself and to others, was particularly pronounced in small European literary cultures. As has been seen, in many of these cultures national poets occupy a prominent, exalted position within the national pantheon. It has also been observed that, although the patterns of their canonization were quite similar in many cultures, their works were quite varied and not necessarily predominantly nationalistic. The main reason for this could be that their canonization had to satisfy two very different requirements. They not only had to please their nationalist postulators at home but also aspired to be recognized by “the Other” – the core of the emerging literary world-system – and included on an equal footing in the ranks of exemplary European classics. In most cases this second mission, their “worlding”, was not successful. There is still a grave imbalance between the prestige and veneration of national poets within their respective literary cultures and their (marginal) position in the canon of world literature – but this is certainly an issue that is well beyond the scope of this study.

The samples of nationally motivated poetry discussed in the last part of this article support the conclusion above. National poets may have dealt with national themes in different ways, to different extents, and in different modalities: and many of them did so with unprecedented excellence. However, this was not the only condition of their eligibility. Their selection does not appear to be directly dependent on the frequency or strength of the distinctly national poetic imagery of their poetry. When considering the afterlives of national poets, an attentive look at their (posthumous) canonization reveals the mechanism of their elevation to this exalted structural position. Among the many parameters of canonization, the concept of appropriation is of particular importance here; compare the table in Dovič and Helgason (2017: 94–95). In the process of canonizing particular national poets, their works and the compact totality of their “life and deeds” were routinely interpreted as

22 National poets, often nearly forgotten in the (late) 20th century, can resurface with surprising agility, especially in turbulent times. Consider, for example, the role of Prešeren and Rainis in the period of the emancipation of the Slovenian and Latvian nation-states around 1990, or the role of Verdaguer in the recent Catalan attempts to gain greater sovereignty.

highly relevant to the national cause – whereas the actual poetic content, diluted into empty signifiers and simplified mantras, became less important. Recalling the statement quoted at the outset of this article, it may now become more evident why John Neubauer (whose work will remain an enduring inspiration for the study of national poets) could not simply state that a “national poet must write poetry that closely identifies with the nation’s cause”, but had to add the coda “or is thought to do so”.

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Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Nietzsche in *fin-de-siècle* Latvian Literary Culture

Johans Volfgangs fon Gēte un Frīdrihs Nīče latviešu literārajā kultūrā 19. un 20. gadsimta mijā

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Summary

In *fin-de-siècle* Latvian literature we observe an increasingly active dialogue with the most significant phenomena in European writing, testifying to a need and desire for creating an elite culture. Goethe and Nietzsche were among the most respected German authors, often mentioned in Latvian culture of the period. Sometimes they have been considered as opposites, directly or indirectly using the Apollonian and Dionysian concepts as developed in Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* (1872). However, the mentioned juxtaposition is not so pronounced in the modern-day assessment of both authors. The creative quests of Goethe's oeuvre, including his late works, reveal an innovative approach to writing, while Nietzsche's radical ideas were shaped by his productive dialogue with classical culture. The opinions of the turn-of-the-century Latvian authors display a great (though not yet sufficiently apprehended) diversity in their evaluation of the both German writers. For example, Rainis's notes from the 1880s and 1890s onwards contain references not only to Goethe's but also to Nietzsche's poetics and ideas. This article delves into the reception of these two German authors in *fin-de-siècle* Latvian cultural milieu, considering the literary texts and essays as well as personal correspondence of Latvian writers (among them Rainis, Aspazija, Jānis Poruks, and Rūdolfs Blaumanis).

Kopsavilkums

19. un 20. gadsimta mijas latviešu literatūrā vērojams arvien aktīvāks dialogs ar nozīmīgākajām parādībām Eiropas rakstniecībā, apliecinot nepieciešamību un vēlmi veidot elitāru kultūru. Gēte un Nīče ir vācu autori, kuri tālaika latviešu kultūrvidē ir ievēroti un bieži pieminēti. Dažkārt viņi uzlūkot kā pretstati, tieši vai netieši izmantojot Nīčes darbā "Trāģēdijas dzimšana no mūzikas gara" (1872) iztīrātās apolloniskā un dionīsiskā konceptus. Šī tēma ir izpētes vērtā, jo minētie pretstati abu autoru mūsdienu izvērtējumā nav tik izteikti. Radošie meklējumi Gētes daiļradē, tostarp viņa vēlīnajos darbos atklāj laikmetīgu pieeju rakstniecībai, savukārt Nīčes radikālās idejas veidojās produktīvā dialogā ar klasisko kultūru. Arī gadsimtu mijas latviešu autoru viedokļi par šiem vācu autoriem rāda lielu daudzveidību, kas līdz šim vēl nav tikusi pietiekami apzināta. Piemēram, Raiņa piezīmēs kopš 19. gadsimta 80. gadiem rodamas liecības ne tikai par Gētes, bet arī par Nīčes darbu un ideju pazīšanu. Raksta mērķis ir iedziļināties abu vācu autoru darbu recepcijā un viņu nozīmē gadsimtu mijas latviešu literārajā kultūrā, balstoties atziņās, kas izteiktas Raiņa, Aspazijas, Jāņa Poruka, Rūdolfa Blaumaņa un citu rakstnieku darbos, apcerēs un arī privātajā sarakstē.

Introduction

Friedrich Nietzsche commences his first published book, *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* (*Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*) in 1872, with this retrospective as well as programmatic statement: "We will have achieved much for the discipline of aesthetics when we have arrived not only at the logical insight but also at the immediate certainty of the view that the continuing development of art is tied to the duality of the *Apollonian* and the *Dionysian*" (Nietzsche 2006b: 42).

As pointed out by Keith Ansell Pearson and Duncan Large, the editors of the English language selection of Nietzsche's works, "[i]n *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche presents the Dionysian and the Apollonian as "tendencies," "drives," but also as artistic "energies" and "impulses" that burst forth from nature itself" (Ansell Pearson and Large 2006: 36). Notably, "[w]hile Apollo is associated with visible form, comprehensive knowledge and moderation, Dionysus is linked with formless flux, mystical intuition, and excess" (Ansell Pearson and Large 2006: 34). In this article, I argue that the above concepts, elaborated in their relevance to the classical Greek tragedy but containing contemporary references, in particular regarding the innovations set forth by Richard Wagner's ideas of music and drama, have not only turned out to be important in Nietzsche's oeuvre or, for that matter, in cultural history more generally, but also can be applied to such contexts as *fin-de-siècle* Latvian literature. The conflict between the Apollonian and the Dionysian principles elaborated by Nietzsche is in many ways illuminating the aesthetic discussions of the turn-of-the-century Latvian cultural scene with its constantly developing interest in the most significant phenomena in European writing (Burima 2011: 38–40; Kalnačs et al. 2017). In broader terms, this was a turning point in the development of Latvian literature with two subsequent generations of authors who, notwithstanding their differences, were challenging the established aesthetic norms from various perspectives. Being inspired by the topical trends and achievements of European culture, they treated Nietzsche alongside his predecessor and compatriot, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, as main representatives of two different epochs of German literature (Grīnuma 2002).

More specifically, while Goethe seemed to represent the intellectual balance of the Apollonian, Nietzsche became, in the eyes of many, an embodiment of the Dionysian principle. However, despite them often being considered as opposites, the creative path of both authors shared many important features. Goethe, by the late 19th century unanimously acknowledged as the most important German author, had constantly been looking for creative freedom, manifest in the early period of the

Sturm und Drang movement but also present in his late work, such as the novel *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* (*Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, 1821–1829), and even in the second part of *Faust* (1832; see Dahnke 1999: 13; Koopmann 1997). The classical shape of some of Goethe's works can be linked to the influence of his Italian trip in the 1780s, which he himself later stylized into a story of a spiritual rebirth overcoming the difficulties of his constant struggle with the material.¹ Nietzsche's radical ideas, on the other hand, were shaped by his training as a classical philologist and by the productive dialogue with cultural tradition. It was the radicality of *The Birth of Tragedy* that burned some of Nietzsche's bridges to the academic discipline, opening the way for the free flow of his own Dionysian energy.

One of the important links between the two authors was provided by their interest in and reception of music. Stefan Hajduk argues that in European antiquity the harmony of the spheres, the atmosphere, "was regarded as an intuitive emotional grasp of the synthesis between the microcosmic order of human society and the stable macrocosmic order of universe, supported by an aesthetic experience of musical harmony" (Hajduk 2022: 185). This perception is echoed in the "Prologue in Heaven" of the first part of Goethe's *Faust* (1808), an important example of the influence of classical aesthetics in his oeuvre. According to the traditional perception, the aesthetic harmony of music expresses the "otherwise inaudible and ineffable eternal formal beauty of planetary spheres in motion" (Hajduk 2022: 187), creating harmony between the universe and individual perception of development. However, Goethe's creativity, inspired as it was by the European modernity with its emphasis on individual agency, also incorporated a radical challenge to earlier tradition. With the advance of the ideas of the Enlightenment, the perception of music as the reflection of planetary harmony underwent radical changes:

[A]lready in early examples of the *Bildungsroman*, as evidenced by Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Years of Apprenticeship* [*Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre*, 1795–1796] [...], the enlightened 'wholeness' of man now comes to include personal individual emotionality also in its full range of volatile manifestations, positive and negative, as something the protagonists must learn to handle during their process of identity formation. The modern redefinition of wholeness, enshrined in an individual's gradual maturation, brought with it the transformation of the classical musico-cosmological notion of atmosphere into an understanding of *Stimmung*, mood and atonement that was premised on a psychology of complex yet mutable, and even inconsistent moods (Hajduk 2022: 199).

Goethe's apparent universalism was thus matched by his understanding of swiftly changing historical conditions that made him one of the most radical 18th

1 "Diese [früheren Texte] bestanden teils aus nur entworfenen Arbeiten, ja aus Fragmenten, wie denn meine Unart, vieles anzufangen und bei verminderten Interesse liegenzulassen, mit den Jahren, Beschäftigungen und Zerstreuungen allgemach zugenommen hatte." (Goethe 1976: 19)

and early 19th-century thinkers with a truly global approach that also inspired his concept of world literature (Pizer 2014). A similarly radical stance was later in the 19th century taken by Friedrich Nietzsche. At the same time, however, Nietzsche (especially at the early stages of his career) also considered it important to revitalize the role of music not only as a means of expression of individual feelings but also as the basis of reality perception rooted in a complex interplay of different human senses. For this and other reasons, Goethe's ideas remained a constant reference point in Nietzsche's writings.²

The acknowledgement of this dialectical relationship between these two German authors was not fully established in *fin-de-siècle* Latvian intellectual community, despite constant references to them. Nevertheless, the impact of their works was partly due exactly to the tension of the rational and emotional aspects of reception, going beyond the limits of clearly defined reference points. Thus, my aim in this article is to outline various comparative aspects of the reception of Goethe and Nietzsche in the turn-of-the-century Latvian cultural milieu, taking into consideration literary texts and essays, as well as mutual correspondence of several important Latvian writers.

I will begin with a brief comment on the reception history, and then focus on the period between 1893 and 1898 that culminates with the translation as well as the Latvian language theatre production of Goethe's tragedy *Faust* (1808–1832; Dzene 1999: 83–85). Here, I build on the ideas of four principal innovators of Latvian literary culture of the 1890s – Jānis Poruks, Rūdolfs Blaumanis, Aspazija, and Rainis –, looking at their constant public references to Goethe, as well as their intense interest in Nietzsche that primarily remained in their private communication. The first public highlight of Nietzsche's reception in Latvia falls into the following decade with the translation of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (*Also sprach Zarathustra*, 1883) by a modernist poet Vilis Plūdons in 1908. An analysis of this generational change is not developed in this article. However, as we will see, Nietzsche was, alongside with Goethe, already hugely present in late 19th-century Latvian intellectual debates.

Goethe and Nietzsche

There is hardly any other German author who would match the importance of Goethe during the rise of 19th-century Latvian elite culture (Mauriņa 1943). Getting acquainted with his works was important for several subsequent generations of authors. The story begins with the translations of

2 See, for example, Nietzsche's *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben* (Nietzsche 2006a).

Goethe's poems into Latvian by Baltic German intellectuals, among them Karl Hugenberger who in 1826 compiled an important poetry volume (Daija and Kalnačs 2022: 14). The older generation of ethnic Latvian authors, including Ernests Dinsbergs, tried their hand as well. His translation of Goethe's *Reynard the Fox* (*Reineke Fuchs*, 1794) was completed by the 1850s when its fragments were printed. The complete translation was published in 1879, and by then Latvian literature had already made a considerable advance. Nevertheless, Dinsbergs's work received an acknowledgement from Jānis Poruks, one of the most prominent *fin-de-siècle* Latvian writers (Poruks 1929: 45). Goethe's poems were also represented in the poetry collection *Little Songs, Translated for the Latvian Language* (*Dziesmiņas, latviešu valodai pārtulkotas*) compiled by Juris Alunāns in 1856. This publication, despite consisting almost exclusively of translations, provided what is often referred to as the starting point of the 'genuine' Latvian national literature (Mintauris 2022: 110). The volume contained four poems written by Goethe. Other representatives of the generation of the so-called New Latvians, among them Krišjānis Barons, as well as their followers, including the highly appreciated national romanticist poet Auseklis (Miķelis Krogzemis), also tried their hand in translating Goethe's texts.

It was during the 1890s, however, that Goethe's reception by Latvian authors reached a new stage. Echoing the diversity of his interests, as well as eagerly responding to the European dimension of his thinking, the newly aspiring Latvian writers referred to Goethe as one of their most important influences. This was considered a yardstick to measure the seriousness of one's literary intentions. Characteristically, when Hermīne Zālīte and Pēteris Zālīte, the editors of the newly established literary magazine *House Guest's Monthly* (*Mājas Viesa Mēnešraksts*, 1895–1905), were looking for a display of their intellectual ambitions, the most appropriate choice turned out to be a Latvian translation of Goethe's *Faust*. When Jānis Poruks refused to undertake this extremely complicated task, the editors approached Aspazija who accomplished the translation in co-operation with Rainis (Mauriņa 1943: 11). It was printed in 1897, and numerous other texts by Goethe were also published in the magazine, including different versions of one and the same poem.

Behind the scenes, however, there was already a growing interest in the work and personality of Friedrich Nietzsche whose German as well as international reputation was on the rise in the 1890s. The steady appeal was partially linked to the tragic circumstances of his personal life, caused by his incurable mental illness. Nietzsche swiftly became a symbol of *fin-de-siècle*'s passionate way of living and thinking – due to his radical challenge of religious beliefs, the boldness of his critical stance, as well as the brilliance of his language (Šuvajevs 2021).

Even more than publications, the letter exchange and surviving personal notes of the turn-of-the-century Latvian authors prove the intensity of their intellectual and emotional encounters with Nietzsche. The German philosopher was their contemporary, highly appreciated but also fiercely disputed, thus demanding a personal judgement (Volkova 2017: 77–78). Nietzsche's importance in Latvian intellectual circles indirectly confirms the opinion that he was "contributing towards thinking on emerging national identities within an interrelated global community" (Morgan 2006: 455). There was certainly a considerable echo in Latvian contexts.

The main points of intersection leading to a certain overlap in the reception of Goethe and Nietzsche in Latvian intellectual circles were the versatility of their writing, the autobiographical element, and the language factor. It is also possible to refer to the connections between different epochs, responding to and confirming Nietzsche's ideas of 'becoming' and of the 'eternal recurrence' that turned out to be productive for the young and insatiable minds of the emerging Latvian intellectuals.

Jānis Poruks and Rūdolfs Blaumanis

The first Latvian author to write an extended comment on Nietzsche's ideas was Jānis Poruks. In 1893, he travelled to Germany where he stayed for slightly more than year in an effort to accomplish his studies at the Dresden Music Academy. Poruks's studies ended rather abruptly due to the lack of money but, importantly, before his return to Riga in spring of 1894 his first book was published in Germany. It was printed by a publishing house established by Philipp Gottheimer, and the small brochure even went into the second print which signals some interest in its topic. It was titled *The Religion of Future* (*Die Religion der Zukunft*, 1894), but the subtitle is even more telling as the book proposes to compare the views of Leo Tolstoy and Friedrich Nietzsche (Vecgrāvis 2023: 164–182). The title was possibly modelled on Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* (*Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, 1886) which was subtitled "Prelude to a Philosophy of Future", in its turn inspired by Richard Wagner. The book found an echo among wider circles of Latvian intellectuals. Poruks's biographer, Viesturs Vecgrāvis, even suggests that this publication might have inspired the editor Zālīte (who himself had studied philosophy in Jena and written a dissertation on the philosophy of Immanuel Kant) not only to invite Poruks to contribute to the *House Guest's Monthly* but also to offer him a higher salary than was paid to other contributors (Vecgrāvis 2023: 166).

The point that Poruks advances in *The Religion of Future* is a quest for a synthesis between Tolstoy's utopic attempt to reach a new stage of Christianity that would strictly put humility at the core of life perception, and Nietzsche's radical dismissal of the culture of piety while instead searching for intellectual aristocracy embodied in

his idea of Overman (*Übermensch*). Poruks emphasizes Nietzsche's point of the importance of individual initiative, but at the same time believes that cutting all ties with the traditional religious norms and beliefs is too radical. In Poruks's opinion, the knowledge of tradition might still help to achieve a higher self-confidence and stimulate moral rebirth of an individual as well as society.

The book contains Poruks's reflections on themes that were important in the formation of contemporary intellectuals, while the discussed authors (not only Tolstoy and Nietzsche, but also others) are for him of subordinate value even as he builds upon their views. The humility preached by Tolstoy seems illusory to Poruks, therefore he joins Nietzsche in highlighting the importance of personality while connecting the idea of self-formation with the freedom of choice: "Nietzsche's spirit wanders over the mountains to find a place where there would be beings who, absorbed by nature's might, could enjoy it completely and truly" (Poruks 1929c: 32).³

Poruks's neurasthenic character and impulsivity that later developed into mental illness seemingly made him even more akin to Nietzsche. Already in 1898, in an article about contemporary Latvian prose, Ernests Pīpiņš-Vizulis noted that there was something "demonic" about Poruks's character (Pīpiņš-Vizulis 1898: 150). His younger contemporaries hailed Poruks as an exceptional figure, Viktors Eglītis even claiming in 1903 that Poruks was the starting point of all the newest Latvian literature (Eglītis 1903). In 1906, Kārlis Skalbe maintained that Poruks was the first and only Latvian author of interest for an international readership (Skalbe 1906: 110).⁴ Poruks's aspirations matched those of the early 20th-century generation of Latvian writers predominantly interested in the aesthetic merits of literature. These authors were referred to as the generation of decadence; it is important to remember Nietzsche's rather complex use of this term, especially in his late essay *The Case of Wagner* (*Der Fall Wagner*, 1888) where he even called Wagner a "typical decadent who has a sense of necessity in his corrupted taste, who claims it as a higher taste, who knows how to get his corruption accepted as law, as progress, as fulfilment" (Nietzsche 2006c: 453).

In the book where Poruks discussed Tolstoy and Nietzsche he also made his first reference to Goethe, describing the latter as an author close to his own preferred approach of striving for synthesis. This was later repeated in the 1897 preface to the publication of the translation of *Faust* in *House Guest's Monthly*. To a certain extent, Poruks here referred to Goethe in Nietzschean terms as a challenger to the daily

3 Translations from Latvian are by the author of the article.

4 Disagreeing on this latter remark, Rainis made a sad entry into his diary (Rainis 1986: 251).

habits of bourgeois life, and devoted a considerable part of his text to the condemnation of readers unprepared to grasp the fullness of Goethe's ideas. Nevertheless, he expressed hope that the publication might still find its readers, and even people who would be willing to delve into the complexity of the second part of Goethe's tragedy that required intellectual effort and wit to grasp (Poruks 1929b: 138). His overall assessment was that Goethe stands for a constant striving towards ideals, this view matching Poruks's own ideas and to an extent also corresponding to the demands of Nietzsche. Poruks emphasized the same point in his 1900 article juxtaposing Goethe and Shakespeare, and highlighting Goethe's willingness to deal with the potential of human development (Poruks 1929d: 10).

Rūdolfs Blaumanis, a contemporary of Poruks, was at the time considered a more traditional realist author, receiving much less praise regarding his intellectual capacities. Nevertheless, in the context of the swiftly changing Latvian cultural scene it is important to underline Blaumanis's constant efforts both to learn from classical culture as well as to follow contemporary trends. In 1882, when at the age of twenty he returned from the German language school in Riga to his home farmstead "Braki", he brought with him numerous books. According to the testimony of his brother Arvīds, the most read among those was *Faust*, and Blaumanis constantly admired the scale of Goethe's thought (Volkova 2008: 470). By that time, interest in Goethe had already replaced his earlier passion for Schiller, whom Blaumanis had even tried to imitate by writing an early and immature play in verse. In the summer of 1893, Blaumanis referred to Goethe as his most important literary influence. He also enjoyed Wagner's operas that he presumably saw at the German language City Theatre (*Stadttheater*) in Riga. When Blaumanis's play *The Prodigal Son* (*Pazudušais dēls*) was produced in the Riga Latvian Theatre (*Rīgas Latviešu teātris*) in November, 1893, it was described by Baltic German press as an attempt that matched the classical tradition, even amounting to the scale of tragic Greek drama. This reminds of the deep involvement of Goethe as well as of Nietzsche in the studies of classical culture. Indeed, in his play Blaumanis made an implicit effort to apply the tradition of the Greek choir and thus stimulate a heightened emotional intensity while at the same time paying great attention to the careful construction of the plot and build-up of events. Arguably, both Apollonian and Dionysian elements were thus employed to provide the aesthetic balance of the play. Blaumanis had a keen sense for displaying his characters' emotions while he also preferred a clear outline of the main events without going too far into abstraction. This might have been one of the reasons for his reserved attitude towards the second part of *Faust*, even though he recognized the importance of Goethe's ideas. Notably, Blaumanis expressed his views about the limited possibilities of 19th-century stage in the opening remarks of

his review of the production of Goethe's tragedy in the Riga Latvian theatre in 1898 by stating that this was one of those dramas that could hardly be done justice in theatre (Blaumanis 1959: 171).

Alongside his long-established interest in Goethe, in the 1890s Blaumanis became an avid reader of Nietzsche's works which, according to his own testimony, he got from his friend Victor von Andrejanoff, a Baltic German writer (Volkova 2017: 77). In the letters exchanged between Blaumanis and Latvian author Andrievs Niedra, since the earliest surviving ones of 1894 there are constant references to various ideas expressed in Nietzsche's oeuvre. In a more elaborated fashion, the same interest is documented in the correspondence Blaumanis held with the Baltic German intellectual Eugen Bergmann. In his letters from 1895 onwards, Blaumanis makes constant inquiries and comments in this regard. After asking of Bergmann's opinion about Nietzsche and obviously receiving an affirmation of interest (Bergmann's letters are lost), Blaumanis then delves into sharing his own opinion, referring to Nietzsche as the brightest spirit in contemporary literature. However, he also contrasts Nietzsche to Goethe by saying that there is something unhealthy in Nietzsche's views, and that this becomes especially obvious when, after delving into Nietzsche's world of thought, one goes back to reading Goethe (Volkova 2017: 77). This kind of love-hate spiritual relationship with Nietzsche was in fact characteristic to all late 19th-century Latvian authors who, recognizing the topicality of Nietzsche's ideas, at the same time remained cautious and occasionally were even repulsed by his radicalism.

The most pronounced statement about Nietzsche made by Blaumanis was in a memorial article published in 1900 shortly after Nietzsche's death. Among his other merits, Blaumanis was especially impressed by Nietzsche's language:

Nietzsche wrote for the most part in the open countryside, walking, stopping, or laying down, with the Italian or Swiss countryside in front of his eyes. Thus, we get direct impressions of nature and the fiery temperament of the writer himself. Life and movement everywhere. With unparalleled skill, he knows how to express the various feelings of the soul. Solemn pathos, grim sadness, unspeakable bitterness, passionate enmity – everything was equally at hand for him, like a painter's colours. As a particularly remarkable feature of his writings, the elegance of his language should be mentioned, which, unfortunately, is lost in translation. Even those who do not agree with Nietzsche's thoughts and teachings will not be able to refrain from the power and charm of this language (Blaumanis 1900).

This opinion helps to explain the context of the late 19th-century reception of Nietzsche, and the special affinity Latvian authors felt to Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. It was above all the highly metaphoric language that at the time fascinated Latvian writers who enjoyed reading Nietzsche in the German original. They also appreciated the ability of Nietzsche to challenge traditional assumptions

in an innovative and playful form, which had mounted up to writing *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as a parody of the New Testament (Zavatta 2022: 16–23). The creative freedom of Nietzsche's writings was an inspiration for Latvian authors who thought carefully about their use of language, expression and style.

Aspazija and Rainis

Considered among the most prominent turn-of-the-century Latvian writers, Aspazija and Rainis had good knowledge of classical and contemporary German literature. Of the two, Aspazija was the first to get recognition; her inspiration taken from German culture became obvious already in her early poem *The Daughter of the Sun* (*Saules meita*, 1894; see Viese 1999: 236). The enthusiastic public response to Aspazija's work encouraged the editor Zālīte to approach her with a request to translate *Faust* which she accepted, also seeing in this a chance for the still unknown Rainis (Jānis Pliekšāns) to prove his poetic skills. The translation of *Faust* was accomplished in their co-operation under changing and largely unfavourable conditions, with Rainis having lost his position as the main editor of the newspaper *Daily Page* (*Dienas Lapa*) in 1895 and struggling for existence. Parts of the translation were done while Rainis was in prison. Aspazija was of a constant editorial help, also working on fragments of the translation. This challenge strengthened Rainis's spirits, and was a source of joy despite difficult circumstances. Importantly, both parts of the tragedy were rendered into Latvian, also due to the changing contexts of Goethe's reception with a growing international interest regarding the second part (Dahnke 1999: 13–14). The success of this translation was vitally important for Rainis who considered it as his literary breakthrough. The interest in Goethe, already developed from his early childhood, was thus immensely strengthened, and the imaginative personal link stimulated further translations. In the early 20th century, when the publisher Ansis Gulbis undertook an attempt to print Goethe's collected works, the seven small volumes that appeared were rendered into Latvian by Rainis and Aspazija.⁵

Rainis preserved the habit of comparing his own opinions, ideas, and plans to those of Goethe throughout his life. As late as in 1926, he was still considering writing an epic poem with the title *The Modern Faust* (*Modernais Fausts*; see Viese 1999). Nevertheless, it is important to remark that comparisons with Goethe were largely made retrospectively. In the 1890s, during the period of translating *Faust*, it was already clear that, despite great respect for Goethe's work, Rainis at the same time

5 The edition included Goethe's poetry, the novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (*Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, 1774) translated by Aspazija, and several plays mostly translated by Rainis.

acknowledged the distance that separated him and his contemporaries from the time when the tragedy was written. In 1897, Rainis opined in his diary: "*Faust* should be written now as Goethe's work is already getting old. [...] We do not live in times of Goethe's beautiful Greek 'proportion' anymore" (Rainis 1986: 118). Similar ideas were expressed when evaluating the importance of both Goethe and Shakespeare, and the attitude to be formed towards them: "So does the humanity not go ahead and march on anymore? Do we have to learn Shakespeare and Goethe by heart and ruminate on them forever? If we can't surpass them, what's the point of writing poetry anymore; the boredom will smother us" (Rainis 1986: 61). One of the main differences Rainis saw between himself and the author of *Faust* was that Goethe was predominantly concerned with an individual, while Rainis was constantly considering the contribution to social development.

It was on these grounds that Rainis also could not reach an inner agreement with the ideas of Nietzsche despite admitting the German author's literary and philosophical merits. Rainis got a proof of how relevant Nietzsche's ideas were when at the end of the 19th century he and Aspazija spent several weeks in Berlin. In November of 1896, in his *Impressions and Memories from Berlin*, Rainis wrote that Nietzsche was celebrated as "the greatest German philosopher of our time" (Rainis 1983: 89). Strikingly, during 1896 and 1897, while working on his translation of *Faust*, the Latvian writer also made extended comments on Nietzsche's essay *Beyond Good and Evil*. Recognizing Nietzsche's interest of and emphasis on human personality, Rainis disagreed with him regarding the relation between the individual and the masses. Where Nietzsche was direct and ruthless in stressing the inevitability of social differences and opted to speak to the chosen few while denouncing the lack of spiritual interest among the majority, Rainis believed that the possibilities of intellectual growth should be extended to everybody, and considered that Nietzsche had misunderstood the necessary presence of egoism in personality formation:

Egoists themselves have misunderstood egoism. Its most ambitious spirit is Nietzsche, who thought that the unleashed evil, greedy, hedonistic, petty, selfish instincts were the real ones [...] and that these unleashed evil instincts became legalized when he created his overman, who should not have any sympathies for "the least ones", including the oppressed, for example, democrats, women etc. (Rainis 1986: 91)

Nevertheless, Rainis acknowledged the deep crisis of the late 19th-century society, forcefully condemned by Nietzsche, and highly valued the passionate social critique expressed by the German philosopher. Rainis's ideas were thus influenced not only by reading and contemplating Goethe and other classical authors, but also by his encounter with the intellectual world of Nietzsche in whom he discovered a deep personal involvement matching that of Rainis himself.

Conclusion

A summary of the above opinions allows to argue that, during the 1890s, both Goethe and Nietzsche had become focal points of interest for many of the most significant Latvian writers. This was an important feature regarding the steady rise of Latvian elite culture, nurturing the hope that the greatest achievements and topical issues of European art could find an echo in Latvian society.

The four Latvian writers discussed in this article were born in the 1860s and early 1870s. They shared a desire for a radical aesthetic and social change in society, and displayed growing interest in European cultural heritage and new developments alike. Thus, the mentioned authors embodied an ambition to strive toward the highest potentialities displayed by European culture that they not only admired but wanted to match.

Metaphorically, it is possible to argue that Nietzsche's well-known parable of the three stages of inner development – namely, that of a camel, a lion, and a child, with the latter embodying the true spirit of human personality, its "innocence and forgetfulness, a new beginning, a sport, a self-propelling wheel, a first motion, a sacred Yes" (Nietzsche 2006d: 264) –, might be applied to the 19th-century maturation process of Latvian culture. Having first been dependent on Baltic German activities, later, in the epoch of the New Latvians, its representatives rebelled against the existing conditions, even while preserving and developing further a lot of their earlier interests and connections. The reception of Goethe's works serves here as a good example. However, the inner freedom referred to by Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as the stage of childhood, was arguably also reached by Latvian society by the end of the 19th century. This led to the discovery of new aesthetic possibilities. The further growth of interest in Nietzsche's work started to provide a fascinating model for the so-called decadent movement in Latvian culture. This later stage remains beyond the scope of the present article. However, the message that "God is dead" (Nietzsche 2006d: 255), which in *Thus spoke Zarathustra* served as a starting point for the growth of Nietzsche's ideas, was already registered by the *fin-de-siècle* Latvian artistic circles, and interpreted as a necessity to delve deeply into the material as well as spiritual realities of contemporary secular life.

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Rainis Otrās atmodas kontekstā

Rainis in the Context of the Second Awakening

Atslēgvārdi:

Otrā atmoda,
Trešā atmoda,
Ernests Blanks,
Jānis Stradiņš,
latviešu strēlnieki,
neatkarības ideja

Keywords:

the Second Awakening,
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Jānis Stradiņš,
Latvian riflemen,
idea of independence

Kopsavilkums

Rakstā tuvāk aplūkots un pētnieciskai kritikai pakļauts Otrās atmodas jēdziens, kā arī tā lietojums, ietilpinātais saturs, idejas un personas. Šis jēdziens konstruēts Dziesmotās revolūcijas jeb Trešās atmodas laikā 20. gadsimta 80. gadu beigās un 90. gadu sākumā, kad Otrā atmoda bija nepieciešama domāšanas figūra, cenšoties noteikt Trešās atmodas mērķus un vietu latviešu vēstures gaitā. Otrā atmoda ir poētisks apzīmējums vairākiem vēsturiskiem procesiem, kas norisinājās Latvijā un ārpus tās no 1915. līdz 1920. gadam. Svarīgākie no tiem ir: 1) Pirmā pasaules kara izraisītā došanās bēgļu gaitās 1915. gadā un bēgļu organizāciju veidošanās; 2) latviešu strēlnieku bataljonu (vēlāk pulku) organizēšana un kaujas; 3) sabiedriskās un politiskās aktivitātes Šveices latviešu emigrantu vidē; 4) Latvijas Neatkarības pasludināšana 1918. gada 18. novembrī un 5) Latvijas Neatkarības karš jeb Brīvības cīņas 1919.–1920. gadā. Rakstā tuvāk iezīmēta Raiņa sabiedriskās darbības nozīme Otrās atmodas kontekstā, secinot, ka Raiņa devums un vieta šai kontekstā ir viņa literārā darbība.

Summary

The article takes a critical look at the concept of the Second Awakening, as well as its use, embodied content, ideas, and persons. The concept of the Second Awakening was formed during the Singing Revolution or the Third Awakening in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Second Awakening was a requisite figure of thought while striving to determine the goals of the Third Awakening and its place in the course of Latvian history. The Second Awakening is a poetic designation for a number of historical processes that took place in Latvia and beyond from 1915 to 1920. The most significant of these are the following: 1) the refugee movement caused by World War I in 1915 and the formation of refugee organizations; 2) the organization and battles of Latvian riflemen battalions (later – regiments); 3) social and political activities in the Latvian emigrant environment in Switzerland; 4) proclamation of the Declaration of Independence of Latvia on 18 November 1918, and 5) the Latvian War of Independence (freedom struggle, 1919–1920). The article highlights the significance of Rainis's social activities in the context of the Second Awakening. The article concludes that Rainis's contribution and place in this context is constituted by his literary activity.

Viņa dramatiskā dzejā šalko latviskais varoņu gars, vienots ar lepmu pazemību Antiņā, tas gars, kurš spilgti uzliesmoja strēlnieku cīņās un atbrīvošanas karos.

(Veselis 1936: 168–169)

Ievads

Atmodas jēdzienam ir poētisks un nacionāls raksturs, tas tiek lietots kā sinonīms nozīmīgiem un plašiem pārmaiņu procesiem tautā. Līdz šim iztrūkstot plašiem un detalizētiem pētījumiem par Otro atmodu (1915–1920), šis jēdziens rakstā tiek lietots ar pētnieciskām šaubām un tiecoties izprast tā pamatotību. Ar Otro atmodu tiek saprasti tādi nozīmīgi procesi kā Pirmā pasaules kara izraisītā latviešu bēgļu kustība, latviešu strēlnieku bataljonu dibināšana, ārpus Latvijas pastāvošās latviešu kopienas, kuras tiecās pievērst starptautisku uzmanību latviešu problēmām u. c., kas norisinājās Latvijā un ārpus tās un noveda pie Latvijas Republikas izveidošanas. Raksta mērķis ir aplūkot līdzšinējo Otrās atmodas jēdziena lietojumu un tajā ietvertu saturu un noteikt Raiņa (1865–1929) lomu Otrās atmodas procesos.

Ir izvirzīta hipotēze, ka Otrās atmodas jēdziens ir veidots Dziesmotās revolūcijas jeb Trešās atmodas (1986–1991) gados Latvijā, lai tolaik notiekošo atbrīvošanos no PSRS okupācijas varas saistītu ar tiem vēsturiski nozīmīgajiem procesiem, kas 19. gadsimta 50.–60. gados radīja visaptverošu latviešu tautas emancipāciju ar pieaugošu pašapziņu un kas Pirmā pasaules kara gados un Brīvības cīņās vainagojās ar neatkarīgu Latvijas valsti. No šāda vēstures skatījuma Otrā atmoda ir nepieciešams fenomens, pie kura atgriezāties 20. gadsimta nogalē, kad notika to personu, notikumu, artefaktu, grāmatu utt. atgriešanās tautas "lietojumā", no kura šis mantojums tika izslēgts okupācijas gados. Tomēr, neraugoties uz plašu un detalizētu pievērsanos Otrās atmodas laikmetam, tas reti tiek uztverts kā vienots laikmets ar centrālām laikmetu virzošām personām, cauraudošiem notikumiem un idejām. Aplūkojot zinātnisko literatūru, jākonstatē, ka līdzās plaši lietotajiem Pirmās atmodas jeb tautiskā laikmeta un samērā plaši lietotajam Trešās atmodas jēdzienam vārdkop-termins "Otrā atmoda" zinātniskajā literatūrā lietots reti. Otrā atmoda līdz šim vairāk ir publicistikā lietots jēdziens, parasti saiknē ar Pirmo vai Trešo atmodu, tā uzsverot vēsturisko pēctecību un notikumu svarīgumu.

Tāpat rakstā tiks vērtēta Raiņa dēvēšana par Otrās atmodas galveno virzošo spēku, balstoties uz viņa iesaistes veidu un dalību. Īsi tiks raksturota Raiņa saikne ar Otrās atmodas nozīmīgākajiem procesiem un idejām, detalizētāk izvēršot to procesu un ideju aprakstus, kas atrodas ciešākā saiknē ar Raiņa sabiedrisko darbību. Ir hipotēze, ka Raiņa lielums un spēks ir literārajā darbībā, kas te īpaši netiks aplūkots,

jo tai veltīts ievērojams skaits pētījumu, bet Raiņa sabiedriskā darbība, lai arī nozīmīga un ievērojama, tieši un izšķiroši neietekmēja gandrīz nevienu no zīmīgajiem Otrās atmodas procesiem.

Tā kā Otrajai atmodai līdz šim nav veltīti reprezentatīvi un plaši zinātniski pētījumi vēsturē vai citās radniecīgās zinātņu disciplīnās, tad raksta avotu bāzi veido tiešsaistes datubāzes periodika.lv atlasīto materiālu kopa, balstoties uz tādiem meklēšanas vārdiem kā Otrā atmoda, Trešā atmoda, Rainis un atmoda, Rainis un strēlnieki u. c. Atlasītajā materiālā jeb avotu kopā Otrā atmoda līdz Dziesmotās revolūcijas jeb Trešās atmodas gadiem ir salīdzinoši maz lietots jēdziens. Vēlākajos gados šo jēdzienu ierasti lieto kā aksiomu, it kā atsaucoties uz kaut ko vispārzināmu un skaidri saprotamu, kas realitātē gan tā nav – jēdziens ir diskursīvs un reti lietots ārpus publicistikas, īsiem preses rakstiem, ar nekonkrētu un vispārīgu atsauci uz kādu it kā vienojošu procesu, kas novedis līdz neatkarīgai Latvijas Republikai un tās aizstāvēšanai Latvijas Brīvības cīņās. Publicistikā parasti uz to norāda kā faktu, kas ir pierādīts jeb eksistē, bet tā tas nav. Tas ir tikai pieņēmums, kas prasa padziļinātus pētījumus, bet līdz šim Otrā atmoda nav bijusi zinātniskās izpētes lokā, lai arī uz to atsaucas un jēdziena saturs, šķiet, ir saprotams.

Kā avots lietotas un tuvāk aplūkotas Raiņa vēstules, kas rakstītas trimdā Šveicē Pirmā pasaules kara gados un kas atklāj Raiņa uzskatus par latviešu tautas nākotnes perspektīvām, latviešu strēlnieku lomu, Vācijas imperiālisma koloniālajiem plāniem Kurzemē utt. Tāpat rakstā izmantotas atmiņas, dienasgrāmatas, arhīvu materiāli un dokumentu krājumi. Nozīmīgi ir bijuši Saulcerītes Vieses (1932–2004), Vitas Matīsas, Gundegas Grīnumas pētījumi, kur autores pievērsušās Raiņa dzīves un darbības Šveices posmam.

Rakstā lietota biogrāfiskā pieeja, kas ir tendēta vērtēt personas lomu vēsturiskajos procesos, diskursa analīze, kas raugās uz vēsturi kā pastarpinātu, reprezentētu realitāti, un kritiskā interpretācija, analizējot un vērtējot informāciju.

Pirmā atmoda, Trešā atmoda, bet vai bija arī Otrā atmoda? Un Rainis?

Latviešu valodā vārds

“atmoda” apzīmē procesus dabā un sabiedrībā, kas izbeidz sastinguma un miera stāvokli (Kalniņa b. g.). Droši vien atmodu var uztvert arī kā garīgās atmodas un reliģiskās atklāsmes vai pieredzes jēdzienu. Sabiedrībai (arī tautai, nācijai, valstij) tas ir spilgts uzplaukuma laikmets, kas maina iepriekšējos “miera stāvokļa” nosacījumus, izvirza jaunas personas un sociālas grupas modernāku uzskatu un ideju paušanai, izvēršanai, pamatošanai un popularizēšanai. Parasti tas izraisa tās sabiedrības daļas, kas vēlas saglabāt esošo “miera stāvokli”, asu pretreakciju. Pamošanos no

uzvarētas, nomāktas un pazemotas tautas "miera stāvokļa" uz jaunu dzīvi, atdzimstošu tautu, pētot jaunlatviešu darbību un tautiskās kustības laikmetu 19. gadsimta 50.–80. gados, pirmais par latviešu nacionālo atmodu to nosauca žurnālists un publicists Ernests Blanks (1894–1972; Blanks 1927: 3). Viņš runā par nacionālu, sociālu un pilsonisku atmošanos, kad veidojās latviešu sabiedrība ar daudziem moderniem atribūtiem, kā latviešu presi, moderno rakstniecību, dažādām biedrībām, koriem u. c., no baznīcas atdalītu un valsts pārvaldē nodotu izglītības sistēmu 19. gadsimta 70. gados (skolotāju emancipācija), pagastu pārvaldi u. tml. (Blanks 1927: 3–4). Par nozīmīgākajiem Pirmās atmodas darbiniekiem ("soliem") viņš uzskatīja Krišjāni Valdemāru (1825–1891) un tautā tolaik ārkārtīgi populāro Ati Kronvaldu (1837–1875), kas bija plaši zināms ar saviem jūsmīgajiem rakstiem laikrakstā "Baltijas Vēstnesis" par skolām, latviešu valodas kopšanu, tautasdziesmām un brošūru "Tautiskie centieni" (vācu valodā; Kronwald 1872). Valdemāra uzskati un darbība veicināja sabiedrības saimnieciskās intereses, kapitāla uzkrāšanu un sociālo atmodu, bet Kronvalds taujāja pēc latviskas skolas un vēl nedroši – pēc latviskas kultūras (Blanks 1921). Blankam Pirmā atmoda ir pamats vēlākajiem kopīgajiem latviešu tautas sasniegumiem, kas vainagojās ar neatkarīgas Latvijas valsts izveidošanu un nosargāšanu Brīvības cīņās no 1918. gada 18. novembra līdz 1920. gada 11. augustam (Blanks 1927). Bez tiem pavedieniem, kas saista abus šos laikmetus, otrais – neatkarīga Latvijas Republika – nebūtu iespējams. Blanks ir pirmais, kas Krievijas impērijas teritorijā pauda neatkarīgas (suverēnas) Latvijas ideju 1917. gada vidū Maskavas latviešu avīzes "Dzimtenes Atbalss" ievadrakstos, uzsverot – "kur beidzas Krievija, tur sākas Latvija" (tuvāk par to sk.: Alberts 2008: 47–60). Blanks skaidri nenošķir un nerunā par Otro atmodu. Viņš aplūko kādu garāku procesu no 1855. līdz 1920. gadam, kurā bija uzplaukuma (atmodas) un pagrimuma brīži, bet kas latviešu tautu no anonīmas un apspiestas zemnieku kārtas "miera stāvokļa" 19. gadsimta vidū novedis līdz suverenitātei Brīvības cīņu noslēgumā, līdz valstij, iespējai lietot un attīstīt savu politiku, valodu, kultūru, izglītības sistēmu u. tml. (Blanks 1970). Jāatzīmē, ka publiski un anonīmi ideju par suverēnu Latviju žurnālā "Proletārietis" jau 1903. gadā pirmais bija paudis jurists, Jaunās strāvas dalībnieks, politiķis un diplomāts Miķelis Valters (1874–1968; Drēģeris 2020).

Kopš 20. gadsimta 20. gadiem Blanka ieviestais jēdziens "atmoda" stabili saistījās ar jaunlatviešu darbību un tautiskās atmodas laikmetu 19. gadsimta otrajā pusē. Jaunlatviešiem un tautiskās atmodas laikmetam ir pievērsušies dažādu nozaru un disciplīnu pētnieki, un publicētie materiāli interesentiem ir viegli pieejami. Ir iznākuši gan avotu krājumi par tautas atmodas laikmetu (sk., piemēram, Tentelis 1939; Zelče 1997–2007), gan plašāki apcerējumi par ievērojamākajiem jaunlatviešiem (Jansons 1939). Par Otro atmodu 20. gadsimta 20.–30. gados netiek runāts. Vien pa

retam un pastarpināti ir sastopams atmodas jēdziena lietojums, kas provizoriski varētu būt saistāms ar Otrās atmodas laikmetu. Tā žurnālists un literāts Ernests Arnis (īstajā vārdā Runcis, 1888–1943) rakstījis par vairākiem nozīmīgiem latviešu politiskās atmodas darbiniekiem, kā Miķeli Valteru, Ernestu Rolavu (1874–1907), Jāni Akurateru (1876–1937), Apsesdēlu (īstajā vārdā Augusts Apsītis, 1880–1932; Arnis 1934). Tomēr šo darbu var uzskatīt par hronoloģiski paplašinātu Otrās atmodas laikmeta un personu raksturojumu, kas ietver 1905. gada notikumus. Ideja par 1905. gada revolūciju kā Otrās atmodas sākumu sastopama arī turpmāk. Rakstnieks Miervaldis Birze (īstajā vārdā Bērziņš, 1921–2000) savas dienasgrāmatas 1989. gada 1. decembra ierakstā Pāvila Roziša (1889–1937) romānu “Valmieras puikas” (1936) raksturo kā tik latvisku, ka to tulkot, lai saprastu citas tautas, nav iespējams, un kā latviešu Otrās tautas atmodas 1905. gadā romānu (Birze 1990: 12). Vēl lielākam intereses trūkumam Otrā atmoda līdz ar visu, kas veda līdz neatkarīgai Latvijas Republikai, tika pakļauta Latvijas PSR okupācijas laikā. Tomēr šī perioda beigās Dziesmotās revolūcijas ietvarā parādījās interese par Otro atmodu jeb, precīzāk – par šo iepriekš padomju cenzūras noliegto laikmetu, ko labākajā gadījumā līdz tam attēloja kariķēti, nicinoši un selektīvi. Tad sporādiski iezīmējās lakoniski mēģinājumi starp vispāratzīto Pirmo atmodu jeb tautiskās atmodas laikmetu un Trešo atmodu, kuras liecinieki tobrīd bijām, rast vietu arī Otrajai atmodai.

Trešās atmodas spilgtākā izpausme ir Baltijas tautu manifestācija un dziesma kā nevardarbīgās pretošanās veids, tādēļ parasti tā saukta par Dziesmoto revolūciju. Dziesmotā revolūcija ir poētisks apzīmējums procesam, kura laikā 1986.–1991. gadā tika atjaunota Baltijas valstu – Igaunijas, Latvijas un Lietuvas – neatkarība (Šmidchens 2024). Latvijā šo periodu ir ierasts saukt arī par Trešo atmodu. Šīs atmodas politiķe Sandra Kalniete ir aicinājusi nepazaudēt polifonisku skatījumu, domājot par šo pārmaiņu laiku:

Rakstiet, nedomājiet par izteiksmes neveiklību! Tāpat kā to darījuši tie tūkstoši zemnieku, kas atsaucās pirmās Atmodas aicinājumam un uzdevumam vākt tautas izklienātās garamantas. K. Barona Dainu skapis ir satriecoša liecība par mūsu tautas līdzatbildību un pūlēm saglabāt savu vēsturisko atmiņu. Šīs ar neveiklu roku rakstītās lapiņas ir paglābušas no iznīcības vērtības, kas ir mūsdienu latviešu nācijas pamats. Tas pamats, uz kura ētiskajām normām balstoties mēs astoņdesmito gadu beigās apvienojāmies dziesmotajā revolūcijā. Rakstiet, lai vēsturei saglabātu patiesību par latviešu tautas trešo ATMODU. (Kalniete 2015)

Reizē viņa ir skaidri vilkusi saikni starp Pirmo un Trešo atmodu, formulējot līdzīgu tautas lomu – piedalīties personisko pieredzes stāstu rakstīšanā par Trešās atmodas notikumiem, personām, pieredzējumu.

1992. gadā akadēmiķis Jānis Stradiņš (1933–2019) izdeva grāmatu “Trešā atmoda”, tajā apkopojot 1988. gada runas un rakstus (pievienotas arī vairākas runas

no diviem nākamajiem gadiem, kas saskaņojas ar 1988. gada saturu). Ievadā viņš atsaucas uz savu runu "Jādzīvo. Jācīnās kopā" Rakstnieku savienības paplašinātajā plēnumā, kurā, kā viņš domā (un atvainojas, ja tā tas nav), pirmais lietojis terminu "Trešā atmoda" (Stradiņš 1992: 55):

Ir jāsaglabā nācijas identitāte, pašreiz taču mēs esam liecinieki trešajai latviešu "Tautiskajai atmodai", mums ir jāaudzina bērni un mazbērni kultūras un humānisma izpratnē. (Stradiņš 2010: 190–191)

Ar to viņš iebilda viedoklim, ka tolaik notiekošais tiek saukts par Otro atmodu, proti, ar tautiskās atmodas jēdzienu jeb Pirmo atmodu ir saistīta tikai jaunlatviešu darbība 19. gadsimta 60.–70. gados, bet notikumi, kas spilgti aizsākās 20. gadsimta 80. gadu beigās, ir Otrā atmoda. Stradiņš uzstāj, ka

arī 1915.–1919. gads, latviešu strēlnieku pulku organizēšanās, Šveices emigrācijas un Krievijas bēgļu komitejas darbošanās, Latvijas Republikas proklamēšana un brīvības cīņas ietveramas jēdzienā "otrā tautiskā atmoda", jo latviešu tautas vairākumam toreiz bija jāmostas no nacionālās apātijas un nihilisma, tāpēc ka ceļu lauza sākumā autonomijas, bet drīz vien (jau pēc 1–1,5 gadiem) Latvijas neatkarības ideja (Stradiņš 1992: 7).

Tātad Stradiņš latviešu tautas vēsturē saredz vēl vienu spilgtu tautiskās atmodas laiku, ko piedāvā uzskatīt par Otro atmodu, iepriekšējā citējumā nosaucot Otrās atmodas "sastāvdaļas". Tas tika uztverts, un Latvijas Tautas frontes programmā, kas publicēta 1989. gada 11. septembrī, teikts:

Aizvadītā gada laikā LTF kļuvusi arī par nozīmīgu latviešu tautas trešās atmodas spēku. Pirmā atmoda pagājušā gadsimta otrajā pusē latviešus pacēla civilizēto tautu vidū, izveidoja nacionālo inteliģenci, politiķus un saimnieciskos darbiniekus. Otrās atmodas gaitā radās neatkarīgā demokrātiskā Latvijas Republika, kas latviešu nācijai nodrošināja agrāk nebijušu uzplaukumu [...]. (Latvijas Tautas frontes programma 1989: 2)

Var uzskatīt, ka jēdziens "Trešā atmoda" sabiedrībā ieviesās un nostiprinājās, tas plaši lietots publicistikā, atmiņu un memuāru literatūrā (Ziemeiņš 2000; Veidemane 2004; Īvāns, Znotiņš 2013), tiek izmantots arī pētniecībā (Taurēns 2022: 101–114), to skaitā promocijas darbos (Ārdava-Āboliņa 2015; Procevska 2015), notikušas konferences (Krišjāņa Barona konference 2021), iznākuši komentēti avotu krājumi (Jundzis 2013–2015). Viena no redzamākajām Trešās atmodas personībām un Latvijas Tautas frontes vadītājs Dainis Īvāns, atskatoties un interpretējot notikušo un domājot par nākotni, izteicis formulu: 1) Dziesmu svētki – tiek radīta Latvija, 2) Neatkarības karš – tiek izcīnīta valsts, 3) Trešā atmoda – tiek atgūta neatkarība (Miķelsone 2021).

Stradiņš noraida 1905. gada revolūcijas iekļaušanu Otrajā atmodā, jo tautas noskaņās tolaik dominēja sociālās atbrīvošanās moments, bet nacionālajam momentam bija pakārtota nozīme. Viņš atzīst Miķeļa Valtera, Ernesta Rolava, Jāņa Akuratera, Kārļa Skalbes (1879–1945) u. c. prasību pēc Latvijas autonomijas jau līdz 1913. gadam,

tomēr tikai Pirmais pasaules karš un 1915.–1917. gada latviešu strēlnieku cīņas tautas autonomijas un pašnoteikšanās ideju izplatīja ievērojamā latviešu tautas daļā, kur tā kļuva par nacionālu ideju (Stradiņš 1992: 7, zemsvītras piezīme). Acīmredzot padomju ideoloģijas iespaidā, kas 1905. gada revolūciju konstruēja kā sociālu procesu, ko vadījuši internacionālisti (Bērziņš 2006b: 561), viņš atsacījās to iekļaut Otrās atmodas konceptā. Stradiņam atmoda ir nevis sociālas, bet izteikti nacionālas ievirzes jēdziens, nacionāls pacēlums (Stradiņš 1992: 330), tas pauž rūpes par tautas un nācijas sākotnēju ieraudzīšanu un konstruēšanu, tās vēlāku valstiskumu un tā atjaunošanas centienus 20. gadsimta 80. gadu beigās.¹ Šis tomēr nav viennozīmīgs jautājums. Par to, vai 1905. gada revolūcija Latvijā ir vairāk "nacionāla" vai "sociāla", ir daudz spriests (plašāk par šo un citiem pretrunīgiem un izvērtējošiem skatījumiem sk. rakstu krājumā "1905. gads Latvijā: 100. Pētījumu un starptautiskas konferences materiāli, 2005. gada 11.–12. janvāris"; Bērziņš (red.) 2006). Tā, piemēram, vēsturnieks Jānis Bērziņš raksta, ka līdzās sociālajiem un politiskajiem mērķiem, kas latviešu un Krievijas revolucionārajiem spēkiem bija kopīgi, "latviešu tautai tā reizē bija arī nacionāla atbrīvošanās cīņa no krievu carisma un vācu muižnieku apspiestības (Bērziņš 2006a: 10), "tādējādi jaunlatviešu aizsāktais latviešu tautas atmodas pirmais posms noslēdzās tieši ar 1905. gada revolūcijas notikumiem" (Bērziņš 2006a: 13). Līdzās sociālajām un politiskajām prasībām nacionālu raksturu 1905. gada revolūcija ieguva rusifikācijas kontekstā (Stranga 2006: 570). Latviešu politologs un politiķis Ivars Ijabs ir piedāvājis uz to raudzīties kā antikoloniālu kustību (Ijabs 2023: 22). Turklāt "revolūcija būtiski aktivizēja latviešu "politisko iztēli" – jaunās brīvības atmosfērā tapa jaunas, radikālas idejas, partijas un projekti. Vienlaikus revolūcijas laiks sniedza latviešiem arī pirmo politiskās pašorganizācijas pieredzi – tam par ilustrāciju kalpo tautskolotāju un pagastu delegātu kongresi" (turpat). Un šī jau ir "politiskas atmodas" programma, kas pamatoti liek raudzīties uz 1905. gada revolūciju Latvijā kā Otrās atmodas sākumu. Lai arī 1905. gadā nebija prasīta suverēna Latvija, šī revolūcija noteikti ir ceļa sagatavotāja tai Latvijas Republikai, kas tika nodibināta 13 gadus vēlāk. 1917. gada pavasarī Jānis Akuraters, rakstot savu revolūcijas laika (1905–1908) atmiņu grāmatu, uzsvēra, ka 1905. gada revolūcija

bija vairāk atmoda kā revolūcija. Tauta ievilka elpu savās gadsimtu nospiestās krūtīs. Un šīs elpas vilciens pārskrēja pār visu Krieviju. Tauta sajuta sevi pirmoreiz apzinīgi kā dzīvu kopotu organismu un saprata arī savas tiesības.

Lietuvēns, kas gadsimtiem ilgi audzis un barojies no tautas ķermeņa, no jauna pārspēja lielo atmodu un uzgūlās atkal uz mūsu laukiem, mūsu darba un kultūras. Bet sapni vairs nevarēja izdzēst. Tas dzīvoja, izauga un kā ledus palos nogrūda verdzību no sevis (Akuraters 1924: 6).

1 Atmodai viņš nepieskaita arī 1956.–1959. gada "atkusni", kas skāra vien daļēji sabiedrības valdošo daļu (Stradiņš 1992: 7, zemsvītras piezīme).

Akurateram 1905. gada revolūcija Latvijā ir “ķermenisks”, “fizioloģisks” notikums, viņš to attēlo kā tautas pamošanos no gadsimtu miega un patstāvīgas elpošanas sākšanu, kad tauta sevi sajuta kā vienotu ķermeni, viņš runā par ienaidnieka augšanu un barošanas no “tautas ķermeņa”, par tautas kopīgajiem sapņiem un tiesībām, palīem (dabas varenības izpausme) un verdzības nogrūšanu no sava ķermeņa.

1988. gadā Jānis Stradiņš ne tikai tolaik notiekošo nosauca par Trešo atmodu un izvirzīja Otrās atmodas jēdzienu, īsi ieskicējot tā galvenos komponentus, bet arī Raini pasludināja par Otrās atmodas nozīmīgāko personu. Grāmatas “Trešā atmoda” 25. lappusē ir publicēts Raiņa portrets ar parakstu – “Rainis (1865–1929), dižais latviešu dzejnieks un domātājs, viens no “otrās atmodas” galvenajiem rosinātājiem” (Stradiņš 1992: 25). Arī citviet Stradiņš ir norādījis uz Raiņa lomu, piemēram, rakstot, ka nacionālais pacēlums Pirmā pasaules kara gados un Februāra un Oktobra revolūcijas laikā ir Raiņa iezīmēti (turpat: 62), un “mūsu Brīvības pieminekli vainago trīs zvaigznes, kas sākotnēji simbolizēja mūsu ilgi šķirto treju vēsturisko novadu – Vidzemes, Kurzemes un Latgales vienotību. Šodien mēs varam šīs zvaigznes tulkot arī citādi: kā trejus latvju nacionālās atmodas lokus – Ausekļa atmodu, Raiņa atmodu un mūsu tagadējo atmodu” (turpat: 71). Jāteic, ka Stradiņš šīs tēzes nav pamatojis un arī plašāk nav izteicies. Nojaušams, ka visa Raiņa darbība kopumā tiek uztverta kā tāda, kas ir būtiski iespaidojusi Otrās atmodas nacionālo raksturu.

Līdzās Rainim, kas nodēvēts par vienu no galvenajiem Otrās atmodas rosinātājiem, par otru nozīmīgāko tiek uzskatīts politiķis Kārlis Ulmanis (1877–1942):

Ulmanis bija latviešu tautas otrās atmodas izcilākais politiķis. Apvienodams sevī K. Valdemāra pragmatisko prātu un Kronvaldu Ata karsto nacionālismu, Ulmanis turpināja jaunlatviešu iesākto. (Turpat: 81)

Jāatzīst, ka Stradiņa apgalvojumi par Raini un Ulmani ir publicistiska rakstura apgalvojumi, neizvērsti, lakoniski, Rainis bieži tiek saukts par ģēniju, kura “diženumu ir atzinuši visi tautas slāņi, visas varas, visi laiki” (turpat: 82). Jā, Rainis ir derējis visiem, varbūt tāpēc, ka ir gan dižs, gan arī ārkārtīgi pretrunīgs, mainīgs, bet vai Rainis ir Otrās atmodas rosinātājs? Jāteic, ka šī ideja ir palikusi neievērota un nepētīta. Vien daži lakoniski vērtējumi. Tā, piemēram, rakstot par Raini un Aspaziju (1865–1943), saikni ar atmodām ir ievērojis un uzvērīs dzejnieks Imants Auziņš (1937–2013):

Abi dzejnieki saņēma pirmās nacionālās atmodas mantojumu pagājušajā gadsimtā, nesa to tālāk cauri revolūcijām un brīvības cīņām, piepildot otro atmodu, kuras kulminācija bija neatkarīgas demokrātiskas Latvijas Republikas nodibināšana 1918. gadā. (Auziņš 1990: 4)

Kā tieši viņi piepildīja Otro atmodu, paliek neatklāts!

Kopā savelkot, ir jājautā – kas Raiņa dzīvē un darbos ir tas, kas viņu ļautu uzskatīt par Otrās atmodas rosinātāju, darbinieku, nozīmīgu personu? 1928. gadā rakstniece Zenta Mauriņa (1897–1978) pauž:

Pirmā atmoda radīja nemirstīgo Lāčplēša tēlu, kas ne tikai simbolizē latvju tautas spēku un likteni, bet arī Pumpura laikmetu vispār. Tagad ir nākusi otra, lielāka atmoda, bet kur ir viņas tēls? Dzīvē un vēsturē redzam varoņus, bet jaunākā literatūrā tādu nav. [...] Tāpat kā liela stila varoņu, nav mums arī dzīves veidotāju, ir tikai dzīves dzīvotāji un dzīves sapņotāji. Savrup stāv Raiņa varoņi, tie neietilpst nevienā no minētām trim kategorijām. (Mauriņa 1928: 631)

Vai Raiņa darbos viņa neatrada meklēto? Kādā kategorijā ir ietilpināmi Raiņa varoņi? Rainis ir “iekšpusē” vai “ārpusē”, kopā vai viens, ar vai savrup?

Vai Rainis ir Otrās atmodas nozīmīgs darbinieks?

1914. gada 28. jūlijā sākās Lielais (Pirmais pasaules) karš, kas ilga līdz 1918. gada 11. novembrim. Rainis un Aspazija šajā laikā dzīvoja Šveicē. Pirmā pasaules kara hronoloģijā ietilpināmas arī iespējamās latviešu Otrās atmodas galvenās norises: 1) karadarbības izraisītā došanās bēgļu gaitās 1915. gadā (it sevišķi no Kurzemes un Zemgales), uzņēmumu un strādnieku evakuācija uz Krieviju, kas radīja apstākļus dažādu ar bēgļu aprūpi saistītu organizāciju veidošanai, kas primāri rūpējās par bēgļu iespējām saņemt atbalstu un palīdzību, darba iespējām, izglītības nodrošināšanu u. c.; 2) latviešu strēlnieku bataljonu (vēlāk pulku) organizēšana un kaujas pret Vācijas impērijas armiju Latvijas teritorijā; 3) sabiedriskas un politiskas aktivitātes Šveices latviešu emigrantu vidē (“Latviešu komiteja Šveicē” u. c.); 4) Latvijas Neatkarības pasludināšana 1918. gada 18. novembrī un 5) Latvijas Neatkarības karš jeb Brīvības cīņas 1919.–1920. gadā. Šiem notikumiem raksturīga ilgstamība (tie turpinās divus līdz četrus gadus) un mobilitāte (kustība, kustīgums). Pirmkārt, tā ir fiziska kustība, piespiedu vai brīvprātīga došanās projām no mājām un vietas, kur dzimta dzīvojusi vairākās paaudzēs, ierastiem darbiem, pienākumiem, vides. Tam ieņemot neierasta ainava, svešas tautas, citas reliģijas, valodas, kultūras, tradīcijas, neskaidrība par nākotni, dzīvības un veselības apdraudējums. Tam visam ir jāspēj pielāgoties, jāspēj to izprast un ar to sadzīvot. Līdz ar to tā ir garīga kustība, domāšanas ātruma maiņa, atbildība un spēja pieņemt lēmumus, kas nebalstījās ierastajā, nepieciešamība darīt darbu, ko nedarīja iepriekšējās paaudzes – vecāki un vecvecāki, tā ir jauna pieredze, kas vairs neļaus dzīvot kā pirms tam. Tā ir vardarbīga un traumatiska iepriekšējās dzīves un pasaules kārtības izārdīšana, jauni meklējumi un sasniegumi, kas izvērtās sarežģīti, pretrunīgi un asiņaini, bet reizē arī veidoja tautu, kas nodibināja un aizsargāja savu valsti.

Kā šajos notikumos iesaistīts Rainis? Kurus un vai vispār kādus no tiem viņš

iedvesmojis, izraisījis, vadījis? Vai Rainis, atrodoties trimdā Šveicē, jēlkādi varēja palīdzēt latviešu bēgļiem? Vai Rainis bija iesaistīts latviešu strēlnieku bataljonu dibināšanā? Jā, viņš to veidošanu apsveica, juta līdzī, varbūt pat uzminēja viņu vēsturisko nozīmi, bet kā dibināšana, tā varonīgās strēlnieku cīņas notika bez Raiņa. Latvijas Republika 1918. gada 18. novembrī tika pasludināta bez Raiņa klātbūtnes. Kā ar Latvijas Neatkarības karu jeb Brīvības cīņām? Te, protams, viņa poēmas "Daugava" lielais iespaids un viņa kā dzejnieka un dramaturga talanta spēks un iedvesmojums:

Daļa Anša Gulbja izdotās grāmatas metiena pēc Latvijas valdības norādījuma tika nogādāta tieši frontes pirmajās līnijās – Rīgas aizstāvju rokās. Un Rainis tika sadzirdēts. No publikācijas publikācijā līdz pat šai dienai pārceļo lēģenda, it kā "Daugava" pēc kāda vārdā nenosaukta militārā speciālista apgalvojuma izraisot latviešu karavīros spēju cīņasspara pacēlumu, esot kļuvusi pat par vienu no izšķirošajiem faktoriem "baskāju armijas" uzvarā pār bermontiešiem. (Grīnuma 2017: 860)

Poēma iesākta jau 1915. gadā, tās lielākā daļa sarakstīta 1916. gada jūlijā un augustā. Darbu pie poēmas Rainis turpināja 1917. gadā, kad saņēma ziņas par Vācijas armijas Rīgas ieņemšanu 1. septembrī, arī 1918. un 1919. gadā. Poēma publicēta 1919. gada septembrī – īsi pirms kaujām pret lielvalstu imperiālismā balstīto Bermonta karaspēku. Poēmas "Daugava" 4000 eksemplārus izpirka divās nedēļās, latviešu karavīri to lasīja, tā aizrāva. Tā ir ne tikai Raiņa reakcija uz dramatiskajiem Pirmā pasaules kara notikumiem (Kalnačs 2001: 49–61), bet arī Raiņa lielums un saikne ar iespējamo Otro atmodu. Vēl bija darbība "Latviešu komitejā Šveicē", prezidenta pienākumus pildot un piedaloties šajā "pirmajā demokrātijas" mēģinājumā (Matīsa 2006a: 151–180; Matīsa 2006b: 61–119). Šādi lakoniski pārlūkojot, Raiņa loma nešķiet liela, katrā ziņā viņš neapvienoja šos procesus, tie ir savstarpēji neatkarīgi, cits citu nomainoši, ar atšķirīgām iesaistītajām personām un nozīmīgākajiem darbiniekiem. Tomēr vairākos no šiem procesiem Raiņa klātbūtne ir būtiska, viņa novērtējums un atbalsts ir bijis svarīgs, viņu tiecās iesaistīt, jo viņš iemiesoja visu centienu galamērķi, pat ja īsti ne Rainis, ne laikabiedri konkrētā laika plūdumā to skaidri neapzinājās.

Viens no tādiem laikmeta simboliem ir latviešu strēlnieks. Latviešu strēlnieku bataljonus Krievijas impērijas armijā sāka veidot 1915. gada augustā. To sākotnēji paredzētie uzdevumi bija izlūkošana, tulkošana, saimnieciskais atbalsts, bet pirmās kaujas ar Vācijas armiju jau 1915. gada oktobrī parādīja, ka viņi ir ļoti motivēti karavīri, kas gatavi aizstāvēt tēvzemi. 1916. gada marta, jūlija un sevišķi Ziemassvētku un Janvāra kaujās (pēc jaunā kalendāra 1917. gada 5.–11. janvāris un 23. janvāris–2. februāris) strēlnieki, ciešot lielus zaudējumus, apliecināja savas militārās prasmes un varonību. Latviešu sabiedrība Rīgā, citviet Latvijā, Krievijā un ārvalstīs sekoja līdzī strēlnieku gaitām, vāca ziedojumus un aizvien vairāk sāka tos uzskatīt par "mūsu karavīriem". 1916. gadā iznāca trīs grāmatas, kas saistāmas ar latviešu strēlnieku bataljonu izveidošanu. Vienā no tām "Latviešu strēlnieku bataljoni" tās sastādītājs

Līgotņu Jēkabs (īstajā vārdā Jēkabs Roze, 1874–1942) kā nozīmīgu uzskata Raiņa reakciju un šī notikuma vērtējumu, atzīmējot, ka jau 1915. gada novembrī Rainis no Šveices ar valsts domniekam Jānim Goldmanim (1874–1919) piesūtītu vēstuli sveicina latviešu strēlnieku bataljonus (Līgotņu Jēkabs 1916: 123). Odesas latviešiem rakstītajā vēstulē 1916. gada 30. maijā Rainis formulē strēlnieku uzdevumu:

Es apsveicu latviešu bataljonus kā brīvās Latvijas sagatavotājus, kā mūsu tautas gara patstāvības modinātājus, kā mūsu slavas paudējus. Aiz bataljoniem lai mīt jauna latvju kultūra visā spēkā un spožumā! (Līgotņu Jēkabs 1916: 123)

Publicistikā šis Raiņa novēlējums ticis saistīts Otro atmodu:

Uz mūžiem paliekamu vietu latviešu tautas un pasaules vēsturē ieņems latviešu strēlnieki, kas, izpildot Raiņa novēlējumu, atnesa mūsu tautas Otro atmodu un radīja iespējas mūsu valsts neatkarības iegūšanai 1918. gadā. (Hartmanis 2009: 14)

Strēlnieki negāja kaujā par Raini vai Latviju, viņi gāja pret vāciešiem, bet kaut kur viņu pārliecībā, izglītībā, identitātē bija jaušams Rainis un Latvija. 1916. gada 6. jūlijā 8. Valmieras latviešu strēlnieku pulka strēlnieks Kārlis Eglītis (1877–1960) savā dienasgrāmatā ierakstīja:

Pamostas gaišs saules rīts. Pat liелgabali apklost, bet kaujas lauks noklāts kritušo kareivju kaudzēm. Varenais zaļais mežs aplauzts un izdarināts. Pat brašie simtgadīgie ozoli nometuši dažu labu kuplu zaru un arī viņu cietais koks saurbts metāla šķembām un lodēm. Bet mīkstās liepas un vītoli jau puskailiem stumbriem. Krituši un laužti gan cilvēki un koki, bet dzīvība paliek jo varenāka, jo skaistāka. Ļaujiet laiku, un milzu koku stāvi atkal zaļos un asnus dzīs, bet cilvēka dēli jaunām, neskaitāmām ķēdēm spiežas kritušo vietā. Jo tuvāka nāve, jo gaviļejošāka dzīve, jo skaidrāka apziņa par brīvību un uzvaru, jo aizraujošāka, brīnišķīga cīņa.

Melnais bruņinieks, tu velti gaidi mūsu ieročus noliekam! Nē! "Vēl cīņa nav beigta un nebeigsies! Tev, Lāčplēš, Spīdola palīgā ies!". (Eglītis 1915–1917)

1915. gada 9. decembrī Kastaņolā Rainis raksta vēstuli vienam no pirmajiem latviešu operdziedātājiem un koncertdziedātājiem Jēkabam Karpam (1888–pēc 1941), izsakot apbrīnu par viņa drosmi brīvprātīgi iestāties itāliešu armijā (Karps kara sākumā studēja mūziku Milānā). Rainis vēstulē pauž, ka jebkuras tautas cīņa par neatkarību ir svēta un taisna lieta, izsakot arī cerību, ka latvieši vienīgi garīgās konkurences ceļā izveidos Latvijas autonomiju zem krievu ērgļa (Rainis 1986: 84). 1916. gada 17. janvāra vēstulē Karpu, kurš ir izteicis vēlmi pārcelties uz latviešu strēlnieku bataljoniem, Rainis cenšas uzmundrināt ar vārdiem:

Mēs, latvieši, esam cietuši 700 gadus, izjūzdami briesmas nepārtraukti, mēs tagad esam pieraduši, sagatavoti pret vēl lielākām briesmām, ja aicinās tēvzeme, kultūra, taisnība. Esiet Jūs īsts latvietis, kas nozīmē to pašu ko varonis. (Rainis 1986: 90)

Tātad Rainis pilnībā un viennozīmīgi atbalstīja latviešu strēlnieku bataljonu veidošanu un saredzēja viņu izcilo lomu "patstāvības modināšanā".

Pēc Šveices trimdā pavadītajiem 15 gadiem 1920. gada aprīlī Rainis kopā ar Aspaziju atgriezās Rīgā, ko slepenībā atstāja 1905. gada decembrī. "Tā bija svētku diena visai latviešu tautai un pašam Rainim. Tā neviens latvietis, dzimtenē atgriežoties, nav sagaidīts – ne agrāk, ne pēc tam." (Kalniņš 1999: 68) "Tālajā Šveicē dzejnieki kļuvuši par tautas gaišāko sapņu simbolu." (Viese 1990: 150) Maija beigās viņš līdz ar citiem izciliem latviešu kultūras cilvēkiem piedalījās kritušo latviešu strēlnieku piemiņas pasākumā pie Silenieku kapiem netālu no Ložmetējkalna, kas līdz ar Nāves salu ir strēlnieku Golgātas ceļa simboli. Uzmanā klātesošajiem Rainis uzsvēra strēlnieku pieredzi dažādām šķirām, kas tomēr nav liedzis viņiem vienoties cīņā pēc viena mērķa. Tāpat viņš izteica prieku par Krišjāņa Barona klātbūtni – tā apstiprina jauno vēstures saiti starp tautas gara mantām (un Pirmo atmodu) un strēlniekiem, kas no jauna iedibina tautā vienību. Silenieku kapos un citur dusošie latviešu strēlnieki "uzdodot stāvēt par brīvību un stiprumu, bet miera un kultūras līdzekļiem" (Rainis 1993: 116).

Rainis atbalstīja latviešu strēlnieku bataljonu dibināšanu 1915. gada augustā (sk. Cielēns 2017: 60). Ar to viņš ir nacionāls. Ar to viņš novērsās no sociāldemokrātu internacionālisma, kas runāja par apspiesto sacelšanos pret apspiedējiem, nevis par tautības un valsts patriotisma principiem (Šiliņa 2022: 211). Pirmā pasaules kara sākšanās Rainim bija ne tikai vilšanās cilvēcē, bet tiešāk un konkrētāk – vilšanās sociāldemokrātiskajā internacionālē. Rainim kopš Jaunās strāvas laikiem pamatšķīra – strādnieki un zemnieki – cīnās par darba tautu lielo salīgumu un Eiropas kultūras nāciju vienotību (Priedīte 1989: 276). Tomēr, karam sākoties, pamatšķīra izrādījās nevis internacionālisti, bet gan nacionālisti, kas nostājās savu valstu pusē, un tā vietā, lai kopīgi ar citu valstu strādniekiem cīnītos pret kapitālistiem un buržuijiem, tie kaujas laukā nogalina cits citu, aizstāvēd savu valsti. Rainis jutās vīlies tajā atbalstā, ko savām valstīm karā izrādīja sociāldemokrāti:

Mani visstiprāk ķēra vācu biedru nodevība, kaut gan to varēja paredzēt; bet dzejniekam jau pēc amata vajag cerēt un ticēt, un es, to zinādam, tomēr biju cerējis, ka genoši kaut cik pretosies karam; viņiem būtu krievi un franči sekojuši ar kļaju revolūciju. Vāci tapa par nacionālistiem, un nu mums arī par tādiem jābūt šo laiku. (Rainis 1986: 26)

1914. gada 3. augusta vēstulē latviešu veterinārārstam, mikrobiologam un politiķim Augustam Kirhenšteinam (1872–1963) Rainis secina, ka Eiropas sociāldemokrāti kara jautājumā nostājušies savu valstu pozīcijās un ir gatavi aizstāvēt katrs savu tēviju. Vācu (sociāldemokrātu) partija kara sākumā neizvēlējās revolūciju, bet gan brīvprātīgi kļuva nacionālistiska, ar mērķi vācu strādnieku problēmas risināt uz pakļauto kaimiņu tautu rēķina (turpat: 8). Tā acīm redzami no sociāldemokrātu starptautiskās kopības Eiropā nekas nav sanācis, un Rainis retoriski jautā: "...un mums jāskatās, vai tiešām mums labāk zem vācu junkuriem vai krievu čīnavniekiem"



1. att. Rainis kritušo karavīru piemiņas brīdī Silenieku kapos pie Ložmetējkalna, 1920. gada 24. maijs. Stāv pirmajā rindā no kreisās: 7. Voldemārs Ozols, 8. Krišjānis Barons, 9. Edvarts Virza, 10. Rainis, 11. Biruta Skujeniece, 13. Kārlis Skalbe, 14. Viktors Eglītis. Eduarda Gaiķa foto.
Avots: Latvijas Kara muzejs, stikla negatīvs, 2-51242/3675-FN

Fig. 1. Rainis at the commemoration of the fallen soldiers at the Silenieki cemetery near Ložmetējkalna, May 24, 1920. Standing in the first row from the left: 7. Voldemārs Ozols, 8. Krišjānis Barons, 9. Edvarts Virza, 10. Rainis, 11. Biruta Skujeniece, 13. Kārlis Skalbe, 14. Viktors Eglītis. Photo by Eduards Gaiķis.
Source: Latvian War Museum, glass negative, 2-51242/3675-FN

(turpat: 8). Rainim vilšanās karā ir ļoti konkrēta – tā ir vilšanās vācu sociāldemokrātijā, kas nostājās kara pusē. Tas viņam “atraisa rokas” – viņš var būt latviešu pusē, Krievijas revolūcijas pusē (Šiliņa 2022: 211).

Rainis cerēja uz Krievijas uzvaru karā, uz demokrātiskas Krievijas izveidošanos, tad tās sastāvā būs autonoma Latvija. Viņš pauž, ka jācer uz Krievijas revolūciju, kas sakaus krievu militarismu, vāju un cietušu jau 1905. gada revolūcijas laikā. “Nonākot pilnīgā vācu baronu jūgā, latviešu nācija tūlīt ies bojā.” (turpat: 27) 1915. gada 22. jūnija vēstulē vēsturniekam un emigrantam Šveicē kopš 1905. gada revolūcijas Jānim Krauzem (1863–1938?) Rainis norāda, ka latviešos ir jāizsauc patstāvīgas tautas apziņa, “kurai nepieciešama arī patstāvīga dzīve, garīgi un politiski” (turpat: 48). Sociāldemokrātijai ir vajadzīga brīva tauta, savu mērķi tā var sasniegt

tikai caur internacionāli, kas pamatojas tautībā, beznācijas ļaužu nav (turpat: 48, 74), "partijai pēc mana uzskata vajadzēja būt ne vien saimnieciskai un politiskai, bet arī ētiskai un garīgai, un filozofiskai" (turpat: 72). 1917. gada 4. aprīlī Rainis raksta Krievijas Valsts domes domniekiem Jānim Goldmanim un Jānim Zālītim (1875–1955), aicinot tos nekavējoties pasludināt Latvijas politisko autonomiju, sasaukt latviešu satversmes sapulci, atbrīvot Vidzemi, Latgali un Kurzemi no ārējiem ienaidniekiem, uzsverot, ka "mūsu cerība – demokrātiska, federatīva krievu republika" (turpat: 189). Rainis nav viens savā interesē par "lielo" politiku, kuras "centrā liekama Latvijas valstiskās autonomijas prasība" (Cielēns 2017: 44–45). Izšķiršanās starp Vāciju un Krieviju tiek uztverta kā izšķiršanās par latviešu tautas nākotni.

Viens no sava laika slavenākajiem pacifistiem franču rakstnieks Romēns Rolāns (1866–1944), norādot uz draudošajām pangermānisma un panslāvisma briesmām, esejā "Mazākais no diviem Jaunumiem: pangermānisms, panslāvisms" anonīmi publicēja Šveicē dzīvojošās Annas Rūmanes-Ķeniņas (1877–1950) emocionālo latviešu aizstāvības vēstuli. Raksts publicēts Šveices franču avīzes "*Journal de Geneve*" 1914. gada 10. oktobra numurā, izraisot plašāku rezonansi vācu, krievu un angļu presē. Varam pieņemt, ka Rainis šo rakstu bija lasījis, tāpat kā 1915. gada 15. septembrī turpat publicēto Rolāna vienu no svarīgākajiem pretkara darbiem esēju "Pāri kaujai" (*Au-dessus de la mêlée*). Šīs divas esejas un citi raksti ir tulkoti angļiski un 1916. gadā izdoti grāmatā "*Above the Battle*" Čikāgā (Rolland 1916). Par darba nozīmi liecina tā pārpublicēšana 2011. gadā, tādējādi tas turpina iespaidot arī mūsdienu domāšanu. Abos rakstos aplūkoti jautājumi, kas nodarbināja Raini.

Rolāna esēja ir emocionāla, krāšņa, spilgta, patētiska, personiska, bezbailīga, bet tomēr "no franču" pozīcijām un atbilde vācu "draugiem", tā ir saruna starp vāciešiem un francūžiem, kurā izskan arī Eiropas "mazo" tautu balss. Eseja iesākas ar savstarpējā naida kritiku, kas pārņēmis Eiropu. Francūzis Rolāns saka, ka jūt nepieciešamību saprast savus ienaidniekus vāciešus un viņu iemeslus, iedziļināties; ja to nedarīs, tad naida kļūs par mūsu pašu lielāko ienaidnieku. Kara apstākļos tā ir riskanta stratēģija: viegli iegūt savējo nosodījumu, ja centies izprast ienaidnieku. Tomēr Rolāns nebaidās. Viņa esejas un domāšanas avots ir vēstules, ko viņš saņem no visas Eiropas, no visām naidīgajām pusēm, tās demonstrē patriotisku deģsmi, savu notikumu izpratni un to, ka ikkatrs savu ienaidnieku uzskata par barbaru. Tā vācieši ir dziļi sašutusi, ka viņi tiek uzskatīti par Lielā kara aizsācējiem, ka viņiem tiek piedēvēta kara izraisīšana, pārkāpjot Beļģijas neitralitāti, un vispār – viņi nevis nopostīja, bet izglāba Lēvenas bibliotēku. Rolāns ar šo esēju tiecas atbildēt uz jautājumu, ko vēstulēs viņam ir uzdevuši vācieši, – kāpēc Francija ir noslēgusi vienošanos ar Krieviju? Rolāna atbilde ir neskaidra un tendencioza. Viņš neko daudz nezina par milzīgo un noslēpumaino Krieviju, bet draugi sociālisti liek viņam domāt, ka tā ir topoša sabiedrība

un, pārvarot cara patvaldību, tā būs brīnišķīga zeme. Viņš ir netaisns pret vāciešiem, apgalvojot, ka pēc Ludviga van Bēthovena, Gotfrīda Leibnica, Johana Volfanga fon Gētes, Frīdriha Nīčes pēdējās desmitgadēs viņi neko nav devuši Eiropas un pasaules kultūrai. Salīdzinājumā ar vāciešu nespēju krievi ir radījuši Ļevu Tolstoju un Fjodoru Dostojevski, kas nav baidījušies kritizēt carismu. Rolāns nostājas jaunās (sociālistiskās) Krievijas pusē, kas vēl ir nākotnes projekts, un šādā kontekstā viņš iekļauj Rūmanes-Ķeniņas vēstuli. Šī vēstule, neraugoties uz abu pušu despotismu, sauc pēc palīdzības pret Vācijas imperiālismu, raugot atrast nākotni demokrātiskā Krievijā. Viņa izvēlas Krieviju, pat neraugoties uz tās despotismu, un tas burtiski ir tāds kā arguments šajā neklātienēs sarunā ar vāciešu "draugiem", redz, vācieši un Prūsijas imperiālisms ir vēl sliktāks. Noslēguma rindkopā, kas sasummē un iekļauj arī Rūmanes-Ķeniņas vēstuli, ieraugāma centrālā doma – ir pienācis laiks Eiropas snobiskajām lielvarām (tolaik liela daļa no tām ir impērijas) ieklausīties to tautu balsīs, kas ir to ietekmētas vai vēlas tās pakļaut. Rolāns necer ne uz prūsiskā, ne cariskā imperiālisma saprātu, viņš cer uz "jaunās Krievijas" saprātu. Tā ir arī Raiņa pozīcija.

Nozīmīgs mēģinājums vērsties pret Vācijas imperiālistiskajiem plāniem Baltijā, kas Rietumos plaši tika popularizēti, bija "Latviešu komitejas Šveicē" (turpmāk – LKŠ) aptuveni gadu ilgusi darbība (1915–1916). LKŠ galvenais mērķis:

Aizstāvēt šie latviešu tautu kā patstāvīgu tautu ar savu valodu un kultūru un savu teritoriju – Latviju – pretī uzmācīgajam uzskatam, it kā tur būtu tikai vācu province un vācu kultūra. (Rainis 1917: 1)

Kaut arī komitejai neizdevās apvienot visus dažādo latviešu politisko uzskatu pārstāvjus, tā tomēr bija konkrētas idejas viens no izpaudumiem. Tās darbības laikā un pēc tam tās paustajām idejām izdevās piesaistīt vairākus Rietumu kultūras un zinātnes darbiniekus, kuru autoritāte bija nozīmīga latviešu stāvokļa pareizai skaidrošanai Rietumu politiķiem un sabiedrībai. Tas nebija maz, ņemot vērā pret latviešiem vērstās vācu melīgās propagandas milzīgos apmērus. Praktiskā darbībā Rainis tā bija iespēja pacelties pāri sociāldemokrātijas partejiskajiem principiem un kļūt par tiešām vienojošu nacionālu figūru, tomēr tas neizdevās, kļūstot par smagu triecienu, "kas viņu kā miesīgi, tā garīgi izsit no sliedēm uz ilgu laiku" (Grīnuma 2017: 773). Drīz pēc komitejas darbības izbeigšanās Rainis pats presē atzīst, ka viens no neveiksmes iemesliem ir sociāldemokrātu un pilsonisko partiju savstarpējā nespēja vienoties kopīga mērķa vārdā (Rainis 1917: 1).

1915. gada beigās Rainis negribīgi, bet tomēr kļuva par LKŠ prezidentu, būtībā visu aktīvo rīcību uzticot komitejas sekretārei Austrai Krauzei-Ozoliņai (1890–1941):

Latviešu emigrantu sabiedrībai Šveicē bija gluži skaidrs, ka tikai Rainim ir morālas tiesības vadīt LKŠ, ka tikai viņa vadībā komitejai ir cerības darboties efektīvi. (Matīsa 2006a: 153)

LKŠ darbība detalizēta aplūkota latviešu politoloģes Vitas Matīsas un literatūrzinātnieces Gundegas Grīnumas pētījumos (Matīsa 2006a: 153; Grīnuma 2017: 769–776 un citviet), tāpēc sīkāk šīs komitejas darbībai, kas ilga vienu gadu, nepievērsīšos. Šajā rakstā vēlos jautāt – kāds bija LKŠ iespaids uz latviešu Otro atmodu un ieguldījums tajā? Savstarpējās ķildas un partejiskās nesaskaņas neļāva realizēt daudzas ieceres, piemēram, netika sagatavoti un publicēti plašāki latviešu vēstures apcerējumi svešvalodās, kas stāstītu par “mūsu vēsturi no mūsu pozīcijām”. Atsevišķi raksti, ko LKŠ izdevās publicēt, neizraisīja plašāku starptautisku rezonansi un nepievērsa uzmanību latviešu (plašāk – Eiropas mazo tautu) jautājumam. Tomēr arī tas nav mazsvarīgi, jo bija nozīmīgs sabiedrisks starppartiju sadarbības mēģinājums un vairāku aktīvi iesaistīto cilvēku (Anna Rūmane-Ķeniņa, Austra Krauze-Ozoliņa, Fēlikss Cielēns u. c.) personiskās izaugsmes un pirmā parlamentārā tipa politiskās darbības pieredze, nespējot gan pārvarēt personisko nepatiku. Arī Rainim. LKŠ darbības izbeigšanos viņš izjuta kā atvieglojumu:

Tagad arī es varēšu skaitīties par atsvabinātu no pienākuma, kurš mani turēja un nelaida pie mana darba vairāk nekā gadu; varēšu brīvi uzelpot, cik ļaus vēl veselība – strādāt mana paša veidā priekš lieliem latviešu jautājumiem un piegriezties atkal literatūrai. (Rainis 1917: 1)

Tomēr, neraugoties uz šīs pieredzes neveiksmīgo raksturu, tas Rainim netraucēja iesaistīties politiskajā darbībā, atgriežoties Latvijā 1920. gadā, lai gan “piedalīšanās politikā sagādāja Rainim nepatīkšanas un pat ciešanas” (Cielēns 2017: 98). Raugoties no sabiedriskās un politiskās darbības pieredzes uzkrāšanas viedokļa, LKŠ darbības gads ir nozīmīgs solis, tā ir tā pati izaugsme, ko latvieši veica citviet – organizējot bēgļu palīdzības organizācijas vai strēlnieku bataljonus. Visos šajos procesos klāt ir kaut kāda papildu pievienotā vērtība, kustība, darbība, mērķtiecība, jaunas zināšanas, kas nodrošina visai straujas izmaiņas un ļauj gan atsevišķiem cilvēkiem, gan plašākām sociālām grupām sasniegt iepriekš negaidītus un neplānotus rezultātus.

Nobeigums

Jāsecina, ka Otrā atmoda ir pētniecībā reti lietots jēdziens, kas veidots Dziesmotās revolūcijas jeb Trešās atmodas kontekstā 20. gadsimta 80. gadu beigās. Ar to tolaik un vēlāk pamatā publicistikā tiecās aptvert vairākus nozīmīgus procesus no 1915. līdz 1920. gadam, kas noslēdzās ar Latvijas Republikas proklamēšanu un aizstāvēšanu Latvijas Neatkarības karā jeb Brīvības cīņās. Par Otrās atmodas nozīmīgākajiem komponentiem tiek uzskatīta Pirmā pasaules kara izraisītā latviešu došanās bēgļu gaitās uz citiem Latvijas novadiem vai Iekškrīeviju, strēlnieku bataljonu organizēšana un kaujas pret Vācijas armiju Rīgas pievārtē,

latviešu emigrantu sabiedriskā darbība Šveicē, cenšoties aizstāvēt latviešu tiesības uz savu zemi iepretim Vācijas koloniālajiem plāniem un piesaistot citu lielo Rietumu valstu uzmanību Eiropas mazo tautu jautājumiem, Latvijas Republikas proklamēšana un bruņota aizstāvēšana. Tomēr minētie procesi neveido kādu vienotu sistēmu, ko virzītu vienotas idejas un personas. Notikumiem gan raksturīga mobilitāte, jo cilvēki piespiedu kārtā vai brīvprātīgi devās prom no ierastās vides, darbiem, mainījās cilvēku attiecības, varas un ideoloģijas. Latviešu tauta dažos gados ne tikai zaudēja milzīgus resursus, bet arī ieguva jaunas zināšanas, prasmes, pieredzi un identitāti. Kā atzīmē Rūmane-Ķeniņa, domājot par Latvijas suverenitātes ideju un ierodoties Liepājā 1919. gada pavasarī Latvijas Republikai izšķirošā brīdī:

Sešus gadus biju bijuse prom no Latvijas. Bet Latvijas ideja bij pa to starpu spēji auguse un brieduse caur tautas neaprakstāmām ciešanām, caur latvju jauneklū un vīru neizmērojamo varonību. (Rūmane-Ķeniņa 1926: 12)

Par Otrās atmodas vienu no centrālajām figūrām ir piedāvāts uzskatīt dzejnieku un dramaturgu Raini. Sevišķi izteikti tas ir dominējis akadēmiķa Stradiņa runās un rakstos 20. gadsimta 80. gadu beigās. Rainis viņam ir sava veida kompromisa figūra, kas spēj ne tikai apvienot Otrās atmodas notikumus un procesus, bet arī pretrunas un pretrunīgumu Trešās atmodas pirmajos gados, sevišķi domājot par latviešu un citu tautu attiecībām Latvijā. Rakstu sagatavojot, secināts, ka Raiņa tieša un nozīmīga iesaiste ir konstatējama vien atsevišķos gadījumos un ka viņa darbība nav izšķirusi laikmeta norises. Svarīga ir bijusi pati Raiņa klātbūtne, interese, atbalsts, mudinājums. Vispilgtāk tas atklājās Raiņa izteiktajā atbalstā latviešu strēlnieku bataljonu organizēšanā un izprotot viņu vēsturisko lomu latviešu tautas pastāvēšanā nākotnē. Kopumā jāsecina, ka Raiņa nozīme Otrās atmodas kontekstā ir meklējama nevis sabiedriskajos centienos, bet dzejnieka un dramaturga lielumā, literārajā darbībā, tekstos, ko tauta lasīja un uztvēra kā pravietiskus un iedvesmojošus. Jaunās strāvas laiks, 1905. gada notikumi un Šveices trimda kopumā, ne tikai Pirmā pasaules kara gadi, radīja to "simbolisko" Raini, kas Rīgā tika sagaidīts 1920. gada 10. aprīlī.

Kopumā jāsecina, ka jēdziens "Otrā atmoda" ir reti izmantots, to varētu lietot kā vispārīgu laikmeta apzīmējumu, bet diez vai to var uzskatīt par monolītu procesu, ko tas pārklātu. Drīzāk ir jārunā par daudziem notikumiem, personām, kas dzīvoja un darbojās šajā laikmetā, par spilgtu uzplaukumu, kas rosināja jaunas idejas un centienus neatkarīgas valsts pastāvēšanas laikā. To pierāda arī līdzšinējā pētniecība, kas pievērsusies dziļai un vispusīgai šī Latvijas vēstures perioda pētīšanai un aprakstīšanai, nemeklējot kādu cauraudošu un vienojošu vadmotīvu. Otrās atmodas jēdziena ieviešana līdz šim nav radījusi papildu vērtību zinātniskajā izpētē. Šo konceptu var lietot kā poētisku laikmeta apzīmējumu vai atsauci uz latviešu tautas vēsturē nacionāli

nozīmīgiem periodiem, kad tika sasniegti būtiski rezultāti tautsaimniecībā, kā arī valodas, literatūras, mākslas, pašapziņas u. tml. jomās. Otrās atmodas gadījumā gan tas būtu mehānisks apvienojums.

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Roses for the Lord of Storms: Analysis of Aspazija's Poetry Dedicated to the Authoritarian Leader of Latvia

Rozes vētru kungam: Aspazijas veltījuma dzeja Latvijas autoritārajam līderim

Keywords:

Kārlis Ulmanis,
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Atslēgvārdi:

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Summary

The main aim of this article is to analyze the poem "The Hymn to the Leader" (1936) by the Latvian poetess Aspazija, which praises the Latvian authoritarian leader Kārlis Ulmanis and was written in honor of the second Harvest Festival in Rēzekne on September 13, 1936. This text is studied in the context of other similar works by Aspazija (especially the poetry collection *The Scattered Roses*). The above-mentioned Harvest Festival is examined, at the micro-level of cultural analysis, by applying the framework of a performative turn. Each power scenario is based on political mythology. Political mythology inherits from ancient religious mythology the story of creation as a rapid process that rejects development, favoring miraculous creation *ex nihilo* and a conflict that shapes the logic of societal history.

Aspazija's works celebrating authoritarianism, especially "The Hymn to the Leader", can be attributed to the genre of festive ode in the manner of the 17th-century European Baroque literary tradition. This genre was reborn during the 20th century interwar period in the public communication of non-democratic regimes, applying the allegorical *topoi* of the absolutism period. Aspazija's texts depict the authoritarian leader as a symbolic force capable of radically changing the current political situation. Aspazija's poetic lexicon contains elements of archaic mythology, whereby the category of time is expressed as a miraculous and rapid accomplishment of the Leader's will. Ulmanis's image was also endowed with sacred traits by borrowing religious motifs from the Bible.

Kopsavilkums

Šī raksta galvenais mērķis ir analizēt latviešu dzejnieces Aspazijas dzejoli "Himna vadonim" (1936), kas slavina 20. gs. 30. gadu Latvijas autoritāro līderi Kārli Ulmani un ir tapis par godu otrajiem Pļaujas svētkiem Rēzeknē 1936. gada 13. septembrī. Šis teksts pētīts kontekstā ar citiem līdzīgiem Aspazijas darbiem (it īpaši krājumu "Kaisītās rozes"). Minētie Pļaujas svētki kultūranalīzes mikrolīmenī tiek aplūkoti, piemērojot t.s. performatīvā pagrieziena ietvaru. Katrs varas scenārijs ir balstīts politiskā mitoloģijā. Politiskā mitoloģija no senās reliģiskās mitoloģijas ir mantojusi stāstu par radīšanu kā ātru procesu, kas noraida attīstību un dod priekšroku brīnumainai radīšanai *ex nihilo* un konfliktam, kas veido sabiedrības vēstures loģiku.

Autoritārismu slavinošie Aspazijas darbi, it īpaši minētā "Himna vadonim", pēc žanra atbilst svētku odai 17. gs. Eiropas baroka literāro tradīciju manierē. Šāds odas žanrs starpkaru periodā atdzima Eiropas nedemokrātisko režīmu publiskajā komunikācijā, izmantojot absolūtisma laikmeta alegoriskos toposus. Aspazijas dzeja autoritāro vadoni attēloja kā simbolisku spēku, kas spēj radikāli mainīt esošo politisko stāvokli. Aspazijas poētiskajā leksikā izmantoti arhaiskās mitoloģijas elementi, kur laika kategorija tiek izteikta kā brīnumaini ātra Vadoņa gribas papildīšanās. Ulmaņa tēlam sakrālus vaibstus piešķir arī no Bībeles pārņemti reliģiski motīvi.

Introduction

Aspazija (Johanna Emīlija Lizete Rozenberga, 1865–1943) is one of the key Latvian intellectuals of the first half of the 20th century. She also represents various developmental phases of the female history of Latvian literature in the period prior to World War I and after the establishment of the independent state of Latvia in 1918. Aspazija's legacy of poetic and dramatic works, in which she has at different stages articulated the themes and poetic forms of European symbolism, illustrates the history of Latvian literature in its close interconnectedness with global literary developments across European urban political space before and after World War I. Her contribution to the development of female engagement in the political processes in Latvia, especially in the Social Democratic agenda on education and social security of women in the 1920s is another important field of research. As the historian Ineta Lipša has recently indicated in her detailed analysis of the topic, Latvian women of that time made extensive use of their constitutional rights to vote and to be elected into Saeima (the parliament) of the newly established democratic Republic of Latvia (Lipša 2023: 93–94). This democratic republic existed until the coup d'état of May 15, 1934 when the parliament was dissolved, media and cultural politics were submitted to censorship, and a cult of the new Leader was established and extensively promoted in the public space by various state institutions.

Another, much less developed area of research is female poetry (and particularly Aspazija's poetic works) during the authoritarian period of Latvian statehood. This period lasted until the first phase of Soviet occupation which started on June 17, 1940, when the government of the dictator Kārlis Ulmanis, following an ultimatum, was *de facto* disabled and Stalin's government began to establish a pro-Soviet political and economic culture in Latvia.

In order to promote the research of the above-mentioned topic, this article will analyze selected Aspazija's works that glorify Ulmanis, the authoritarian leader and self-imposed head of the state during 1934–1940. As the key text of the analysis, we have chosen a festive ode to Ulmanis written on the occasion of the second Harvest Festival that took place in the city of Rēzekne in Latgale on September 13, 1936.

This study is framed by a wider context of similar other works by Aspazija and other authors who supplied the new ideology with literary texts for public performances. There is a number of poems and statements made in interviews or elsewhere in the public space that attest to Aspazija's involvement in the glorification cult of Ulmanis.

For example, at a meeting with teachers Aspazija enthusiastically said that the task of youth is to "follow the example of the Leader, to compete and strive upward,

just as trees in a newly planted forest push their branches toward the sun”¹ (O.V. 1939: 10). In spite of her Social Democrat past, Aspazija managed to get support from the authoritarian regime. In 1939 she received the Prize of Fatherland (*Tēvzemes balva*). Established in 1937, this prize was awarded by a Council headed by Ulmanis. When asked what she would have said during the laureate ceremony if she had been given the floor, Aspazija replied that she would have thanked the Leader (Plaudis 1939: 5). She was also among those who donated money to the national guards (*aizsargi*) organization less than a month after the coup (*Aizsargu priekšnieka pateicība* 1934: 291). Later, she expressed willingness to donate her golden bracelet and golden francs from the time of Louis XIV for the construction of Victory Square (*Uzvaras laukums*) in the capital Riga. Even Ulmanis thought it was too much, and in a letter to the poet he asked her not to give away these precious things: “[T]his is not the [right] time to make such sacrifices” (Ulmanis 1936). A campaign “*Dosim labāko Raiņa un Aspazijas muzejam Kastanjolā!*” (Let’s give our best to the Museum of Rainis and Aspazija in Castagnola!) was launched in order to collect memorabilia for the planned Rainis and Aspazija Museum (at that time it could not be implemented due to World War II) in Castagnola, the Swiss village where the two poets lived from 1906 to 1920 in exile after the 1905 revolution. The campaign was funded by the Press Society, and this happened despite the fact that supporting the memory of Rainis as a Social Democrat was not a priority of Ulmanis’s authoritarian government (Grīnuma 2009: 61–63). Later, after World War II, the memory of Rainis and Aspazija found itself at the crossroads of the differing interests of Soviet ideologists and the Latvian diaspora in the West during the Cold War ideological battles, in which both authors were a valuable resource for symbolic communication.

Aspazija, who by 1934 had long become a well-known public intellectual figure, closely associated with her deceased husband Rainis (a Social Democrat and a glorified Latvian intellectual), during the authoritarian period of Latvian statehood published various literary works where she mainly revived and reworked her poetic forms and themes shaped by the symbolism patterns which were important to her already decades before the coup. Let us look more closely at the context of her poetry dedicated to Ulmanis. What was the political and personal frame for creating “*Himna vadonim*” (Hymn to the Leader, 1936; henceforth “The Hymn”) to be analyzed below? We must point out that a large part of the facts forming the context will remain fragmented due to lack of archive materials and due to the controversial reception of Aspazija during the analyzed period.

1 The quotations here and henceforth are translated by Valdis Tēraudkalns, unless otherwise noted.

Various opinions have been expressed about the reasons why Aspazija decided to praise the authoritarian regime. One version was that of her long-lasting conflict with the leadership of the Social Democratic Party², the poet's views no longer fitting into the framework of the politically leftist ideology of a class society (Labsvīrs 1977a: 3). Jānis Labsvīrs, who in the late 1930s worked in the Ministry of Public Affairs which was directly responsible for the formation of authoritarian ideology in the public sphere, later wrote in exile that his institution did not try to influence Aspazija's attitude towards the 1934 regime – instead, it had been her own conscious decision. Meanwhile, there were other writers – for example, Kārlis Skalbe – who held a critical attitude towards the new ideology and never received any public gratitude or commissions (Labsvīrs 1977b: 3). The question remains: is this version based on reliable sources of the period? One of Aspazija's letters from that time contains a phrase: "The president himself wrote to me and is expecting from me..." (*Aspazijas vēstule pirmspublicējumi* 1966: 35), the rest of the sentence being unreadable. Did it refer to some action, a text, or a public statement? We have to acknowledge that these unfinished words and emotional metaphoric language still hide their secrets from the researchers today. Thus, any attempt to revisit, restore and reread the past will be partly a fiction, because a large amount of sources are lost or disfigured into myths.

Kārlis Ulmanis actively worked on establishing his personal cult, using various state and municipal institutions to create an intense performative space for the rituals of glorification. The Ministry of Education was one of the first to start working on this by organizing public open air patriotic performances in Riga as early as in July of 1934, when the show "*Atdzimšanas dziesma*" (Song of Rebirth) was staged in Esplanāde square in order to retell the history of Latvian statehood in terms of Ulmanis's theses of the "rescued" Latvian culture and state. This and other performances and festivals by various social and professional groups across the country were later managed by the Ministry of Public Affairs, established as a state propaganda institution to deal with the ideological frame of the authoritarian regime. The new political culture marginalized various political ideologies and parties, such as Social Democrats on the left side and the *dievturi* (Latvian neo-pagan movement) on the right side of political spectrum. One of the most widely used genres of glorifying literature was an ode or a festive hymn to Ulmanis, where he was usually addressed as the Leader (*Vadonis*) or Landlord/Master (*saimnieks*) and styled as the

2 This argument has been raised by Saulcerīte Viese in her study on Aspazija (Viese 2004: 416). Unfortunately, the book does not provide references to the sources used by the author. The information was probably taken from Jānis Kārklīš's own memories (Kārklīš 1967: 58) and those of his contemporaries which claim that Ulmanis made sure that Aspazija did not have to pay debts.

protector of the Latvians (who, according to the new ideological frame, had been facing political chaos and peril shortly before the coup of May 15).

The fact that Aspazija's financial situation improved after the coup and her significant debts were suspended (Viese 2004: 436) probably also played a role in her choice to praise Ulmanis. The whole topic of Aspazija's relationships with various political regimes in 1930s and early 1940s has not yet been sufficiently researched. There are some short studies like the one by Herberts Balodis (Balodis 1993: 30–37), and some (if any at all) paragraphs in biographies of and collective monographs on Aspazija. The present article is an attempt to add a source-based reading of the Latvian authoritarian culture through interpretation of poetic texts addressed to the new leader.

Theoretical frame and questions of the case study: Neo-baroque rulers of the interwar Europe? Approaching authoritarian performative practices

One of the key theoretical novelties produced by the linguistic turn in Western philosophical thought in the beginning of the 1970s, articulated by Clifford Geertz in his study "The Interpretation of Cultures", was the concept of culture understood as an "acted document, thus [...] public" (Geertz 1973:10). Culture, according to this concept, was created and circulated in an immense variety of sign. Performance is thus defined as a social drama, acted in rituals and ceremonies which aim to produce social relations of power through public demonstration of accepted cultural meanings. Performative turn, evolved out of the linguistic turn and supported by performative arts and theatre studies, offered a wide contextual frame for understanding culture as a public interaction that creates, cancels or re-establishes socially acceptable interpretations of meanings.

In this article we examine the authoritarian ideological tools of the Ulmanis regime within the cultural frame of other non-democratic European interwar ideologies – which, as we will show later, made intense use of Baroque public performative culture. We denote these ideas, concepts, texts and performative actions by the term "non-democratic Neo-Baroque politics". These tools, linked to the traditions of the monarchical miracle and the divine origin of power, included an array of cultural texts articulating the new, post-democratic concept of society through a radically different image of the political leader and the origin and nature of power. European interwar non-democratic elites revived, applied and developed the

Baroque category of the political spectacular in order to establish (through the regularity of mass performative culture) the new paradigm of an existential conflict against a democratic “enemy” won by the supernatural capacities of the new ruler, who became a new quasi-religious pantocrator (the almighty one).

The public nature of performative actions led Richard S. Wortman to coin the term *scenarios of power*. It was helpful for his analysis of Russian imperial culture when reading the political messages of the monarchy in various fields, including geopolitical issues and priorities, the image of a ruler, and the vision of origins of power. According to this researcher, power is “an elite institution with its own culture, expressed in a symbolic system” (Wortman 2006: 1).

The application of the concept of performative turn to the cultural history of non-democratic European countries in the interwar period (beginning with the early 1920s and Mussolini’s rule and ending with the early 1930s in Nazi Germany and Eastern, Central and South European authoritarian regimes, including the Baltic states) highlights various aspects, important for this study. Firstly, the culture produced within the ideological constraints of non-democratic politics imposed on the heterogenic social fabric of post-democratic societies an idea of unity which was defined as a tool and a guarantee protecting from social instability and insecurity experienced during the previous political regime (which was “successfully eliminated” in the name of stability). Stability was presented in the vocabulary of a golden age as an ancient literary *topos*, rediscovered and employed by the new regimes. The previous researchers of the regime of Ulmanis have already presented a variety of case studies and archive materials to prove this theory by applying a conceptual frame of the performative turn. The concept of the end of history, a twin *topos* of a golden age in Latvian authoritarian ideology, was intensively distributed in various media available to the authoritarian ideology – such as ministries, schools, museums, arts, performative events staged in the capital of Latvia (e.g. the already mentioned show “Song of Rebirth” in July 1934), and various regional festivals. The “end of history” was defined as the result of the coup d’état, whereby the Latvian history found its revelation and symbolic “peace” in and through Ulmanis’s new political culture. The most widely used *topos* in the media of the regime was that of the conclusion of political development – with no more political diversity, which was presented as having been a source of chaos and a threat to the Latvian ethnic cultural dominance in the state. Political interests of separate groups of society were also seen as cancelled by the new government of unity. These theses and the concept of a unified society at rest were identifiable in mass festivals, among which the second Harvest Festival in Latgale is an example which illustrates the authoritarian patterns of the new regime particularly well.

Thus, at the micro level of cultural analysis within the methodology of performative turn, this article will deal with the case of the above-mentioned festival which took place in the city of Rēzekne (the regional centre of Latgale) on September 13, 1936. In this study we have defined authoritarianism as a set of symbolically articulated concepts of the Latvian society. The contemporaneity of the Latvian society was to be shaped by the grand narrative of the regime – describing the supposed rescue of Latvia through the coup d'état on May 15, 1934. The future of Latvia, according to this narrative, had been endangered by a universal catastrophe allegedly caused by the “weak” and inefficient political pluralism of the parliamentary culture before the coup. Each scenario of power, as Wortman points out, is based on political mythology (Wortman 2006: 1). The Latvian version of the non-democratic mythology of the “close shave” and “happy escape” will be the ideological frame for analyzing the poetic texts written by Aspazija for the new regime.

Secondly, myth as such, according to Ernst Cassirer, is shaped by dramatic features – not in the sense of a peculiar agitation of emotions, but as a performed action created by a clash between natural forces or actors (Kasīrers 1997: 82). Political mythology had inherited from the ancient religious mythology the story of creationism: a quick and non-logical process which rejects development and prefers a marvelous creation *ex nihilo*, and a conflict shaping the logics of the history of the society which accepts the mythological dynamics of societal development. The myth of chaos versus harmony must be performed in order to be told and accepted. The performativity is the very essence of the myth as a collective story of belonging to and holding together a group. Thus the mythological language of the non-democratic narrative was destined to be staged at public events, such as the Rēzekne festival and many others.

Thirdly, the clash of ideas, parties, power groups or nature's forces in the mythological logics of a final combat is another important feature we discovered when analyzing the Ulmanis regime in a wider European context of that time. The ideological clash, as the coup was defined, implies an existential conflict, a mortal combat which can only have two outcomes – a victory or a downfall. No situation or condition in between is possible or acceptable according to the narrative rules of the non-democratic heroism which produced a new hero – a leader. These dynamics of categorical choice are linked to the physical dimension of the society existing as a body collective, as an allegorical supra-human being which includes each and every member of the community. All become one, submitted to the victory story of the new leader.

The history of Latvia until May 15, 1934, as already said, was defined by the new regime as a mythopoetical history of a basic conflict between allegorically

shaped figures of the parliamentary culture and its antipode, the rule of Ulmanis. Both, according to the logic of political aesthetics of the Baroque *chiaroscuro*, were depicted in the already mentioned show “Song of Rebirth” (performed on a stage in the centre of Riga) in visual terms of light versus darkness, in sonic terms of harmony versus cacophony (the latter being created by the political propaganda of the numerous parties), and in spatial terms as the antithesis of the German medieval city of Riga versus Latvian rural harmony or the industrial development associated with Latvians in the metropolis (Hanovs 2010: 116–118).

Intense propaganda activities of the new regime tried to establish the legitimacy of the May 15 transformations. The regime relied on a combination of various media, plots and forms of publicly distributed narration. Ulmanis’s ideological institutions activated a variety of tools which were shaped and enacted in terms close to the aesthetics of politics in the Baroque period of European culture, as already mentioned before. In the 17th century (in Eastern Europe until the mid-18th century), Baroque was a pan-European paradigm of artistic, musical, public and political representation of absolutism power. Later, the revival of interest in Baroque – from Heinrich Wölflinn and Erwin Panofsky to Walter Benjamin and Gilles Deleuze – produced many new readings of the age that was traditionally associated with the decline of the Late Renaissance and had long been deprived of a value *eo ipso* in the history of European arts. Other authors, such as Peter Burke (Burke 1992), Doris Kolesch (Kolesch 2006), Anna Korndorf (Korndorf 2011) and Kirill Ospovat (Ospovat, 2016 & 2024), as well as the authors of this article (Hanovs 2013 and 2022; Hanovs, Tēraudkalns 2022), have applied the notion of social control to the various genres of political Baroque, thus adding the category of political discourse to the traditional categories of artistic language and intense allegorical narration. The occasionally pejorative perception of Baroque just as a set of vulgar escapades of the aristocratic Southern Europe, papal Rome, or Russian empress Elizabeth with her masked balls in the Winter palace shows a lack of interest in the more serious aspects of Baroque – e.g. its language of control and submission of various groups of European societies after the global military conflict over confessional dominance in post-Reformation Europe.

The interwar period of European political culture since the early 1920s is defined here as another period of political control which used propaganda tools borrowed from the gallery of Baroque. Public massive festivities with elaborate effects produced by electricity-driven machinery, exuberant Art Deco aesthetics with the dominance of glitter and gold, collective appreciation of Oriental ornaments in mass media, cultivation of media stars from American cinema and European cabaret – all these and many other visual and mechanical means of political spectacle affected the creation of new urban spaces where Neo-baroque aesthetics of non-democratic

cultures could exhibit the efficiency of their ideology. This long list would be insufficient and would lack a teleological element if we ignored the very essence of the opulence of these cultures with their intense schedule of massive outdoor events. The massive acceptance of the marvelous in the politics of the post-democracy age was the major societal, communicative and aesthetic shift all across Europe – with few exceptions such as France and Great Britain. A political miracle was made possible in the atmosphere of radical political metamorphosis in many continental European post-imperial societies with a very short and fragile period of democracy. The rapid decline and disappearance of the spectacular monarchical culture across Europe after the end of World War I in the economic and political turmoil of republicanism was the setting that welcomed the return of the political wonder and the mythological logics of rapid emotions and rapid actions. The long, slow, consensus- and talks-based culture of democratic compromise was attacked by non-democratic parties and regimes all over Europe. Performative elements of the “return of the golden age” were staged in various cities of the former democratic regimes – the new social drama, to use the term coined decades ago by Victor Turner, was aimed at cancelling the “boring” and uncertain democracy. Instead, the dynamic and highly emotional event- and miracle-oriented drama was to be staged with its main *dramatis personae* – the authoritarian and totalitarian leaders and parties.

Non-democratic Neo-Baroque mass politics of the interwar period was also developed and enacted in the artistic sphere, where various genres of mimetic arts were engaged to articulate the new ideological dominance in both urban and rural spaces. The new narrative was supposed to be established and circulated by implementing the semiotics of wonder combined with artistic density and with the presence of the Leader in everyday politicized space, where alternatives (democracy, communism, Social-Democratic symbolism of proletarian engagement) were banned. The case of Nazi Germany, where German Romanticism in arts and literature was rediscovered by the totalitarian cultural policy as soon as in early February of 1933, shows that arts were redefined as eternal and static, thus subjugated to the leader of the new oppressive regime. German Chancellor Adolf Hitler was regarded as the ultimate judge of artistic eternity, rather than as one of many viewers of a fluid artistic modernity in its pluralism of forms and endless interpretations (Groys 2013: 137). An important element of the new public culture of non-democratic regimes was poetry which addressed the radical political changes in a glorifying manner, using the poetic and dramatic tradition of the European Baroque court in order to shape a divine image of the ruler. Festive odes or hymns addressed to a party or a leader in our opinion can be regarded as 20th-century analogues of the court ode for a Baroque sovereign. In the Latvian case this genre also had its feminine

voice – Aspazija, the renowned poet and playwright who had represented the leftist discourse on feminism in the early years of the Latvian Republic. As already mentioned above, she articulated her persistent and emotional support for the coup of May 15 and its leader in a series of poems, one of which we will interpret further in this article, framed by similar works in this genre.

As regards the already mentioned frame of interpretation – the concept of the Baroque ruler as a political and mythological actor – we decided to turn to the works of Walter Benjamin. His most well-known research is the study of German tragic drama (*Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, first published in Berlin 1928), but he has also outlined the major functions and imagery of a Baroque ruler – such as internal conflict and tragic elements. According to Benjamin, a Baroque ruler is both a symbol and an author of history, and he enacts his rule over history in his public actions. We believe that this conception is also applicable to the interwar aesthetics of politics.

The above-mentioned image might seem to contradict the idea of the democratic critique of the power seizures that cancelled democratic plurality in the interwar political landscape of Europe. However, the notion of controversy is exactly what interests us in the ambiguity of a ruler's image in a Baroque play and in the performative culture of authoritarian Latvia. The concept of an exceptional state of affairs becomes a political legitimization of Baroque tyranny:

[T]he Baroque concept develops on the basis of a discussion of the state of exception, and makes it the most important function of the prince to avert this state. Whoever rules is from the beginning destined to be possessor of dictatorial powers if war, revolt, or other catastrophes should bring about a state of exception. (Benjamin 2019: 49)

Perception of universal power as a heavy duty is identifiable both in the poetic plots in Aspazija's volume *Kaisītās rozes* (The Scattered Roses, 1936) and in her poem written for the festival in Rēzekne. As we will see further, the image of *Vadonis* (Leader) had been transformed into an all-encompassing natural power whose energy and immensity possesses a potency to change, to govern and to secure the natural equilibrium. The natural and the societal were combined in the Baroque aesthetics of power – the solar concept of the ruler, reflected upon by Benjamin, was present in the Baroque tragedy as a sign of singularity, close to tragic solitude (Benjamin 2019: 52). The ambiguity of the solar imagery – which combines fostering of life and its destruction as a symbolic punishment – was one of the basic *topoi* of European absolutism. The French king Louis XIV, who revitalized the solar symbolism of Valois imagery after the civil war of Fronde for the Bourbon dynasty, was described in the following way by his latent critic duke de Saint-Simon in his account of the sickness and death of the playwright Jean Racine in 1699. The dramatist, being a court historian, had "gained [...] some degree of intimacy with the King" (Saint-Simon

1959: 40). As the result of being too close to the sun (due to Racine's absent-mindedness and some critical remarks about the family of the King's favorite and unofficial wife de Maintenon), the author of classicism tragedies fell in disgrace, was forbidden to be in the presence of the sovereign, fell ill and died soon afterwards. The duke, even without having read the study by Benjamin, provided an indirect proof of the tragedy of solar sovereignty and of its ability to sustain and to destroy as the very essence of royal imagery: "After that neither the King nor Mme de Maintenon spoke to Racine or took any notice of him. He was so distressed that he fell into a decline and died two years later." (Saint-Simon 1959: 41)

Another feature of a Baroque ruler reflected upon in the study of Benjamin was indecisiveness in exceptional conditions – he acts, but after a long period of reflexion on moral and emotional issues. Such are the figures of the Roman emperor Titus or Persian prince Artaxerxes, for example, in libretti by Pietro Metastasio – both characters undergo deep changes in the process of understanding their role as rulers, and then act to save their kingdoms from peril. No such long reflexions or pauses were present in the deeds of the 20th century non-democratic European leaders. On the contrary, their excessive decision-making capacities aimed to prove the supernatural powers of a mortal political – see e.g. the story of Mussolini who, with his media-broadcasted vitality and risky sports activities, acquired features of a superhero and was even regarded as a divinity to pray to for rain after a long drought (Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi 2007: 91). In the Latvian version of supernatural features of the leader, Ulmanis (according to Aspazija) was granted extremely strong political will and needed no pauses. He had adopted some ideas and performative practices of the Italian fascism,³ so it is natural that he assigned such a significant role to the transformation and revival of ancient myths and the creation of new ones. As Emilio Gentile, a researcher of political ideology, describes Italian fascism: "[The] ways of visualizing and dramatizing myths, symbols, and rituals were necessary to make the mythology of the "Fascist religion" accessible to the masses and to convert them to the new faith" (Gentile 1996: 84).

The link between Baroque representation of an absolutist ruler and Neo-Baroque culture of interwar mass festivals can be shown within the frame of performative turn: both ideological concepts created social drama of an endangered political universe rescued by a royal or new leader. Both periods made use of urban space as a stage for open-air mass events in order to demonstrate the legitimacy of the head

3 It should be noted that there were differences between Italian fascism and authoritarianism in Latvia. In Mussolini's case it was the state that was elevated to the level of sacredness, in Latvia – the nation (Pourchier-Plasseraud 2015: 443).

of the state. Both cultural formations employed a multi-levelled combination of ancient and Christian mythology, creating a sacred memory space of the political crisis and the events of salvation. From the Medici's court in Florence with their *intermedii* and early Orpheus story to the Latvian coup of May 15, 1934, the history of a ruling family or of a new leader was turned into hagiography with the help of multimedia tools. This transformation of history from the combination of political processes into a sacred history of an event (founding; restoration of political order) also transformed the political community of a former democratic society. In the rhetorics of non-democratic regimes, society as a spectrum of politically diverse groups of interest must turn into a unified community, a parish consolidated under a quasi-religious leadership. Private, particular interests that cause tension and conflicts had to be avoided and deleted from the public imagery of the post-democratic society, where "We" had become an abstract but widely used substitution for societal heterogeneity. Aspazija's poetry, as we will see below, reflected these elements of the transfigured Latvian society by means of religious symbolism, by biblical but also pantheistic vocabulary of nature driven by the will of a superhero Ulmanis.

Though the temporal distance of three centuries between the Baroque culture of power and the 20th century dictatorships may cause skepticism regarding the issues of aesthetic inheritance, the culture of deification of a modern ruler, his metaphysical transition from a politician (often with career in democratic administrative institutions or parliaments) into a natural force or a deity can build a bridge between two cultural formations – Baroque and modernity. Culture of public allegoric festivities with a deity or a ruler at their centre, inherited from the Baroque artistic practices of the *ancien regime*, never actually disappeared for long – the French nation, which succeeded the feudal performativity of *les rois thaumaturges* (the miracle-working kings), established new forms of festive performances which presented the nation and constitutional culture as sacred. The pan-European nationalism culture in its countless variations across the continent in the 19th century had created new altars and new lay priests. Thus there was no long-lasting interruption in the semiotic sacrality of a leader or a political victim-hero and hero triumphant in European political culture. In the state of the interwar political and economic turbulences, many European societies (including the Baltics) supported the fall of democratic pluralism and reestablished old hierarchies in new images of leaders created according to the semiotic practices of the miraculous.

As we proceed to the interpretation of Aspazija's texts, we pose the following questions: what semiotic elements of the Baroque ruler (interaction with natural elements, scenarios of action, attributes, situations or preconditions, conflicts) from the array of artistic tools of the 17th century political culture of absolutism were

applied by Aspazija when composing the festive ode for the Latvian dictator Ulmanis? How did the poet intend to explain the legitimacy of the new leader in her poetics? These issues will be discussed in the next chapter of this study, where we look at the Latvian version of the transfiguration of a former politician and prime minister into the driving force of an authoritarian culture or rather universe (taking into account the cosmogonic tune of the above-mentioned poem).

It's all about him... Imagery of Kārlis Ulmanis in Aspazija's poem "Hymn to the Leader"

Following the tradition of Baroque ceremonial public events which were explained to the participants and posterity in commemorative brochures, the second Harvest Festival in Rēzekne, celebrated on September 13, 1936, was also described in great detail to its audience (and to those who did not attend in person) in a small brochure. It consisted of the schedule of the festive event and was supplemented by various dramatic and poetic texts which were to be presented during the ceremony.

The festival began early in the morning with large bonfires which were supposed to introduce the festive mood, as the early trains brought in the first participants. At 12:30, Ulmanis and representatives of the government were expected to arrive in Rēzekne. Then the glorification part was to begin, introduced with the song with the first line "*Mēs suminām Tevi, tautas Vienotāj!*" (We Hail You, Unificator of the Nation). Its lyrics were written by the Latvian poet Vilis Plūdons. The song, performed by a mixed choir and orchestra, was followed by a festive declamation whereby the Leader was greeted at the gates of honor by the welcoming committee. These performances were followed by a song "*Himna Vadonim*" (Hymn to the Leader) composed by Jāzeps Mediņš with the lyrics by Aspazija. The address of Ulmanis to the participants was planned for 13:40. In his speech, he referred to the myth of the ancient Latvian king Visvaldis, and also quoted unnamed residents of Latgale who had allegedly stated that they do not need old castles and ruins, "because Rēzekne is full of new castles" (*Šis gads ir lielu un dīzu sasniegumu gads* 1936: 2). Thus, a break in history was symbolically created, rejecting the Baltic German cultural heritage and its visual traces in the Latvian landscape. The entire event was planned as a performance, during which various groups of residents declared their loyalty to the Leader. For example, a farmer representative recited an oath, after which he presented Ulmanis with a gift – a decorated oak chair (*Lielie plaujas svētki Rēzeknē* 1936: 8).

The text by Aspazija was published in the festive brochure together with two poems by Plūdons: "*Dziesma tautas Vienotājam*" (The Song for the Unificator of the Nation) and "*Tev mūžam dzīvot, Latvija*" (You Must Live Forever, Latvia), and a piece

by Alberts Sprūdžs – “*Laiks gadu straumēm plūst*” (Time Flows in Yearly Streams). Aspazija’s text is a short twelve-line poem, divided in four three-line verses. Our prosaic translation of the text is as follows:

There is no peril on the way of heroism,
Because the blue rays of soul overcome flames
And wings carry you beyond the starry firmament.
Each hero is a part of the eternal power
From which the world’s edifice is built,
And he carries centuries on his shoulders.
You, born in flesh, eternally being reborn,
You, reposing and eternally flying,
You, a rebel (lit.: non-peaceful) who brings peace to the others,
Go forward, teach [us] how to follow (lit.: chase) you,
Go through storms, you need not fear the storms
Because you know you are a lord over the storms.

(2. *Latvju zemnieku Pļaujas svētki Rēzeknē* 1936: 11)⁴

The construction model of this poem is antithetic. It is built according to the structure of Baroque poetics of conflict and binary opposition, which is aimed at a gradual rise of emotions. The binary structure implies the co-existence of oppositions, thus negative phenomena are also shown – such as peril, pressure, or storms. These phenomena never endanger or question the status of the hero – the Leader. Danger does not stop the hero, and his immense physical and emotional strength enables him to articulate his supernatural strength in action. We have identified three sources of glorification content in the poetry: Old and New Testament, pantheistic symbolism, and Baroque allegorical terms related to the imagery of *Naturschauspiel* (nature show). During the 17–18th century, a ruler’s political potency was often depicted in terms of interaction between natural forces and their presence in human world, such as the conflict of darkness and light in absolutism iconography (Levit 2011: 17).

One of the main elements in the heroic profile of Ulmanis is indicated by his intense energy: the hero’s body and its physical strength consist solely of objects and elements that are in motion. Verbs denoting action are dominant in the piece: *born* and *reborn*; *build* and *carry*; *go forward* and *teach* (i.e. bring new knowledge), *repose* and *bring peace*. Various nouns are associated with further actions of the leader. For instance, shoulders evoke the mythological image of Atlas who carried the earth on his shoulders and secured the stability of the world lest it falls. Besides

4 The original Latvian text: “*Uz varonības ceļa nava briesmu, / Jo zilie dvēš'les stari pārvar liesmu / Un spāmi augstāk nes par zvaigznāju. / Ik varon's daļa ir no mūža spēka, / No kuŗa radīta top pasaul's ēka, / Un gadu simteņus tas plecos nes. / Tu miesā dzimis, mūžam atdzimstošais, / Tu dusošais un mūžam lidojošais, / Tu nemiernieks, mums citiem mieru nes. / Ej tālāk, māci mūs tev pakal dzīties, / Ej vētrām cauri, nav tev vētru bīties, / Jo zini, pats par vētrām kungs tu esi.*” (2. *Latvju zemnieku Pļaujas svētki Rēzeknē* 1936:11)

that, an Apollonic element of the new leader is stressed by the knowledge that he would transmit to the people. Unlike Prometheus, he would accomplish this without suffering, and provide the people with knowledge of how to pursue the deified leader (the employed verb denotes a continuous, non-completed process). This implies that at the current situation the poetic we, i.e. the ethnic Latvians, are not yet able to reach the leader's superiority as they lack the knowledge and are in a state of a non-activated, not fully alive community.

The task of activating the people, ascribed to the head of the state, must be ensured with a special material his the body is made of – Aspazija describes various body parts of Ulmanis as made of the eternal power. We would suggest to read these descriptions as a variation of Ovid's "*Metamorphoses*". In his mythopoetical history of the world, the exiled Roman author anticipated the return of the golden age which, according to him, was made possible by the Roman senator and dictator Caesar and by his adopted son Augustus. In the first chapter of the poem, when explaining the creation of the material world, Ovid depicts the peril and decline of the civilization and mores when Astrea, the virgin symbolizing the eternal peace and prosperity, leaves the blood-soaked earth of conflicts and wars. Visual dominance, the allegoric tool employed by Ovid, was also used by Aspazija in the 1930s to depict a plot of creationism and the patterns of the birth and appearance of the new savior: thus Ulmanis has got a special blue soul light, and its rays can fight flames. If we presume that the flames represent perilous fire (fire as natural or political catastrophe and a widespread *topos* of turbulence in poetry, propaganda posters and even operatic libretti), then the ancient mythological significance of fire as a divine element might be ascribed to the rays which come from within the soul of the new leader and destroy the fire which is a chaotic element.

In the Old Testament and in Christian mythology and iconography, an inner light seen by witnesses is the image of an internal sacred nature or miraculous experience, the special divine stigma that elevates the bearer of this light above others. Moses and Christ in their transfiguration were depicted as framed by sacred light coming from within their bodies, connecting them to the divine and testifying to their own sacred status. Another interpretation could be the neoplatonic reading of the blue rays as a concept of the return of all mortal beings to the God, as they are agitated through the light of divine love. In Marsilio Ficino's interpretation of Plato's conception of love, light is the visual element of hierarchic harmony of the world, created by a God who does not move. In comparison to the Renaissance idea of static divinity, the divine subject of Aspazija is extremely active – even peace is not a passive and given condition, but must be delivered by the supernatural hero to the community which then returns to the hero. Peace being delivered also means that there has been a

turbulence previously, which as a negative phenomenon may be linked to the idea of flames in their negative connotation – as destruction and lack of peace. In this combination, the internal rays of the new human divinity overcome the external, political flames of disorder, and bring peace to the community of Latvians.

As we know from the descriptions of various festive performances in the 1930s (including the “Song of Rebirth” in 1934 in Riga and the Rēzekne festival in 1936), one of the most often employed metaphors of the democratic republic was an image of a political chaos, conflicts and turbulences. After May 15, 1934, peace had been delivered and the community, too, was delivered from the danger of turmoil. The narrative of the peace and prosperity achieved by Ulmanis was also present in other texts of the 1936 brochure. A patriotic play “*Svētā zeme*” (Sacred Land), written by Alberts Sprūdžs and performed on September 13, 1936, consisted of various scenes of Latgale history, starting with the old times when Latgalians suffered from hard labour. Antons, the protagonist of the play, goes to study in St. Petersburg and returns with visions of national revival for his region and his people. This idea takes political shape during the Liberation war in the early 1920s when the Rēzekne Congress decides that the Latgale region has to become a part of the independent Latvia. After a scene that shows the war liberating the Latvian territory, the period of the democratic republic is not represented. The authors of the play skip the political diversity in favor of the “end of history” – when the unified people under the auspice of the leader Ulmanis complete the story of their political development. Antons, now a Latgalian deputy, sings a song of praise to the leader and declares that life has improved after the “Owner of the Land” (*Zemes Saimnieks*) took the power in his hands. As the result, the country has become more beautiful and also more Latvian (Sprūdžs 1936: 28), thus supporting the idea of Latvianizing the Latgalian culture by the new regime after the coup. The play ends with a ballet and an oath to Ulmanis: the unified Latvian people promise to guard and preserve Latvia forever (Sprūdžs 1936: 29).

Besides the combination of Ancient Greek and Christian mythologies, typical of the Baroque iconography of European rulers, there is another layer which is difficult to define or name. We shall use the term *Naturschauspiel* coined by Benjamin, invoking the Baroque vocabulary of the theatricality of nature in the absolutism narrative of an all-encompassing adoration of the ruler. We can hear this narrative in the most popular image of a ruler – the one where he is compared to Orpheus, the poet and favourite of Gods, who transgressed the borders of physical world. In the early Baroque opera “*La morte d’Orfeo*” (The Death of Orpheus) by Italian composer Stefano Landi, the nature itself in all its physical forms (rivers, mountains, forests etc.) is moved by Orfeo’s divine gift of music and succumbs to it. Another dimension

of the interaction between natural forces and humans is, according to late philosophy historian Valery Podoroga, the human anxiety which signifies the guilt and sins in front of God (Podoroga 2022: 47). Thus, natural catastrophes were experienced as divine punishment. (However, in the twelve lines of Aspazija's poem one cannot observe any indication of Ulmanis as a figure of punishment, rather than a leader of transformation of the society.)

The elements of *Naturschauspiel* bring Ulmanis outside the circle of human beings or divinities incarnated as human beings. Instead, he is placed within the realm of natural forces, such as air, wind, and their extreme form i.e. storms, which have to be overcome by the eternal movement of the "lord of storms". These air elements are expressed by verbs such as *lidot* (to fly) and the noun *nemiernieks* (rebel; *lit.*: the non-peaceful one). The eternity of the new leader, his exception from the community of mortals was, according to Aspazija's text, granted to Ulmanis by his ability to be constantly reborn. This ability is underlined by the statement that he, even though born in flesh (i.e. as a mortal), has been transformed and has overcome the bodily, physical temporality of existence. The final line, urging the leader not to fear the storms, is his apotheosis. He is rewarded with the title of a lord who reigns over storms, as he subjugates political storms and flames to his will. The end of the poem is structured in terms of the end of history – the renewal of nature in a transfigured, leader of the "natural forces" is the end of the temporal category, as he is here to stay for eternity, capable to be reborn and to stop history which is a source of trouble and uncertainty.

In order to view "The Hymn" in the poetic context of other Aspazija's texts dedicated to Ulmanis, we suggest to look at her poetry collection *Kaisītās rozes* (The Scattered Roses). Different opinions have been expressed about the texts in this collection. The linguist Rasma Sināte has pointed out that at least some of the texts have been composed before Ulmanis's rule and already published in Social Democratic collections, and thus were not referring to the authoritarian period (Sināte 1968: 92–93). We, however, find that the following opinion of Bruno Kalniņš, the leader of Social Democrats, is more convincing: "[I]t is quite characteristic that Aspazija included epigrams from this democratic era in *The Scattered Roses* [...] which, according to their content, could also be attributed to the Ulmanis dictatorship" (Kalniņš 1968: 94). It is interesting that Kalniņš himself had thought earlier that the texts in *The Scattered Roses* contained a hidden critique of the regime, but later renounced that view (Kalniņš 1968: 93–94). We need to keep in mind that he and other diaspora Latvian authors did not have access to many sources. In Soviet Latvia it was the opposite – authors sometimes had access to various classified sources, but were not free to publish their findings and to make use of Western theoretical novelties.

The title *The Scattered Roses* may be interpreted within the European tradition of glorification and apotheosis in various mythological, poetical and political performative practices. Roses, scattered from above over someone or under their feet, were used in the glorification ceremonies of various European sovereigns. In the medieval literature, rose was also a symbol of mystical religious experience. The triumphal element of the rose symbolism was used during the Ulmanis regime when welcoming the new leader on his visits to various regions of Latvia. The newspaper *Jaunākās Ziņas* (The Most Recent News) regularly published photos of these visits, where girls were scattering flowers in front of the leader. For example, a report titled "Expecting the Leader" (*Vadoņa jausma*) by writer and journalist Ādolfs Erss depicts a visit of Ulmanis to the town of Pļaviņas in June 1936. A photo shows two teenage girls, dressed in white, walking before Ulmanis and throwing around petals of white flowers from baskets that they are holding (Erss 1937: 17). The motto of *The Scattered Roses* volume clearly invokes the tradition of rose as a sign of triumph and a ceremonial gift: "A small rose for this one, a small rose for that one, a whole armful [of roses] for the Leader"⁵ (Aspazija 1936: no page indicated). The title of the first subchapter of this poetry collection is "*Ģēnija aicinājums*" (The Calling of the Genius) which, as well as its dedication "*Tautas vadonim Dr. K. Ulmanim*" (To the leader of the people, Dr. K. Ulmanis), augments the pathos. The first poem in the collection holds a title "*Vadonim Dr. K. Ulmanim*" (almost identical to the subchapter title), and its content is almost identical to that of "The Hymn", with a new three-line verse added (placed before the last verse). In the third line of the first verse, a rider (*jājējs*) is now mentioned instead of the stars (*zvaigznājs*). The following text of the newly added verse shows a less festive and more doubtful mood:

Maybe the great dream of your life will not be fulfilled,
But nonetheless souls warm themselves by it,
As the sea gets warm after the sunset (Aspazija 1936: 7)⁶

This implies that the Latvians will remember the Leader even after he is no longer physically present and after darkness comes (following the sunset), which can also be interpreted as an allegory of death. The Leader like the sun still provides warmth – even when his aim, the prosperity of the people, is not achieved despite all the physical and intellectual capacities of the superhero. Various heroes of European mythological landscapes, such as King Arthur in England or Lāčplēsis in the Latvian

5 The original text in Latvian: "*Šim rozīte, tam rozīte, Vadonim pilnu klēpi*" (Aspazija 1936: no page indicated).

6 The original text in Latvian: "*Varbūt tev mūžā lielais sapnis nepiepildās, / Bet tomēr dvēseles pie viņa sildās, / Kā jūra silta top pēc saules rieta*" (Aspazija 1936: 7).

national movement, did not win or achieve their goal. They temporarily passed away or moved to a faraway place from where they can still exert their influence and also promise to return or to keep fighting against the enemies of their people. Ulmanis's physical life ended in a Soviet camp, and his body was never found and identified. In a way, this fact has added a vital element to his mythological biography, to this day symbolically providing the immortality described repeatedly by Aspazija. In her poetic imagination the image of the Leader has religious features; just like in Christianity, it is associated with resurrection. See, for instance, the poem "*Liieldienu zvani*" (Easter Bells) with its lines: "We are the new casting of the ancient bells, / We are the Easter message in the tomb vault" (Aspazija 1936: 12)⁷. An exalted portrayal of the Leader as the embodiment of goodness was also expressed in her personal correspondence: "Only the kind heart of our dear president keeps me going. Oh, how good he is!" (Aspazija 1938).

Conclusions. The ruler and his solitude – a non-democratic scenario of the poetics of power

This article presents the analysis of selected poetic works by Aspazija, in which she addresses Kārlis Ulmanis – the new, self-imposed leader of the authoritarian regime in Latvia after the coup of May 15, 1934. The lyrical genre of these works and especially of the poem "The Hymn to the Leader" (1936) allows to define them as festive odes written in the tradition of the 17th century European Baroque literature. Across Europe, various non-democratic regimes in the 20th century used and updated the genre of the court ode in public communication, applying the allegorical *topoi* of the absolutism period to the new authoritarian leaders. Glorification as a multimedial ideological process often took the shape of open-air festivals in both of these ideological paradigms and historical epochs – the Baroque and the 20th century interwar period. Their common element was the performative action used to stage the miraculous deeds of a new leader whose actions had revised the history of his society by turning it into a new, socially and politically unified and homogeneous group, loyal to the leader and free from diversity of interests. Conflicts were allegedly overcome and were never to return, thanks to the supernatural abilities and knowledge of the new leader. These features provided him with a special place within the cosmogony of the new regime – at the very top of the political universe, unreachable and currently unreachable by the

7 The original Latvian text: "*Mēs seno zvanu jaunais pārlējums, / Mēs kapu velvē Liieldienvēstījums*" (Aspazija 1936: 12).

community of observers, into which the post-democratic society of actors was to be transfigured. This kind of hierarchy produced the key element of the sacred status of Ulmanis – his supernatural solitude and an emotional Baroque-shaped weight on his shoulders as a price paid for being the demiurge of the new political reality.

While the hymn was the dominant literary genre in which Aspazija celebrated Ulmanis and his regime, she also expressed similar ideas in other instances of public communication, presenting the new leader as a symbolic power or a natural force able to radically change the situation. Aspazija's poetic vocabulary is that of symbolism combined with elements of archaic mythology – for instance, the themes of creationism whereby the category of time is at the same time compressed into the frame of a miraculous rapidity of will and expanded into an endless realm of repetitive eternity of the rebirth of the leader. Christian motives, together with Old Testament plots and imagery, added even more sacred features to the image of Ulmanis.

At the same time, Aspazija's participation in the glorification campaign of Ulmanis is a part of a sad story about trying to survive under the rule of various political regimes that rapidly succeed each other and also bring violence and persecution to artists. It sends a message about those intellectuals (both today and in the past) who take over the voices of others and, by indulging in self-censorship, silence their own critical voices. During the short period of the first Soviet occupation, Aspazija also tried to be useful to the new regime. The regime, however, used her for its own purposes. Writer and Soviet activist Jūlijs Lācis wrote to Žanis Spure (after the Soviet occupation in 1940 he was the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia, previously having been an employee of the USSR secret services) about a poem sent to him by Aspazija: "It seems to me that its printing depends on the extent to which it would provide an opportunity to split the bourgeois circles" (Eversone 2023: 49). The compilers of Aspazija's poetry collections later, during the second period of Soviet occupation, used an unpublished manuscript where she congratulated the Red Army on its arrival in Latvia as an excuse to publish her works at all (Labrence 1965: 6). There is also unpublished poem that she dedicated "to the creative genius, the bearer of the sun, the great comrade Stalin" (Aspazija 1940: 1).

However, the zenith of Aspazija's fame was already behind – symbolically, the attitude of the new authorities was shown in September 1940 by changing the name of Aspazija Street in the town of Saldus to Leons Paegle Street (*Jauni nosaukumi* 1940: 7). An underground communist writer was much more acceptable to the Soviet system than a "bourgeois" writer. Jānis Niedre, one of the founders of the Latvian Soviet Writers' Union, described her as "a typical bourgeois romantic whose revolutionarism is expressed in romantic fantasy" (Niedre 1941: 693).

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Tālas noskaņas vārdos, krāsās un līnijās: Rainis, Aspazija un divi latviešu gleznotāji

Distant Moods in Words, Colours and Lines: Rainis, Aspazija and Two Latvian Painters

Atslēgvārdi:

literatūras un vizuālās mākslas sakari un
mijiedarbība,

latviešu glezniecība,

latviešu grāmatniecība,

Vilhelms Purvītis,

Voldemārs Zeltiņš

Keywords:

contacts and interaction of literature
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Latvian painting,

Latvian book industry,

Vilhelms Purvītis,

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Kopsavilkums

Aspazijas mājā Jūrmalā, Dubultos, viena otrai blakus aplūkojamās Voldemāra Zeltiņa un Vilhelma Purvīša gleznotas ainavas. Lai izsekotu Aspazijas un Raiņa saiknēm ar abiem māksliniekiem, rakstā aptverti dažādi aspekti: *ut pictura poesis* principa izpausmes vārdos un attēlos; glezniecības, grāmatu mākslas un preses grafikas jautājumi; mākslinieku un literātu sociālais tīklojums u. c. Nosaukumā ietverta atsauce uz Raiņa dzejas krājumu "Tālas noskaņas zilā vakarā" (1903), secinot, ka šis iepriekš retā vārda "noskaņa" literārais lietojums ietekmēja leksiku, ar kuras palīdzību latviešu valodā ierasts raksturot 19. gadsimta beigu un 20. gadsimta sākuma mākslu.

1905. gadā Zeltiņš darināja dekorāciju metus Raiņa lugai "Uguns un nakts" un ilustrācijas dzejnieka iecerētam žurnālam "Virpulis", pirms šos plānus izjauca cariskā režīma reakcija un dzejnieka bēgšana no Krievijas impērijas. Zeltiņa pašnāvība 1909. gadā pārvilka svītru turpinājuma iespējai.

Rainis un Purvītis galvenokārt sadarbojās 20. gadsimta 20. gados, kad Purvītis radīja vāku zīmējumus Raiņa dzejas krājumiem un abi vadīja Latvijas mākslas izstādes sarīkošanu Stokholmā. Pēc Raiņa nāves Aspazija, kuras aizrautība ar Purvīša mākslu sākās 19. gadsimta 90. gadu beigās un atbalsojās viņas 20. gadsimta 20. gadu dzejā, līdz mūža beigām goda vietā savā mājoklī glabāja kādu viņa ainavu.

Summary

Among works of art in the Aspazija House in Dubulti, Jūrmala, there are two landscape paintings by Voldemārs Zeltiņš and Vilhelms Purvītis. The article explores the connections of Aspazija and Rainis with these artists, embracing various aspects: the principle *ut pictura poesis* in words and images; painting, book art and press graphics; the social network of art and literary figures, etc. The title of this article refers to Rainis's poetry collection *Tālas noskaņas zilā vakarā* (Distant Moods in a Blue Evening, 1903), suggesting that this literary use of the previously rare word *noskaņa* (mood) inspired the vocabulary in which the art of the late 19th and early 20th centuries is described in Latvian.

In 1905, Zeltiņš started working on the scenic design for Rainis's play *Uguns un nakts* (Fire and Night) and illustrations for the magazine *Virpulis* (Whirlwind) conceived by Rainis, until these plans were destroyed by the Tsarist reaction and the poet's flight from the Russian Empire. The suicide of Zeltiņš in 1909 put an end to any sequel.

Rainis and Purvītis cooperated in the 1920s when Purvītis made cover drawings for collections of Rainis's poetry, and they organized an exhibition of Latvian art in Stockholm. After Rainis's death Aspazija, whose fascination with the art of Purvītis originated in the late 1890s and was reflected in her poetry of the 1920s, treasured a landscape by him until the end of her life.

Ievads

"[...] es tūlīn iedomājos zilganu novakari bez saules, kad debess izskatās sevišķi plaša un tāļa, un caur šo tāļumu manās ausīs, klusi šūpodamās, nāk ilgu pilna melodija. Tā sacel manā dvēselē gaidas, kuras ar neapturamu spēku velk mani kaut kur tāļumā..." Latvijas 19. un 20. gadsimta mijas vizuālās mākslas pazinēji šo rindu pirmavotu vispirms censtos rast atsauksmēs par Vilhelma Purvīša (1872–1945) glezniecību, turpretī literatūras vēsturniekiem uzreiz būtu skaidrs, ka tas ir fragments no Kārļa Skalbes (1879–1945) recenzijas par Raiņa (1865–1929) dzejas krājumu "Tālas noskaņas zilā vakarā" (Rainis 1903; Skalbe 1903: 516). Tā nosaukums pauž redzes un dzirdes tēlu kopspēli, kas tolaik Latvijā dažādās izpausmēs nodarbināja ievērojamākos jaunos gleznotājus un saista arī viņu mākslas mūsdienu pētniekus.

Vienu no raksta tēmas ierosmēm deva divas viena otrai līdzās skatāmas un apmēram vienlaikus radītas gleznas Aspazijas (1865–1943) mājas salonā Dubultos. Voldemāra Zeltiņa (1879–1909) ainava "Bērzi" (ap 1900) savulaik piederēja Rainim un ir deponēta no Latvijas Nacionālā rakstniecības un mūzikas muzeja (turpmāk – LNRMM). Turpretī Purvīša ainava "Ziedošās ābeles" (1900) no Jūrmalas muzeja simboliski pārstāv slavenā meistara nezināmu dabasskatu, ko dzejniece paturēja savā tuvumā līdz mūža beigām. Ko par abiem dzejniekiem un abiem māksliniekiem var pavēstīt šo darbu klātbūtne? Raksta autores monogrāfiskajos pētījumos par Zeltiņu un Purvīti mazliet iezīmēta viņu sadarbība ar Raini (Ābele 2021: 63, 128–130, 135, 199; Ābele 2022: 501–503), daļu atbilstošo faktu atstājot ārpus izklāsta varbūtējai papildu izpētīšanai. 2024. gadā Aspazijas mājā norisinājās izstāde "Krāsu dzejnieks. Vilhelms Purvītis – Aspazijas kaimiņš Dubultos", kuras vēstījumā muzeja speciālistes Dace Kaukule un Signe Cīrule kopā ar mākslas vēsturnieci Baibu Gusti apvienoja divas pamattēmas, parādot gan Purvīti kā Jūrmalas iemītnieku un gleznotāju 20. gadsimta 20.–30. gadu vasarās, gan Aspazijas iepriekšējo saskari ar viņa mākslu un personību kopš 19. gadsimta 90. gadu beigām (Aspazijas māja 2024). Izstāde rosināja sekot tajā savītajiem pavedieniem, šķetināt tos, pārbaudīt un papildināt ar citos avotos atrastām ziņām.

20. gadsimta gaitā Purvīša un Raiņa vārdi kopā ir minēti bieži, dažādiem autoriem vispārēji iezīmējot nacionālās kultūras kanona siluetu. "Ne velti Purvītim latviešu tēlotājā mākslā piedēvē tādu pašu nozīmi kā Rainim literatūrā," raksta mākslas zinātnieks Pēteris Savickis (1925–2015). (Savickis 1971: 180) Tomēr bez tuvinājuma konkrētībai šādu apgalvojumu variācijas viegli kļūst par tautoloģiskām klišejām. Abu virsotņu piesaukšana ir kalpojusi arī tik klajam nacionālam pašcildinājumam kā vērīnīgu kultūrvēsturisku apceru autora Hugo Vītola (1900–1976) atzinums: "Latvietim

tikai tas darbs ir mākslas darbs, kas rosina un izglīto. Tālab Rainis bija Latvijas izglītības ministrs un Purvītis Latvijas Mākslas akadēmijas rektors.” (Vītols 1975: 182) Augstā iedziļināšanās pakāpē Purviša glezniecības paralēles ar Raiņa jaunradi nodarbināja mākslas zinātnieci Tatjanu Kačalovu (1915–2010), kas disertācijas noslēgumā secina: “Purvītis ievērojams ar to, ka novedis ainavas “muzikalitāti” gandrīz līdz seno meistarū monumentālās un dekoratīvās glezniecības līmenim. Tas īpaši spilgti izpaužas tur, kur viņa ainavu glezniecības idejiskais saturs sabalsojas ar Raiņa daiļradi [...]” (Kačalova 1966: 506) Arī plašam lasītāju lokam paredzētajā biogrāfiskajā monogrāfijā viņa citē dzejnieka domas par Purviša veikumu un glezniecības analīzē izmanto salīdzinājumu ar Raiņa dzeju (Kačalova 1971: 92, 136, 143). Literatūrzinātniece Saulcerīte Viese (1932–2004), pētot “plašo kultūras materiālu,” ar ko saskārusies Aspazija, pievērs uzmanību Purviša mākslas iespaidu atbalsojumiem viņas publicistikā un dzejā (Viese 2000).

Sekojo personību saskares epizodēm un savienojot tās ar noteiktām līnijām vai varbūtības punktiem, šajā rakstā paredzēts pievērst uzmanību dažāda rakstura pārādībām – kopš antīkās senatnes pazīstamās saiknes *ut pictura poesis* (latīņu val. “dzeja kā glezna”) iedzīvinājumiem vārdos un attēlos, glezniecībai, grāmatu un preses grafikai, mākslas un literatūras darbinieku sociālo saišu tīklojumam, valstiski un starptautiski nozīmīgiem kultūrpolitiskiem centieniem, mākslas darbu piederības vēsturei. Kopainas līniju spilgtumu dažviet pastiprinās saskanīga vai polemiska krustošanās ar aspektiem, ko izzinājuši citi autori – gan Raiņa un Aspazijas literārā mantojuma speciālisti, gan mākslas un grāmatniecības vēsturnieki.

Izklāsta nodaļu kārtojums būs pretējs mākslas vēsturē ierastajai secībai, kas liktu sākt ar Purvīti un turpināt ar Zeltiņu. Šajā gadījumā svarīgi, ka dzejnieku sadarbība ar Zeltiņu norisinājās 1904.–1905. gadā, turpretī galvenie notikumi viņu attiecībās ar Purvīti aptver Latvijas brīvvalsts pirmo desmitgadi, lai gan to priekšvēsture sakņojas gadsimtu mījā.

No bērzāja gaismēnu raksta līdz liesmu virpulim. Voldemārs Zeltiņš

Rainim piederējušajā

ainavā “Bērzi” Voldemārs Zeltiņš attēlojis gaiši plankumainus stumbrus pavasara saulē pret gaismu, kas aužas cauri lapotņu pirmajam zaļumam, priekšplānu nosedzis ar ieslīpi krītošu ēnu vēdekli un tālākajā plānā gan turpinājis ēnu rakstu, gan iegleznojis gaisīgas ziedošu koku un krūmu kupenas. Pirms dažiem gadiem LNRMM krājumā tas vēl bija aprakstīts un arī Aspazijas muzejam deponēts kā nezināma gleznotāja darinājums, taču jau 1994. gadā versija par Zeltiņu kā iespējamo autoru piesaistīja Latvijas Mākslas akadēmijas Mākslas zinātnes nodaļas diplomandes

Gunas Pigitas uzmanību. Bakalaura darbā par šo mākslinieku viņa konstatēja, ka, "tāpat kā vēlāk gleznotajos darbos, arī šeit caur lapotni krītošā saules gaisma zemi it kā sadala joslās" un "vertikālais ritms radīts ar koku stumbriem" (Pigita 1994: 36), veidojot ritmisku "rūtojumu", ko izcēla kā vienu no galvenajām Zeltiņa kompozīciju uzbūves pazīmēm (Pigita 1994: 33).

Pārliecību par Zeltiņa autorību nostiprina ne tikai daži radniecīgi viņa darbi citās kolekcijās, bet arī ap 1900. gadu uzņemta fotogrāfija ar jauno mākslinieku gleznojam brīvā dabā (LNRMM, inv. Nr. RTMM 419938). Audeklā uz viņa etižu trijkāja saskatāma cita, bet ļoti līdzīga kompozīcija ar ēnu plankumiem priekšplānā un kokiem tālāk. Ainava "Bērzi" palīdz iztēloties jaunā mākslinieka draugam vēlākajam restauratoram Kārlim Jurjānam (1884–1951) atmiņā palikušu "impresionistisku gaismas efektu gleznu," kurā Zeltiņš attēlojis "saules drebošās gaismas aušanos cauri rīta miglai" (Siliņš 1980: 246). Darbs droši vien gleznots ap 1900. gadu, kad viņš pameta mācības Venjamina Blūma (*Wenjamin Bluhm*, 1861–1920) zīmēšanas un gleznošanas skolā Rīgā, lai patstāvīgi strādātu plenērā, sekodams Vilhelma Purviša un Īzaka Levitāna (*Isaac Levitan*, 1860–1900) ainavās saskatītajām ierosmēm, bet vēl nebūdams sasniedzis savai glezniecībai pēcāk raksturīgo ekspresīvo izteiksmi. Tāpat kā citām zināmajām Zeltiņa eļļas gleznām, šim dabasskata attēlojumam nav paraksta.

1903. gada vasaru Zeltiņš un Jurjāns pavadīja dažādās vietās Bauskā un tās apkaimē, kur viņu biedri bohēmiskā vasarnieku brālībā bija gan Pēterburgas Ķeizarskās mākslas akadēmijas glezniecības studenti Aleksandrs Romans (1878–1911) un Jānis Roberts Tillbergs (1880–1972), gan Rīgas Politehniskā institūta inženierzinātņu students Alfrēds Razums (1880–1929). (Siliņš 1980: 243, 244; Ābele 2021: 116, 117) Razums ne tikai "arvien veda kroniku jeb dienas grāmatu, kurā bībeliskos vārdos un toņos aprakstīja visu, kas noticis ar mūsu draugiem" (Krumesis 1934: 53), bet arī bija palīdzējis izdot Raiņa pirmo dzejas krājumu "Tālas noskaņas zilā vakarā", kas tieši 1903. gada jūnijā nonāca pie lasītājiem (Ābola 1977: 456, 457).

Atšķirībā no iepriekšējā gada Zeltiņš toruden vairs nedevās uz Pēterburgu, kur bija pārtraucis mēģinājumu iegūt akadēmisku izglītību glezniecībā, bet kādu laiku padzīvoja pie Edvarda Treimaņa-Zvārguļa (1866–1950) Cēsīs, ilustrēdams topošo satīriskās dzejas antoloģiju "Uz karstiem ķieģeļiem" (Treimanis 1904), kas ir viņa pirmais darbs grāmatu grafikā. Gadu vēlāk, 1904. gada augusta beigās, šo apkopojumu "uz laba papīra, lielā formātā, 18 drukas loksnes biezu, ar modernu vāku un 50 ilustrācijām tekstā, kuras zīmējis mākslinieks Vold[emārs] Zeltiņš," laida klajā pazīstamais grāmattirgotājs un izdevējs Dāvids Zeltiņš (1867–1943) (Zeltiņš 1904). Viens no literāro darbu 67 autoriem krājumā bija Rainis ar diviem dzejoļiem no "Tālām noskaņām zilā vakarā" – "Labdaris" un "Saimnieciskas pamatmācības" (Treimanis 1904: 194).



1. att. Aspazijas mājas salons Jūrmalā, Dubultos, Zigfrīda Meierovica prospektā 18–20. Stūrī – Voldemāra Zeltiņa glezna "Bērzi" (ap 1900, Latvijas Nacionālais rakstniecības un mūzikas muzejs, RTMM 124664) un Vilhelma Purviša glezna "Ziedošas ābeles" (1900, Jūrmalas muzejs, JPM Pmk. 6365). Kristiānas Ābeles foto, 2025

Fig. 1. Salon of Aspasija House at 18–20 Zigfrīda Meierovica Prospekt in Dubulti, Jūrmala. In the corner – painting *Birches* by Voldemārs Zeltiņš (ca. 1900, Latvian National Museum of Literature and Music, RTMM 124664) and painting *Blossoming Apple-Trees* by Vilhelms Purvītis (1900, Jūrmala Museum, JPM Pmk. 6365). Photo: Kristiāna Ābele, 2025

Zīmējumu oriģinālus, kas nav saglabājušies, nezināms gravieris iespieduma vajadzībām atkārtoja kokgrebuma tehnikā, tādējādi saasinādamus daudzu motīvu laužīto lineārismu, kas tomēr labi atbilda satīriskajam literārajam saturam. Kritika ilustrācijas uzņēma atturīgi. Līgotņi Jēkabs (1874–1942) recenzijā par antoloģiju atzīmē: "Zīmējumi tekstā man nepatīk; vinjetes labākas." (Līgotņi Jēkabs 1904: 1517) Bīderu Juris (Juris Bebris, 1859–1951) izlikās paraustām plecus: "Karikatūras grāmātā – kā jau nu karikatūras. Viņām maz nozīmes." (Bīderu Juris 1904) Plašāk izteicās Augusts Saulietis (1869–1933), bet viņa vērtējums nebija atzinīgs: "Zīmējumi (no V[oldemāra] Z[eltiņa]) gan nu diezin kā grāmatu nerotā. Viņi grib piederēt pie tādu darbu šķiras, kas lai ar nedaudz līnijām priekšmetu vai iejūsmu pilnīgi raksturotu. Bet tādas līnijas spēj vilkt tikai gatavi mākslinieki; V[oldemārs] Z[eltiņš] vēl ne tuvu ne." (Saulietis 1905: 144)



2. att. Voldemārs Zeltiņš. Vāka zīmējums žurnālam "Virpulis" ("Virpuls"). 1905. Latvijas Nacionālais rakstniecības un mūzikas muzejs, RTMM 25032

Fig. 2. Voldemārs Zeltiņš. Cover drawing for the magazine *Virpulis* (Whirlwind). 1905. Latvian National Museum of Literature and Music, RTMM 25032

Daudz labākās domās par Zeltiņa līniju izteiksmību, lakonisko tēlveidi un asprātību, ar kādu viņš bija attēlojis dažādus nelaimes putnus un iedomu pūpēžus, noteikti bija Rainis, kaut arī viņa dzejas lappusi izdevumā rotā vien tiražēti tipografikas elementi. Pēc tam kad 1905. gada 17. (30.) oktobrī izsludinātais cara Nikolaja II manifesti atcēla grāmatu un preses priekšcenzūru, Rainis kopā ar Zeltiņu iecerēja veidot humoristisku žurnālu "Virpulis" (Rainis 1925b: 187), kas ziņās par gaidāmajiem latviešu preses jaunumiem bija pieteikts kā satīrisks nedēļraksts "Virpulī" Raiņa vadībā no 1906. gada sākuma (Rīgas Avīze 1905). Nodoms nepiepildījās, jo dzejnieks 1905. gada decembrī pameta Krievijas impēriju, kļūdams par politisku trimdinieku. 20. gados viņš atcerējās, ka Zeltiņš žurnālam uzzīmējis "dažas karikatūras, kuras 1906. gadā bija palikušas Rīgā un pazudušas" (Rainis 1925b: 187).

Taču ir saglabājies vāka zīmējums (LNRMM, inv. Nr. RTMM 25032), ko Rainis atskatā atzina par "raksturīgu tam laikam un māksliniekam" (Rainis 1925b: 187). "Virpulis" ir personificēts kā debesīs virs pilsētas vai – ticamāk – spokainām krāsmatām no liesmu mēlēm un tumsas apmetņa savīts dinamisks tēls, kurā jūgendstila līniju līgani dejojošais rotaļīgums apvienojas ar draudīgu ekspresiju un sejas bērnišķīgais

meitenīgums – ar līdzību cilvēkam norvēģu mākslinieka Edvarda Munka (*Edvard Munch*, 1863–1944) slavenās kompozīcijas “Kliedziens” melnbaltajā litogrāfijas versijā. Sabalsošanos nemazina tas, ka Munka cilvēks saulrietā aizspiež ausis, veltīgi mēģinādamis paglābties no dabas kliedziena, jo tas izlaužas no viņa paša mutes. Tēlveides un stilistikas sakarību meklējumos iespējams iet soli tālāk par “pārsteidzošas līdzības” (Ābele 2021: 128) iespaida vispārīgumu. Munks litogrāfiju iespieda 1895. gadā Berlīnē, un 1905. gadā šis grafikas darbs ir reproducēts Hermaņa Esveina (*Hermann Eßwein*, 1877–1934) monogrāfijā, kuru kā septīto laidienu sērijā “Modernie ilustratori” Minhenē un Leipcigā publicēja Reinharda Pipera (*Reinhard Piper*, 1879–1953) izdevniecība *R. Piper & Co* (Eßwein 1905: 44). Zeltiņa mūžā nebija ceļojumu ārpus Krievijas impērijas robežām, taču vācu grāmatniecības jaunumu straujā un regulārā nonākšana Rīgā, pieejamība tirgotavās un specializētos lasāmgaldos, kā arī minētā izdevuma esamība tagadējā Latvijas Nacionālā mākslas muzeja bibliotēkas krājumā padara iespējamu, ka “Virpuļa” zīmētājs un varbūt arī Rainis šo grāmatu zināja.

Gunas Pigitas komentārs, ka, pēc viņas domām, “Virpuļa” vāka zīmējumā “atrodama netieša 1905. gada politisko notikumu atblāzma” (Pigita 1994: 45), varētu būt pastiprināms drošā apgalvojumā par tiešu saikni starp revolucionāro situāciju un virpuļa iespaidīgo plosīšanos, ko pēccenzūra uz karstām pēdām pakļautu aizliegumiem. Salīdzinājumā ar šo biedinošo tēlu Zeltiņa tolaik zīmētais vāks žurnālam “Kāvi” ar mutuļojošām nakts debesīm virs sniegotas ziemas ainavas atgādina vien krāšņi nemierīgu sapņojumu. Iespiešanai periodiskajos izdevumos paredzētos zīmējumus atšķirībā no gleznām Zeltiņš lielākoties parakstīja, un arī vāku kompozīcijās katrs apakšējais stūris ir “pienaglots” ar vienu no viņa vecās ortogrāfijas iniciāļiem W. S. Nākamajā rudenī jau trimdā Rainis acīmredzot vēlējās, lai tieši Voldemārs Zeltiņš darinātu vāku viņa rediģētajam “Virpuļa kalendāram”. Tā izdevējs – jau minētais Dāvids Zeltiņš – 1906. gada 23. oktobrī dzejniekam atbildēja, ka šai nolūkā tomēr griezies pie Alfrēda Purica (1876–1936) Pēterburgā, jo Voldemāra Zeltiņa Rīgā neesot (Knope 1979: 338).

Žurnālam paredzētajā vāka zīmējumā virpuli šķiet veidojam divi spēki – uguns un nakts. Kad Jaunais Rīgas latviešu teātris Rīgas Latviešu amatnieku palīdzības biedrības namā 1905. gadā gatavojās iestudēt Raiņa nesen pabeigto un “Mājas Viesa Mēnešrakstā” publicēto drāmu “Uguns un nakts”, Zeltiņš “bija uzņēmies gleznot dekorācijas” (Rainis 1925a: 9). Lugas autors atcerējās: “[...] priekš kara skici tiku vēl redzējis, – bija skaista simfonija sarkanā un zaļā. V. Zeltiņam jau toreiz tika izmaksāta samērā liela summa darba iesākumam, kas rādīja, kādas cerības tanī laikā lika uz šo lietu; vēlākais ir tikai turpinājums šim sākumam. Reakcija izjauca šos plānus.” (Rainis 1925a: 9) Par pirmuzveduma ieceri un jaunā gleznotāja dalību tajā liecina arī Aspazijas atmiņas par lugas tapšanu un likteni: “Kad lielais darbs bija pabeigts,

Bisenieks [domāts Bisnieks] piesolīja 500 rubļus "Uguns un nakts" dekorāciju un kostīmu izgatavošanai. Mākslinieks Zeltiņš izfantazēja lugas skatuvisko ietērpu. Bet tas notika 1905. gada revolūcijas laikā – mums bija jābēg. Vēlāk Mierlauka inscenējums parādījās ar Kugas dekorācijām." (Aspazija 1966: 52, 53) Raiņa un Aspazijas atmiņas neatklāj, cik cieši Zeltiņa "skaistās simfonijas" iecere sekoja lugā ietvertajām vizuālo efektu norādēm, ko analizējusi literatūrzinātniece Zane Šiliņa, pētot nakts tēmas traktējumu Raiņa jaunradē (Šiliņa 2022: 220, 221).

Minētais Jānis Kuga (1878–1966) pirms 1908. gadā uzsāktās sadarbības ar Jauno Rīgas teātri (1908–1915) scenogrāfa izglītību un pieredzi ieguva Štiglica Centrālajā tehniskās zīmēšanas skolā Pēterburgā (1899–1905) un ar skolas piešķirto ārzemju stipendiju Rietumeiropā (1906–1908). Turpretī Zeltiņš pirms "skaistās simfonijas sarkanā un zaļā" bija paguvis uzkrāt dažus amatiera piedzīvojumus šajā nozarē – gan izraisījis skandālus 1901. vai 1902. gadā Ērgļos un 1903. gada beigās Ļaudonā par alegoriskiem kailfigūru attēlojumiem vietējo biedrību skatuvēm izgatavotos priekškaros, gan izpelnījies atzinību par bērzu birzs dekorāciju, ko pēc Teodora Zaļkalna (1876–1972) meta 1903. gada pavasarī bija uzgleznojis Emiļa Melngaiļa (1874–1954) muzikālajam vakaram Pēterburgā (Ābele 2021: 102, 103, 112, 114, 119, 121). Zeltiņš bija pieredzējis daiļkrāsotāja mācekļa gaitas, kas ne tikai izraisīja pastāvīgu iekšēju protestu pret amatnieciskumu, bet arī sniedza iemaņas, kas noderēja, lai piepelnītos ar dekoratīvās glezniecības uzdevumiem.

Nav iespējams paredzēt, vai Raiņa un Zeltiņa kopdarbs žurnālā un teātrī citos apstākļos pēc savstarpēji iedvesmojošā sākuma būtu attīstījies veiksmīgi un kļuvis par enkuru gleznotājam, kura mākslai un personībai no paaudzes paaudzē visbiežāk piedēvētie emocionālie stāvokļi ir bijuši trauksme un nemiers. Varbūt Aspazijai, kam Rainis šķita "nemitīgi purināms, raujams laukā no bezdarbības," "ģēnijs, bet ar vājiem nerviem" (Aspazija 1966: 52, 53), izdotos panākt, ka Zeltiņš neapstājas pusceļā un pat priekšlaikus neiztērē Latviešu amatnieku palīdzības biedrības krājaizdevu kases direktora un teātra finanšu pārziņa Pētera Bisnieka (1854–1911) izsniegto avansu. Pirms varas iestādes teātri 1905. gada decembrī slēdza, trupai izklīstot, un abi dzemnieki patvērās Šveicē, Zeltiņš bija nonācis tik tuvu nacionālās kultūras aktualitāšu epicentram, ka pietrūka nedaudz, lai viņš radītu pirmo scenogrāfiju vienam no latviešu dramaturģijas stūrakmeņiem.

1911. gada 26. janvārī (8. februārī), kad Jaunā Rīgas teātra publika ieraudzīja "Uguns un nakts" vērienīgo pirmuzvedumu Alekša Mierlauka (1866–1943) režijā ar Jāņa Kugas slavenajām dekorācijām, no 1909. gada 31. augusta (13. septembra), ko apēnoja Voldemāra Zeltiņa pašnāvība, šķir gandrīz septiņpadsmit mēneši – šķietami pārāk ilgs laika posms, lai pieļautu kādu saikni starp abiem notikumiem. Tās nav ne laikabiedru liecības par Zeltiņa nāvi, ne mūsdienu monogrāfijā par viņu. Tomēr,

iespējams, ir vērts pievērst uzmanību Kugas vecumdienu atmiņām, ka drīz pēc Aspasijas "Vaidelotes" iestudējuma, kura pirmizrāde Jaunajā Rīgas teātrī notika 1909. gada 20. martā (2. aprīlī), Mierlauks viņu "aicināja grandiozām darbam – "Uguns un nakts" izrādes sagatavošanai": "Pie šī uzveduma strādājām 18 mēnešus, tā [izrāde] prasīja milzīgus līdzekļus un piepūli. Tā nesa jaunu simbolu nacionālai dzīvei, bet arī labāko inscenēto darbu, kāds jebkad bija skatīts uz latviešu skatuvēm." (Akmentiņš 1966: 62)

Norādītais sagatavošanas periods, mazliet pārsniedzot jau minēto laika attālumu no Zeltiņa nāves līdz lugas pirmizrādei, vedina meklēt papildu ziņas par iestudējuma priekšvēsturi. Jaunais Rīgas teātris dramatiskās cenzūras atļauju izrādīt "Uguni un nakti" bija saņēmis 1909. gada martā (Latvija 1909), un 18. (31.) augustā Latviešu skatuves biedrības padome lēma par dārgā, bet publikas ļoti gaidītā iestudējuma finansēšanas veidu – "uzaicināt mākslas draugus uzņemties garantiju par visiem vajadzīgiem izdevumiem un varbūtējo iztrūkumu" (P. 1909). Tātad Mierlauks un Kuga patiešām jau plānoja paredzamos darbus, un Zeltiņš, būdams saistīts ar Jauno Rīgas teātri mazākos scenogrāfiskos projektos, dzīves pēdējās nedēļās noteikti zināja par kolēģu ieceri. Tas varēja noprotamajiem pašnāvības iemesliem – veselības stāvoklim un nelaimīgai mīlestībai – pievienot arī rezignāciju par paša izsappoto "Uguns un nakts" dekorāciju likteni un savu nespēju šajā jomā konkurēt ar diplomēto Kugu, kas turpinājumā, kā rakstīja publicists Osvalds Akmentiņš (1914–2004), ar šo izrādi "blakām Rainim [...] iegāja latviešu kultūras debesīs" (Akmentiņš 1966: 62).

Zeltiņa bērēs Jaunā Rīgas teātra un Latviešu skatuves biedrības vārdā no viņa atvadījās draugs Pāvils Gruzna (1878–1950), sacīdams, ka aizgājējs vēl maz "padarījis skatuves mākslas labā, bet arī tas, kas padarīts, liecinot par viņa karsto un sajūsmības pilno mākslinieka dvēseli" (Krūza 1909). Ko Rainis domāja un iztēlē skatīja, rakstīdams, ka "vēlākais ir tikai turpinājums šim sākumam" – 1905. gada lolotajiem un reakcijas izjauktajiem plāniem? Viņam par to varēja atgādināt Zeltiņa maigie "Bērzi" un nevaldāmais "Virpulis" dzejnieka "mazajā mīlestības muzejā," kas viņa dzīves vidē tapa no "biedru un draugu laipnās piemiņas" mākslinieciskajām zīmēm (Rainis 1911), taču mūsdienu interesentiem atbilde uz šo jautājumu ir nepieejams noslēpums.

Galotņu saskaršanās. Vilhelms Purvītis

Kad Rīgas Mākslas biedrība (*Rigascher Kunstverein*) 1898. gada decembrī Basteja bulvārī atklāja savu mākslas salonu ar Baltijas mākslinieku darbu izstādi, kurā gandrīz puse no pusotra simta eksponātu bija gadu iepriekš Pēterburgas Ķeizariskās mākslas akadēmijas diplomdarbu konkursā uzvaru guvušā Vilhelma Purviša gleznas un studijas, redzētais izraisīja auglīgu apvērsumu Voldemāra Zeltiņa un dažu citu Blūma skolas audzēkņu skatījumā uz dabu, vedinot viņus atbrīvoties no 19. gadsimta reālisma sausās

detalizācijas un doties svaigu brīvdabas iespaidu meklējumos. Rainis tolaik bija nometinājumā Pleskavā, toties laikraksta "Dienas Lapa" līdzstrādniece Aspazija vēl pēc izstāžu nomaiņas nevarēja "atraisīties no iespaida, kuru uz viņu atstājušas Purviša k[un]ga gleznas ar savām teiksmainajām krāsu kompozīcijām". Viņa rakstīja, ka "visas šīs krāsu skaņas un skaņu krāsas modina tās neapzināmās jūtas, par kurām mēs nevaram noteikt, vai tās vairāk saistās pie aplūkotā priekšmeta jeb vai dvēsele pati, kādā dzīvā vietā iekustināta, rada tālāk pati savus tēlus un, apkārtnei aizmirsdama, aizlido tālāk sapņu pasaulē" (Aspazija 1899).

Rainis, saņemdam no Aspazijas ziņas par Rīgas kultūras dzīvi, apsvēra, ka varētu kaut ko rakstīt par latviešu mākslu, lūdza sagādāt Jaņa Rozentāla (1866–1916) adresi (Rainis 1899/1900: 164), kā arī ieminējās, ka Rozentāls vai Rihards Zariņš (1869–1939) būtu piemēroti ilustratori Aspazijas lugai "Vaidelote" (Rainis 1900: 186), tomēr Purviša viņa vēstulēs minēto personu skaitā gadsimtu mijā nebija. 1903. un 1904. gadā abi dzejnieki noteikti izmantoja iespējas redzēt daudz Purviša darbu izstādēs Rīgā un Majoros, taču nav zināms, kad un kādā ceļā Rainis un Aspazija paši kļuva par viņa ainavas īpašniekiem. 1905. gada notikumu laikā Baltijas slavenākais gleznotājs neparakstīja Raiņa sastādīto "Latviešu intelīģences darbinieku prasību pēc pilsoniskām tiesībām Latvijā" un vērsās pret sabiedrībā samilzušo etnisko konfrontāciju (Ābele 2022: 448, 449). Purvītis izturējies iecietīgi un reizē bažīgi pret sava audzēkņa Ģederta Eliasa (1887–1975) un citu jauniešu iesaistīšanos revolucionārajā kustībā (Slava, Kaupere 2012: 303), tomēr viņa būtība bija pretēja skaisti postošajam Zeltiņa "Virpulim" – Purvītis Latvijas vēsturē nederēja par vecās kārtības grāvēju, bet izrādījās neatsverams, kad vajadzēja būvēt jaunu.

Neatkarīgi no politisko vēju virzieniem un ģeogrāfiskā attāluma starp Baltiju un Šveici tautieši sāka ietvert Raini un Purvīti vienā nacionālās kultūras galotņu siluetā. Apcerēdams ainavista darbu izstādi, kas 1911.–1912. gada mijā notika Rīgas pilsētas mākslas muzejā, Viktors Eglītis (1877–1945) sprieda: "[.] iekš tā taču pastāv mākslinieka dzīves cīņa – zaudēt un par jaunu iegūt, ieraugot aizvien jaunus uzdevumus. Pēdējā laikā arī Rainis no sīkiem intīmiem dzejoļiem un sentencēm ar panākumiem devies šekspīriskas drāmas valstī. Par ko lai Purvītim to dziedam?" (Eglītis 1912: 399)

Dzejnieka un gleznotāja sadarbības galvenās pieturzīmes attiecas uz desmitgadi, kad viņi abi kā nacionālās kultūras pīlāri pēc Purviša pārbraukšanas no Norvēģijas, kurp viņam bija izdevies aizceļot 1917. gada rudenī no revolucionārās Petrogradas, un Raiņa atgriešanās no Šveices trimdas strādāja jaunās Latvijas valsts labā. 1920. gadā Purvītis darināja vāku zīmējumus Anša Gulbja (1873–1936) izdotajiem Raiņa dzejas krājumiem "Addio bella", "Čūsku vārdi" un "Uz mājām", kā arī to kopsējumam "Treji loki" (Rainis 1920a, 1920b, 1920c, 1920d). 1920. gada 18. decembrī dzejnieks dienasgrāmatā ierakstīja, ka saņēmis "Uz mājām" un "Čūsku vārdus": "Ņēmu izlasīju. Patīk



3. att. Raiņa dzejas krājums "Addio bella".
Rīga: A. Gulbis, 1920. Vāku zīmējis
Vilhelms Purvītis

Fig. 3. Rainis' poetry collection *Addio bella*.
Rīga: A. Gulbis, 1920. Cover drawing by
Vilhelms Purvītis

ne lasīt, bet atgriezt; daudzums drukas kļūdu atstāj nepatīkamu iespaidu. Ilgi priecājos par vāka zīmējumu." (Rainis 1920e) Šī piezīme vedina domāt, ka iespiedumam izmantotos oriģinālus, no kuriem viens tagad atrodas Latvijas Nacionālajā mākslas muzejā, Rainis iepriekš nebija redzējis. Intas Pujātes (1957–2025) raksta "Vilhelms Purvītis un jūgendstils" angļu un krievu tulkojumos savstarpēji nedaudz atšķirīgā – apgalvojuma un pieļāvuma – formā lasāms par Raini kā sadarbības rosinātāju (Pujāte 2000: 171, 173). Lai gan latviešu oriģināltekstā šī informācija, acīmredzot neatrodot nepieciešamo papildu apstiprinājumu, ir atmesta (salīdzināt Pujāte 2000: 167), Džeimss Hovards Freizers (*James Howard Fraser*, 1934–2013) pārņēma to un vēl paspilgtināja, nosaukdams Purvīti par Raiņa draugu (Fraser 2014: 66). Tomēr nav zināms, kuram – dzejniekam vai izdevējam – pirmajam radās nodoms vāku zīmēšanu uzticēt Purvītim, vai mākslinieks strādāja saskaņā ar kādiem norādījumiem un bija pilnībā iepazīstināts ar manuskriptu saturu.

Vāki patika ne tikai Rainim, bet arī literāro jaundarbu recenzentiem Ādolfam Ersam (1885–1945) un Kārlim Dziļlejam (1891–1963), lai gan abi ievēroja, ka Purvīša "skaistās gleznainās dabas ilustrācijas" (Erss 1921: 26) ir samērā neatkarīgas no poētiskā vēstījuma. Erss kopsējuma apskatā konstatēja, ka tās "vairāk dod pašas

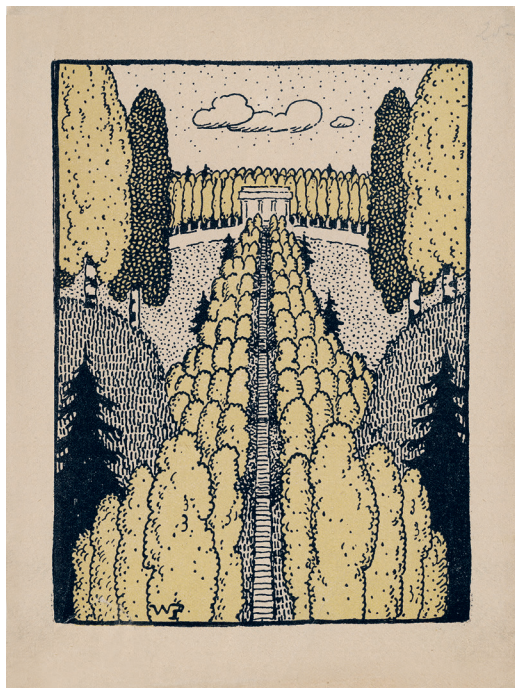


4. att. Raiņa dzejas krājums "Čūsķu vārdi".
Rīga: A. Gulbis, 1920. Vāku zīmējis
Vilhelms Purvītis

Fig. 4. Rainis' poetry collection *Čūsķu vārdi*
(Serpent Incantation). Riga: A. Gulbis, 1920.
Cover drawing by Vilhelms Purvītis

nekā atspoguļo grāmatas saturu" (Erss 1921: 26), bet Dziļleja, pirmo krājumu vērtēdams, atzina, ka "Purvīša impresioniskais, kolorīta bagātais vāks labi saderas ar grāmatas pamattoniem, bet – tā ir ilgās skatītā Latvju zeme, ne tā svešā skaistā zeme, kurai Dagda atvadoties sauc "Addio bella"" (Dziļleja 1920).

Kritiskus viedokļus pauda Purvīša jaunradi kopumā atzinīgi vērtējušie Rīgas mākslinieku grupas modernisti. Pēc Ugas Skulmes (1895–1963) domām, "tiem, kas ciena Purvīti, viņa tagadējie vāki ir jāaizmirst": "Ja Purvītis ir labs gleznotājs, tad viņa vāki neliecina arī, ka viņš ir labs grafiķis, un arī impresionisms, kuram sintētiskā radīšanas metode sveša, nav tas virziens mākslā, kas veicinātu grafikas uzplaukšanu." (Skulme 1921: 155) Romanu Sutu (1896–1944) tracināja jūgendstila iezīmes formu stilizācijā: "Akadēmiķa V. Purvīša Raiņa grāmatu vāki pierāda, ka viņa grafiskās spējas ir diezgan problemātiskas, tamdēļ viņam jāķeras pie mākslīgas ne stila [...] manieres, un šī maniere mums daudz ko atgādina diemžēl atkal no vācu "Jugenda" un Leistikova stilizatoriskām manierēm. Viņa vāki ir nesaprasta grafika, un vienīgi bagātais, lai arī rupjais kolorējums vēl kaut kā tos glābj no banalitātes." (Suta 1921) Suta izraudzīto formveidi saistīja ar viņa izpratnē anahronisku gadsimtu mijas vācu vizuālās kultūras paraugu inerci, kas sakņojās Minhenes žurnāla *Jugend* grafiskās valodas un Berlīnes



5. att. Raiņa dzejas krājums "Uz mājām".
Rīga: A. Gulbis, 1920. Vāku zīmējis
Vilhelms Purvītis

Fig. 5. Rainis' poetry collection *Uz mājām*
(Going Home). Riga: A. Gulbis, 1920.
Cover drawing by Vilhelms Purvītis

gleznotāja Valtera Leistikova (*Walter Leistikow*, 1865–1908) ainavisko kompozīciju dekoratīvajā stilizācijā. Suta pārmeta, ka Ansis Gulbis (1873–1936) "nopietni grib" sabiedrībā vairot grāmatas cieņu, bet, "pats nesaprazdams statiskas mākslas, būdams, kā tas ir ar lielāko daļu no mūsu inteliģences, uzaudzināts vācu paraugos, apzinīgi jeb neapzinīgi paliek joprojām šīs kultūras atmosfērā" (Suta 1921). Grāmatu mākslas un lietišķās grafikas lietpratējam Visvaldim Peņģerotam (1897–1938) 20. gadu vidū, šķiet, nebija tādu iebildumu pret stilistiku, taču viņš "Purvīša vākus Raiņa dzejām" vērtēja kā šim grāmatniecības uzdevumam "ne visai pieņemamus," jo tie ir "pilnīgi patstāvīgi zīmējumi (pat bez virsraksta) un tos ar tādu pat tiesību var izlietot kurai katrai citai grāmatai" (Peņģerots 1925a: 139; 1925b: 36).

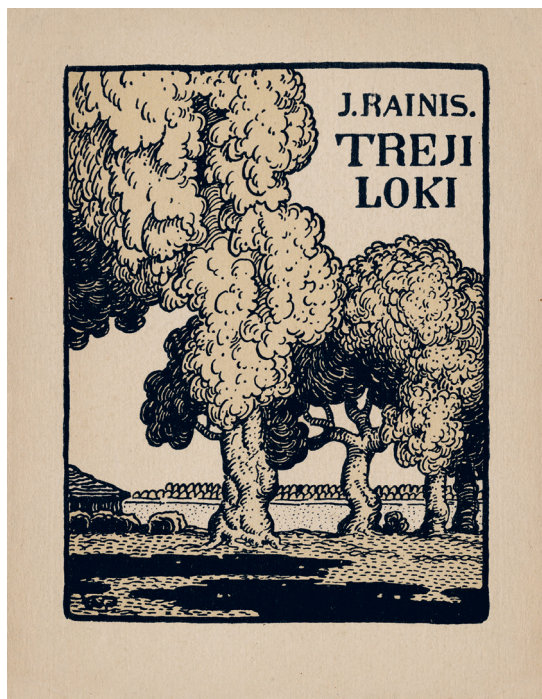
Līdzība ar Purvīša vāku zīmējumiem, kas 1904. gadā rotāja izdevniecības "Zalktis" izdoto Augusta Saulieša (1869–1933) rakstu burtnīcas, mākslas vēsturnieci Guntu Rudzīti (1933–2022) 20. gadsimta 70. gados noveda pie Skulmes un Sutas viedokļiem piebalsojoša secinājuma, ka "tas, kas reiz bija sasniegums, tagad ir novecojies un šķiet šķērslis" (Rudzīte 1974: 182). Tuvojoties mūsdienām un mainoties pētnieku attieksmei pret 19. un 20. gadsimta mijas vizuālās kultūras mantojumu, jūgendstila tradīciju klātbūtne vairs nešķita problemātiska. Valdis Villerušs šīs vāku ilustrācijas

raksturoja kā "dekoratīvas ainavas ar jūgendstila un simbolisma iezīmēm" – tādas, kuras Purvītis vai nu "strukturēja brīvā ritmā atbilstoši savā glezniecībā aprobētajiem kompozīcijas principiem," vai arī būvēja "simetriski, piešķirot tām scēnisku raksturu" (Villerušs 2016: 409). Pievēršdama uzmanību Latvijas dabas motīvu un klasiskās kultūras elementu, jūgendstila reminiscenču, simbolistiska vēstījuma un varbūtēju konstruktīvisma iezīmju sakausējumam, Inta Pujāte šajos risinājumos saskatīja mērķtiecību un nozīmi, kas var atspēkot laikabiedru izteikto kritiku par attēlojuma neatbilstību grāmatu saturam. Visvairāk viņu piesaistīja vāka zīmējums krājumam "Čūsku vārdi" – simetriska kompozīcija (oriģināls Latvijas Nacionālajā mākslas muzejā) ar ģeometriski skaidru mauzoleju centrā kā "šķirtni starp šo pasauli, ko simbolizē bērzu gaišie stumbri" abās malās, un "aizsauli, ko ievada melnā josla darba priekšplānā" (Pujāte 2000: 168). Pētniece to izceļ kā "klasiskās un modernās mākslas sintēzes kvintesenci" (turpat), un savā ziņā to varētu uzskatīt par Purvīša mākslas neoklasicisma un simbolisma alūziju koncentrētu kopsavilkumu, kas sabalsojas ar dažādām telpiskām iecerēm sava laika memoriālajā kultūrā, tāpat kā no putna lidojuma skatītais simetriski svinīgais, Latvijas koku godasardzes ietvertais procesiju ceļš uz templi vāka zīmējumā krājumam "Uz mājām".

1921. gada 6. februārī, pavisam drīz pēc aplūkoto dzejas krājumu iznākšanas, Rīgas pilsētas mākslas muzejā notika Purvīša godināšana 25 gadu darba jubilejā, par atskaites punktu ņemot viņa pirmo piedalīšanos izstādē Latvijā – 1896. gada Latviešu etnogrāfiskās izstādes Dailes nodaļā (Ābele 2022: 495). Līdz ar klātienes apsveikumiem jubilārs saņēma ap 70 rakstveida sveicienu "no visām Latvijas malām," un pie to pazīstamākajiem autoriem reportāžā atzīmēti Rainis un Aspazija (Jaunsudrabiņš 1921). Apliecinādam, ka Purvīti viņa goda dienā "sveicina visa latviešu tauta un atskatās ar lepnumu uz nacionālās glezniecības nodibinātāju un lielāko darbinieku," Rainis uzsvēra: "Bet Tu, mūžam augošais, neatskaties, Tu ej vienmēr uz priekšu." Viņš sūtīja vēlējumu vispirms kā tuvākā mērķa piepildījumu "dot mums mākslas akadēmiju blakus mākslas muzejam," bet vienlaikus likt "savus tālākos mērķus uz mūžību". Sekojošajos noslēguma vārdos reizē ar veltījumu jaušas pašiedvesmas uzruna rakstītāja spoguļattēlam: "[.] un ja arī Tavas miesas lūzīs, tos nerasniegušas, Tavs gars tos sniegs. M ā k s l a i r d z ī v e u n l a i m e . Nes mums dzīvi un laimi, Tu – laimīgais." (Rainis 1921)

1921. gada rudenī Purvīša vadītajā Latvijas Mākslas akadēmijā studijas sāka pirmie audzēkņi, tomēr 20. un 30. gados vēl nebija piepildījies nodoms šīs augstskolas vajadzībām iegūt Biržas komercskolas ēku, kur akadēmija "blakus mākslas muzejam" mājot tagad.

Kad 1928. gada janvārī Rainim vajadzēja izvērtēt savu trīspadsmit mēnešus ilgušo darbības laiku izglītības ministra amatā, viņš par lielu veiksmi atzina "mūsu gleznu izstādi Stokholmā, kas izdevās ļoti spoži" (-ksi 1928). Šis 1927. gada pasākums



6. att. Raiņa dzejas krājumu "Addio bella", "Čūsku vārdi" un "Uz mājām" kopsējums "Treji loki".

Rīga: A. Gulbis, 1920.

Vāku zīmējis Vilhelms Purvītis

Fig. 6. *Treji loki* (Three Circles) – set of Rainis' poetry collections *Addio bella*, *Čūsku vārdi* (Serpent Incantation) and *Uz mājām* (Going Home). Riga: A. Gulbis, 1920. Cover drawing by Vilhelms Purvītis

ievadīja Latvijas mākslas viesizstāžu virkni, kas ar pārtraukumiem turpinājās līdz 1939. gadam galvenokārt Purviša vadībā un ir atspoguļota Daces Lambergas pētījumos (Lambergas 1991: 8, 9; 2000: 153–157). Tie sniedz ieskatu arī sarežģījumos, kas pavadīja Stokholmas izstādes priekšdarbus un apdraudēja tās norisi, līdz Purvītis, uzņemdamies galvenā rīkotāja pienākumus, spēja novest ieceri līdz veiksmīgai īstenošanai. Saglabājusies oficiāla izskaidrošanās vēstule, ko Purvītis 1927. gada 1. oktobrī, īsi pirms organizatoriskās krīzes atrisinājuma, Rainim rakstīja kā amatpersona amatpersonai, cieņas apliecinājumu adresātam paužot nevis jubilejas apsveikuma retorikā, bet atrunā, ka "atlikušā īsā laika dēļ nebūs iespējams izstādi sarīkot tā, ka tā atbildētu tik izsmalcinātās publikas kā Stokholmā vismazākām prasībām un ka tas vajadzīgs sevišķi šinī gadījumā, kur izstādes priekšgalā stāv divas tik eminentas personas kā Zviedrijas princis–mākslinieks un Latvijas ģeniālākais cilvēks–dzejnieks" (Purvītis 1927). Pirmais no minētajiem bija gleznotājs princis Eižens (*Prins Eugen*, 1865–1948), Raiņa vienaudzis, ko Purvītis pazina kopš gadsimtu mijas ceļojumiem un izstādēm, tādēļ īpaši raizēdamies, kā Latvijas mākslu uzņems ziemeļu karaļvalstī, un ilgodamies, lai šī uzņemšana notiktu godam. Kā atcerējās gleznotājs Augusts Annuss (1893–1984), Purvītis bija pieļāvis, ka Rainis, līdzīgi kā viņa priekšteči

izglītības ministra amatā, par izstāžu nepieciešamību ārzemēs būs tikai runājis vien, tomēr izrādījies, ka "Rainis ir pavisam cita kalibra". Puvītis Annusam bija stāstījis, kā Rainis viņu vēlreiz pilnvarojis noorganizēt latvju mākslas ārzemju izstāžu lietu, un kā neticamu parādību spilgti atainojis lielo dzejnieku sitam ar dūri pa galdu (Annuss 1972: 4).

Tuvojoties izstādei, bija paredzēts, ka Rainis "Stokholmā noturēs vairākus priekšlasījumus par mūsu mākslu un literatūru" (Tr. 1927a), taču nākamie laikrakstu paziņojumi mainījās no dienas dienā: "J. Rainis ar prof. V. Puvīti uz Stokholmu izbrauks 1. vai 2. nov[embrī]" (29.10.). – "Uz Stokholmu aizbrauca vakar prof. V. Puvītis, J. Rainis tur dosies 5. nov[embrī] un uzturēsies nedēļu" (3.11.). – "Stokholmas izstādes atklāšanas gadījumā izglītības min[istrs] J. Rainis vakar nosūtīja apsveikšanas telegram[m]u izstādes iniciatoriem" (10.11.). (Tr. 1927b, 1927c, 1927d) Iekšpolitisku apstākļu dēļ Raiņa brauciens uz Stokholmu izstādes laikā tomēr nenotika. Sarīkojumam bija ievērojami panākumi: viesus no Latvijas brālīgi godināja gan zviedru mākslinieki savā klubā, gan princis Eižens svinīgās brokastīs, Rīgas laikraksti cītīgi atfērēja zviedru kritiķu atsauksmes un Zviedrijas Nacionālais muzejs iegādājās Puvīša gleznu "Tirgus būdas Majoros" (tagad Modernās mākslas muzeja krājumā Stokholmā). (Brīvā Zeme 1927a, 1927b; u. c.) Jaunās valsts mākslas viesizrādes iespaidi vēl nebija pagaisuši, kad Rainis, vairs nebūdams ministrs, 1928. gada martā divreiz apmeklēja Stokholmu, dodamies uz Henrika Ibsena (*Henrik Ibsen*, 1828–1906) simtgades svinībām Norvēģijā un atceļā no tām. Zviedrijas galvaspilsēta viņam veltīja radošo vakaru, kura noslēgumā Rainis runāja par latviešu un zviedru sakariem pagātnē un tagadnē (Gudriķe 1972: 147). Notika iepazīšanās ar "Stokholmas arhitektūru, mākslas muzejiem, teātriem, operu," piedalīšanās parlamenta sēdē, Upsalas bibliotēkas apmeklējums, pieņemšana pie jau minētā prinča Eižena un citas pagodinošas sastapšanās (turpat), kas Raiņa ceļabiedram Arturam Bērziņam (1882–1962) radīja iespaidu, ka "pie svešajiem viņš atrada daudz vairāk laipnības nekā savās mājās, kur viņa darbu pazina labāk un kur to varēja labāk novērtēt" (Bērziņš 1933).

Pētot Raiņa bibliotēku, Aina Britāne (1932–2012) atzīmē, ka līdzās citiem izdevumiem par mākslu viņam piederēja grāmatas par "mūsu Rozentālu un Puvīti," kas dzejniekam bijuši tuvi (Britāne 1982: 98). Šāds apgalvojums varēja būt pareizs vien daļēji. Raiņa dzīves laikā iznāca pirmā monogrāfija par Rozentālu (Šterns 1925) un viņa darbu reprodukciju sakopojums ar septiņiem attēliem (Rozentāla mākslas salons 1926). Parādījās pirmās grāmatas par latviešu mākslas vēsturi (Suta 1923; Dombrovskis 1925; Vipars 1927), turpretī neviens atsevišķs izdevums par Puvīti vēl nebija radīts. Plašāku ieskatu viņa jaunradē Latvijā 20. gados sniedza ar attēliem bagātīgi papildinātas biogrāfiskas apceres mēnešrakstos "Ilustrēts Žurnāls" (Prande 1925) un *Perezvony* (Prande, Misheev 1926).

1929. gada 15. septembrī Purvītim bija lemts noliekt galvu, pavadot Raini pēdējā gaitā, kā tas redzams Viļa Rīdzenieka (1884–1962) uzņemtā bērū fotogrāfijā (LNRMM, inv. Nr. RTMM 1085). Tajā raugoties, gleznotāju var iedomāties pārcilājam no dzejnieka saņemtos veltījuma vārdus par to, kas jāpaveic garam, ja "miesas lūzīs," nesasniedzot "tālākos mērķus uz mūžību".

***Ut pictura poesis* noskaņu ainavā, literatūras kritikā un Aspazijas "Atstātajā svētnīcā"**

Līdzās dokumentētajiem biogrāfiskajiem saskares faktiem iespējams runāt par mijiedarbību gleznotāja un dzejnieka jaunradē un tās uztvērumā. Raiņa un Purvīša savstarpējā radošā ietekmēšanās paliek varbūtību miglas tālo noskaņu aizplīvurota, taču ir skaidri noprotams, ka gleznotāja darbu iepazīšana skoloja dzejnieka lasītājus un otrādi. Krājuma "Addio bella" recenzijā Valdemārs Dambergs (1886–1960) šo dzejas darbu aprakstīja kā gleznu ciklu, kurā "krāsu mirdzums, tīrība un caurspīdīgums [...] aiziet līdz vecmeistariskam krāsu biežumam un tumšajām zaigām" (Dambergs 1921). Antons Krauja (īstajā uzvārdā Balodis, 1880–1942) 1912. gadā sprieda, ka, ja Raiņa daiļrades "pamatvilcienus gribētu projecēt uz audekla un likt tiem runāt uz skatītāju Raiņa valodu, [...] tad ilustrācijai, gleznai, dekorācijai būtu jāapvieno skatītājs ar tādu telpas bezgalības sajūtu, kā nemirstīgais Raiņa dzejols "Kalnā kāpējs", tām būtu jāizceļ galvenām kārtām divi momenti: tāla, skaidra perspektīve un līniju harmoniska noslēgtība" (Krauja 1912: 961, 962). Nosauktie "divi momenti" precīzi raksturo Purvīša zīmēto vāka kompozīciju astoņus gadus vēlākajam Raiņa krājumam "Uz mājām".

Pilnībā izklaidēt varbūtību miglu un iezīmēt skaidru apvārsni jautājumā par Purvīša un Raiņa radošo saskari droši vien būtu pa spēkam tikai Aspazijai, kas jaunā ainavista mākslai jau minētajā 1898.–1899. gada mijas izstādē atsaucās ar "Faustam līdzīgu ilgošanos: "Tai līdzī, vienmēr līdzī doties."" (Aspazija 1899) Tajos gados Rainis viņai pauda, ka "par mākslu varētu rakstīt vienīgi Tu, Inīn," – pretstatā Teodoram (domāts Teodors Zeiferts, 1865–1929), kas neesot "redzējis nevienu bildi, atskaitot gaili ābecē un kungu spēļu kārtīs" (Rainis 1900).

1923. gadā žurnālā "Lira" un pēc tam liriskās autobiogrāfijas trešajā daļā "Raganu nakts" Aspazija lasītājiem nodeva dzejoli "Atstāta svētnīca" (Aspazija 1923a, 1923b: 113, 114), kas pēc pirmās izskaņas un pārtraukuma noslēdzas ar pēcjautājumu:

Kas šai atstātai svētnīcai
Bijis gan nama daris?
Beklina "Nāves sala" tā vai
Purvīša "Pavasaris"?

Abi minētie mākslas darbi kā pretēji sava laika vizuālās kultūras simboli, ko šādā salikumā pazina un apjūsmoja vienīgi Latvijā, pamesto Kiprīdas – Afrodītes – templi, kur reiz “trokšņojis bakhantu tracis,” noenkuro gadsimtu mijas atmiņu telpā. Atklājoties šiem rosinātājiem, “Atstāta svētnīca”, iespējams, vairs nav lasāma tikai Pētera Birkerta (1881–1956) traktējumā – kā dziedājums “par izbeigtu mīlu,” “skaista noskaņglezna par bijušo līksmi un baudu” pretstatā “tagadējai atstatuma, vientulības un skumju gleznai,” kurā “nav mīlas, nav dzīvības” (Birkerts 1935: 11). Pēcjaudājums šķiet aicinām ne tikai ļauties nostalgiskai grūtsirdībai, bet arī pamesto dailes mājokli atslēgt, izpētīt un doties projām nevis ar nāves, bet pavasara atmodas vārdu uz lūpām.

Dzejoļi nodēvēta par “Nāves salu”, šveiciešu simbolista Arnolda Beklīna (*Arnold Böcklin*, 1827–1901) glezna “Miruso sala” (*Die Toteninsel*) dažādu variantu (I–V, 1880–1886) attēlos 19. gadsimta beigās un 20. gadsimta sākumā bija Latvijas literātu un mākslinieku iztēli visvairāk iedvesmojušais ārzemju mākslas darbs, it sevišķi laikā, kad to publicēja, komentēja un ar latviešu autoru literārajām ekfrāzēm papildināja “Mājas Viesa Mēnešraksts” (Ābele 2025). Arī Aspazijai piederējusi “liela šīs gleznas reprodukcija” (Viese 1986: 671), bet 1936. gada reportāžā par viesošanos pie viņas Dubultos atzīmēta liela citas Beklīna gleznas – “Pils pie jūras” – fotoreprodukcija, kas bijusi “dārga piemiņas balva dzejniecei no “Sidraba šķidrauta” pirmizrādes” (Mednieks 1936), tātad – no 1905. gada. Bet kā ar Purviša “Pavasari”? Lai gan Saulcerīte Viese dzejoļa komentārā raksta, ka tas ir “viens no latviešu glezniecības vecmeistara izcilākajiem darbiem” (Viese 1986: 672), atbilstošāk būtu runāt par vienu no viņa galvenajām tēmām, kas risināta daudzās gleznās, aptverot dabas norises un noskaņas no pēdējā sniega līdz ziedonim. Tādējādi “Atstātas svētnīcas” “Pavasaris” varēja būt gan atsevišķa vai sintezēta atmiņtēlu glezna, gan no reprodukcijas pazīstama ainava vai “mazajā mīlestības muzejā” klātesošs oriģināldarbs.

Desmit gadus pēc dzejoļa pirmpublicācijas, 1933. gadā, Aspazija pārdeva Rīgas māju un iegādājās namiņu Dubultos, Gončarova ielā (vēlāk un tagad Zigfrīda Meierovica prospekts) 20, kurp vasarā pēc remonta pārcēlās uz pastāvīgu dzīvi, cīnīdamās ar Raiņa atstāto parādu izraisītajām grūtībām. Kādu laiku šī ēka bija preses reportieru iecienīts novērošanas objekts. Viens no šī aroda darboņiem septembrī netālu no Dubultu stacijas pamanīja cilvēku “biezā mētelī un lielu šalli ap kaklu” sēžam liela molberta priekšā un cītīgi triepjam krāsas uz audekla (–mp 1933). Žurnālists bija vai izlikās izbrīnīts, tuvumā pārliecinādamies, ka tas ir profesors Purvītis, kas akadēmijas brīvlaiku – patiesībā kārtējo kopš 20. gadu sākuma – bija pavadījis kā Dubultu vasarnieks īrētā mājīnā Gončarova ielā 10 (tagad Aspazijas iela 1). Aspazijai, kas teicās māju atstājam reti (Pēdējā Brīdī 1935), vajadzēja no saviem logiem un dārza itin bieži redzēt Purvīti lēnā gaitā ejam uz dzelzceļa uzbēruma un upes pusi studijās. Tagad gleznotāja atceļu var nostaigāt, apciemojot tēlnieces Olgas Šilovas skulptūru

"Aspazija kāpās" (2020) un turpinot vērpt vai šķetināt raksta ievadā minētās izstādes intrigu – vai kaimiņš Purvītis tolaik pārkāpa dzejnieces nama sliekšni?

Viņa glezna – ticamāk sendienu piemiņa nekā jaunieguvums – kļuva par vienu no Aspazijas Dubultu mājokļa rotām. Avīzes "Pēdējā Brīdī" reportieris 1935. gadā to redzēja viesistabā līdzās gleznotam namamātes portretam (Pēdējā Brīdī 1935). 1936. gadā žurnālā "Zeltene" citu mākslas darbu vidū atzīmēts "kāds simpātisks "Purvītis"" (Miesnieks 1936). 1940. gada 20. augustā, jau drīz pēc padomju okupācijas varas nodibināšanas, Valsts privāto mākslas un vēsturisko priekšmetu reģistrēšanas komisija līdzās rokoko galdiņam un antīka sievietes krūšutēla kopijai par vērtību atzina Purvīša dabasskatu, dzejniecei apņemoties "šos priekšmetus turēt savā pārziņā" (Aspazijas māja 2024). Pat ja izrādītos, ka Purvītis savās Jūrmalas vasarās 30. gados nav viesojies Aspazijas namā un kaimiņus satuvinājusi muzejiska interpretācija, dzejniece loloja viņa ainavu – iespējams, kādu no pašlaik zināmajiem oriģināldarbiem ar neskaidru piederības vēsturi.

Aspazijas salona ekspozīcijā mūsdienās "Atstātās svētnīcas" pēcjautājuma izskaņu – "Purvīša "Pavasaris"?" – kāpjošā gaviļu intonācijā skanīgi rečitē Purvīša un Zeltiņa gleznu duets. Jau citētās Pētera Birkerta pārdomas par šo dzejoli rotā vārdu savienojums "skaista noskaņglezna" (Birkerts 1935: 11), kas ir vienlīdz labskanīgs kā zinātājiem viegli atpakaļ uz vācu valodu pārtulkojamais jēdziens *schönes Stimmungsbild*. Raksta noslēgumā šis "noskaņas" un "gleznas" sapludinājuma piemērs var dot ierosmi pārdomām, ka Raiņa dzeja, iedzīvinot līdz tam reti lietoto vārdu "noskaņa", palīdzēja tapt leksikai, kādā latvieši jau vairākās paaudzēs domā un raksta par 19. gadsimta beigu un 20. gadsimta sākuma mākslu. Kas Purvītim pašam profesionālajā žargonā līdz mūža beigām palika "štimmunga", Janim Rozentālam rakstos "sajūsma", vēl dažam autoram "jūsmība" un Kārlim Štrālam (1880–1970) daiļliteratūrā "skandums", tas mūsdienu valodu ir sasniedzis ar apzīmējumu "noskaņa", izplatoties arī tādos savienojumos un lietojuma kontekstos kā "noskaņu māksla" – nu jau ļoti iesakņots vācu *Stimmungskunst* latviskojums, bez kura Purvīša jaunības laikmetu Latvijas glezniecībā būtu neiespējami apjēgt un aprakstīt.

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Lithuanian Contexts of Aspazija's Historical Drama *Vaidelote*

Aspazijas vēsturiskās drāmas “Vaidelote” lietuviešu konteksti

Keywords:

Lithuanian Evenings,
amateur Lithuanian theatre,
historical dramaturgy,
theatrical communication structure,
horizon of expectation

Atslēgvārdi:

“Lietuviešu vakari”,
lietuviešu amatierteātris,
vēsturiskā dramaturģija,
teātra komunikācijas struktūra,
gaidu horizons

Summary

Aspazija's historical drama *Vaidelote* (Pagan Priestess; 1894), based on Lithuania's early history, was translated into Lithuanian in 1908 and staged several times by diaspora Lithuanian theatre amateurs in Riga and *Mitau* (now Jelgava). This paper aims to determine how the Lithuanian audience perceived it. The translation and staging of *Vaidelote* is a good opportunity to consider the tradition of Lithuanian dramaturgy in the context of evaluating this Neo-romanticist drama by Aspazija, and the influence it may have had on the Lithuanian historical drama of the time. The methodological approaches used here include the notion of the horizon of expectation, which comes from literary hermeneutics, and the model of theatrical communication by Susan Bennett, who has adapted the active reader response to the theatrical situation. These theoretical tools are discussed in the first part of the paper. The second part presents the situation of early Lithuanian theatre and its dramaturgy at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The third part is devoted to the translation of Aspazija's drama *Vaidelote* and its reception by Lithuanian audience. This paper concludes that Aspazija's drama entered the Lithuanian theatre scene after having been simplified and adapted to the limited possibilities of the amateur theatre of that time. Therefore, its influence on Lithuanian historical dramaturgy was limited.

Kopsavilkums

Aspazijas vēsturiskā drāma "Vaidelote" (1894), kas balstīta Lietuvas senvēstures notikumos, tika pārtulkota lietuviski 1908. gadā, un to vairākkārt iestudēja Rīgā un Jelgavā dzīvojošo diasporas lietuviešu amatiereteātri. Šī pētījuma mērķis ir izzināt, kā šo lugu uztvēra lietuviešu auditorija. "Vaidelotes" tulkojums un iestudējumi sniedz iespēju izvērtēt lietuviešu dramaturģijas tradīciju saistībā ar Aspazijas neoromantisma lugas izpratni, kā arī tās iespējamo ietekmi uz tālaika lietuviešu vēsturiskās drāmas žanra attīstību. Pētījumā izmantotā metodoloģija ietver gaidu horizonta jēdzienu, kas aizgūts no literārās hermeneitikas, kā arī Sūzanas Benetas izstrādāto teātra komunikācijas modeli, kur skatītāja aktīvā reakcija pielāgota teatrālajai situācijai. Šīs teorētiskās metodes tiek apspriestas raksta pirmajā daļā. Otrajā daļā aplūkots agrīnā lietuviešu teātra un dramaturģijas stāvoklis 19. gs. beigās un 20. gs. sākumā. Raksta trešā daļa ir veltīta Aspazijas drāmas "Vaidelote" lietuviešu tulkojumam un recepcijai. Visbeidzot tiek secināts, ka šī Aspazijas luga uz lietuviešu teātra skatuvēm nonāca vienkāršotā veidā, pielāgota tālaika amatiereteātra iespējām. Tādēļ tās iespaids uz lietuviešu vēsturisko dramaturģiju bija neliels.

Introduction

In 1891 Aspazija (Elza Rozenberga-Pliekšāne) wrote a five-act drama based on Lithuania's early history called *Vaidelote* (Pagan Priestess). Staged at the Riga Latvian theatre in 1894, it became a great success, "shining like a bright lightning bolt in the world of Latvian theatre" (Hausmanis 2016: 217)¹. *Vaidelote* was Aspazija's second drama, with which the already famous poetess gained the title of playwright. It became one of Aspazija's most staged plays in Latvia, and in 1927 it was also produced as an opera. The Lithuanian themes of *Vaidelote* immediately brought it to the attention of Lithuanian intellectuals: the surviving correspondence between Jānis Rainis and Eduards Volters, a lecturer at the University of Saint Petersburg who worked as a censor of Lithuanian writings, testifies to the fact that Volters had suggested to the Lithuanians of Saint Petersburg to translate and stage this drama even before 1899: "I have long encouraged the Lithuanians to translate Aspazija's drama from the history of Lithuania, they have costumes and actors: everything is ready, but it is difficult to set our Lithuanians in motion" (Nastopka 1971: 151). Although the Lithuanian press of the late 19th and early 20th centuries repeatedly admired the Latvian performances of *Vaidelote* and rhetorically asked when the Lithuanian stage would finally see this historical drama, it was a long time before the artwork was translated and performed by the Lithuanian amateur theatre society *Kanklės* in Riga (1911, 1913) and Jelgava (1913). It should come as no surprise that the Lithuanian diaspora in Latvian cities had their own theater societies. At the end of the 19th century, Lithuanian migration to the industrial cities of the Russian Empire was particularly high, Lithuanians were especially attracted to the rapidly growing city of Riga. It is estimated that on the eve of World War I, over 37,000 Lithuanians lived in Riga. There were also large Lithuanian communities in Liepāja and Jelgava (Mačiulis, Jēkabsons 2018: 8).

Lithuanian reviews of the Latvian performances of *Vaidelote* also give us the impression that this historical drama remained on the minds of Lithuanian theatre lovers well into the early 20th century but, despite their efforts, it never became popular. The play was translated into Lithuanian in 1908 by the Riga amateur theatre maker Nepakentuolis (Povilas Žaldokas, c. 1858–1920), and in July of the same year the censors granted the permission to stage it. This fact was announced in the Lithuanian press by Lithuanian writer Ona Pleirytė-Puidienė. In an article presenting Aspazija's *Vaidelote* and *Skirmunda* by Laimnieks (Jēkabs Dravnieks), she noted:

1 The quotations in this article are translated by Aleksandra Fominaitė, unless otherwise noted.

Both “Vaidelote” and “Skirmunda” give extremely fine, strong scenes, both are adorned with songs and dances of specific festivities. The former and the latter works are in Lithuanian translations, it would be pleasant to see them one day on our stage, [for] there are no equally excellent originals in the literature of our stage. Both translations are still in manuscripts, so if any theatrical societies and individuals would like to get closer to these works, they can do so through the “Vilnius News” editorial office which will help them get in touch with the translators. (Pleiryte-Puidienė 1908: 2)

It is not only Pleiryte-Puidienė’s desire to see a Lithuanian production of *Vaidelote* that should be emphasized – it is also important to note that, according to the writer, original Lithuanian dramatic works were not equal to this play. It is possible that an attempt to stage Aspazija’s artwork on the Lithuanian stage was also made in 1909 when preparing the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the first Lithuanian public performance. It was planned that *Vaidelote* might be performed on the second day of the celebrations, but the organizers opted for a concert instead (Būtėnas 1940: 58–59).

Why did *Vaidelote*, despite its attractive themes, not become a popular production on the Lithuanian stage? In order to understand how this drama functioned in the Lithuanian context, we should consider the early stage of Lithuanian theatre and the audience’s expectations, which can only be determined by grasping what their amateur theatre was like. In other words, the state of theatrical communication was important, taking into account that for the Lithuanian audience of that time, the amateur stage was the only way to experience Aspazija’s artwork. Žaldokas’s translation of the play circulated as a manuscript and was never published. It survived only as a copy sent to the tsarist censors and is now preserved in the censorship fund of the Saint Petersburg State Theatre Library. Although there are many translations of Aspazija’s poetry into Lithuanian, only two excerpts of the drama were published in Lithuanian. Its first act was translated into Lithuanian by Arvydas Valionis (Aspazija 2018: 179–198), while one of the songs from the opera *Vaidelote*, the Lithuanian victory anthem, was included in the poetry anthology *The Immortal Land: Lithuania in the Verses of World Poetry* (Šešplaukis-Tyruolis 1970: 125)².

At the beginning of the 20th century, Aspazija was known to Lithuanians and appreciated as an exponent of new tendencies in Latvian literature: “Aspazija occupies the foremost place in the current of the recent literature, bringing to it a whole new vitality” (Volteris, Pleiryte-Puidienė 1908: 360), but detailed attention to her drama was still lacking. Aspazija’s *Vaidelote* was noticed by Lithuanians because of its Lithuanian themes, which is why its first Latvian production received a short review in USA Lithuanians’ weekly *Vienybė lietuvininkų* in 1894 (Kiszkis iš Kopustų

2 All of Aspazija’s works translated into Lithuanian have been registered by Regina Kvašytė (Kvašytė 2016: 285–286).

1894: 104). The Lithuanian topics were also emphasized later as the primary reason for noticing this drama (Žaibas 1904: 3). We can say that this tendency is still evident to this day, and it is precisely because of these themes that Alfonsas Šešplaukis-Tyruolis included a short discussion of this play in his collection of articles on the image of Lithuania and Lithuanians in world literature (Šešplaukis-Tyruolis 1985: 120–124). The drama has also been mentioned in the works of Lithuanian theatre scholars (Maknys 1972: 194), moreover, it has been presented in a study of the links between Lithuanian and Latvian literature. Kęstutis Nastopka briefly discussed Aspazija's drama in the context of 19th-century Latvian Romanticist literature on Lithuanian themes and provided a concise, but perhaps the most conceptual analysis of the work (Nastopka 1971: 77–79). *Vaidelote* also came to the attention of Vigmantas Butkus as a transitional work from the Romanticist to the Neo-romanticist paradigm in Latvian dramaturgy, although the literary scholar excluded it due to his chosen aspect of analysis – the relationship between the nation and the individual (Butkus 1997: 82–83). In general, Lithuanian works analyzing Baltic literatures more often discuss Aspazija's poetry (Gaižiūnas 1989: 161–165) and prose (Mykolaitytė 2004: 50–52; 68–70), rather than dramaturgy. Therefore, it can be stated that the reception of Aspazija's *Vaidelote* in contemporary Lithuanian literary studies is rather superficial, only partially presenting the meanings that the drama offers. For example, an aspect that is completely unremarked upon in the Lithuanian context and that is most emphasized by current Latvian scholars is the feminist stance of this writer and the creative work that it inspired. This is precisely the aspect highlighted in *Aspazija and Modernity: Gender, Nation, Creativity* – one of the most recent collective monographs devoted to the analysis of her biography and work: "[T]he study was carried out with a thematic orientation/perspective towards gender identity as the national cultural identity, the main object of the research and reflection being her literary creativity and personality" (Cimdiņa 2016: 439).

This paper aims to see *Vaidelote* through the eyes of its Lithuanian contemporaries and to understand why it was translated into Lithuanian, what was the most important factor for the Lithuanians who watched this drama, and why it never became popular on the Lithuanian stage. The methodological tools for this reconstruction are provided by looking at the horizon of Lithuanian theatre lovers' expectation – their perception of the possibilities of Lithuanian theatre at its early phase. The theoretical part of this paper therefore briefly introduces the concept of the horizon of expectation, as it is formulated in the works of Hans-Georg Gadamer. The theoretical conception of Hans Robert Jauss, who took over and developed the term, is also important. The concept of the horizon of the reader's expectation, which comes from literary hermeneutics, has been productively applied in theatre

communication research. This paper uses the model of theatrical communication proposed by Susan Bennett. The theoretical assumptions of such a framework are outlined in the first part of the paper. The second part presents the communicative structure of the Lithuanian Evenings, the early Lithuanian theatre that tried to assimilate Aspazija's drama, and subsequently relates it to the horizon of expectation of the Lithuanian audience and the repertoire of the Lithuanian Evenings at that time. The third part turns to the specific reception of Aspazija's *Vaidelote*: it considers its path to the Lithuanian theatre scene (translation, productions discussed in newspaper reviews), and its popularity in comparison to other Latvian theatrical works translated into Lithuanian. It also considers those works in Lithuanian historical dramaturgy which are the closest to Aspazija's play in terms of plot, and considers to what extent her text may have influenced Lithuanian playwrights.

The Horizon of the Theatre Audience's Expectation: Theoretical Assumptions

The importance of the theatre audience and the difficulties in describing its role are well expressed by two quotes from English director Peter Brook. On the one hand, as he puts it: "I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged" (Brook 1996: 9). On the other hand, despite the apparent necessity of the spectator, "[i]t is hard to understand the true notion of spectator, there and not there, ignored and yet needed. The actor's work is never for an audience, yet always is for one. The onlooker is a partner who must be forgotten and still constantly kept in mind" (Brook 1996: 51).

Traditionally, the audience was considered *hyper-passive*, performing the most minimal action imaginable – just passively watching, identifying with the dramatic action on stage (Ortega y Gasset 1999: 394). In the 19th century, therefore, the spectator was "disciplined": the audience was taught to behave in a "decent" manner, threatened with fines for misbehaviour (chattering, eating, making noise during the performance), and a curtain was hanged to separate the stage and the auditorium. The aim was not only to set the audience apart from the performers, but also to isolate the viewers from one another, so that the behaviour of other people in the auditorium would not interfere with one's inner reactions and one could fully identify with the spectacle (Erika Fisher-Lichte 2013: 62). In the 20th century, it was realized that the spectator's reception of performance is specific. Currently, in Western drama theatre the audience is indeed asked to behave passively: to sit and watch the

dramatic action unfolding in front of their eyes. However, at the same time the viewers are expected to interpret the spectacle in a very active way.

The changing attitude towards the spectator is also linked to the fact that schools of literary criticism have shifted their focus to the reader. The relationship between the work of art and its addressee emerged first in literary hermeneutics in the second half of the 20th century. Hermeneutics reminded us about the importance of the reading audience for literature, and of the social and historical context in which its meaning is perceived and shaped (Jurgutienė 2006: 34). According to the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, the meaning of a work of art is not objective and finite; it is rather constantly created and changed by its perceptions. Gadamer described interpretation as the convergence of the perspectives (horizons, contexts) of the text and the reader: interpretative meaning comes into existence as the result of the convergence and fusion of two horizons of understanding. Each time a work of art is perceived, the reader's horizon of expectation (German: *Erwartungshorizont*) is (un)consciously involved in the interpretation, which meets the horizon of meanings conveyed by the work – the artistically meaningful truth. Reading begins only after a critical evaluation of one horizon by another and opening a dialogue between them, and the most important question of reception criticism is: what does the work of art mean here and now? (Jurgutienė 2006: 37–47).

The notion of the horizon of expectation became central to the work of the German literary scholar Hans Robert Jauss, who focused on historical evaluations of readers and the ways they change. In his manifesto article *Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory* (1967), Jauss emphasizes the dimension of literary perception and its impact. Obviously, a work of art only exists because it is addressed to someone – being the addressee is seen as the reader's most important role, because "[a] literary work is not an object which stands by itself and which offers the same face to each reader in each period. It is not a monument, which reveals its timeless essence in a monologue. It is much more like an orchestration, which strikes ever new chords among its readers and which frees the text from the substance of the words and makes it meaningful for the time." (Jauss 1970: 10). It is the perceiver who realizes the possible meanings offered by the artwork, depending on their personal experience and the norms of perception offered by the context.

Jauss modified the notion of the horizon of expectation taken from Gadamer by emphasizing the historical analysis of the perception and reading of the artwork. The horizon of expectation is a system of preconceptions and evaluations held by the reader: "[T]his frame of reference for each work develops in the historical moment of its appearance from a previous understanding of the genre, from the form and themes of already familiar works, and from the contrast between poetic and practical

language" (Jauss 1970: 11). According to Jauss, a work of literature cannot be a complete novelty – it is written in a certain context, evokes the memory of works already read, and is judged according to the rules or norms of the genre. The horizon of expectation also makes it possible to determine the impact of a work on its readers, because the distance between the horizon of readers' expectations and a new work is aesthetic, and is expressed in the various reactions of the public: spontaneous success, rejection, limited appreciation, gradual or delayed understanding.

The function of the audience in theatrical communication emerged in the 1960s as a problem for specialized theatre studies. The theatre scholars' gaze was directed towards the audience as the result of literary theories that emphasized the reader (this impetus was accelerated by film and television studies) and the theories of performance that became popular in the USA around this time, as well as the so-called performative turn whereby the performance aspect of a theatrical production was increasingly stressed (Šatkauskienė 2002: 93). This paper uses the model of theatrical communication elaborated by theatre scholar Susan Bennett. In the monograph *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception* (1990, 1997), she analyzes the role of the audience. The researcher looks at the structure of theatrical communication by extending her analysis to the concept of theatre as a social event. According to Bennett, the sociality of theatre is confirmed by the obvious fact that a performance is based on the shared presence of the audience, which is necessary for the artistic practice of a theatrical production to take place at all. Drawing on Bertolt Brecht's theoretical considerations and theatrical practice, the theory of the reader's response, and the ideas of post-structuralism, Bennett proposes a two-layered model of theatrical communication – consisting of the external and the internal frame or plane. The external frame of the spectator's experience is related to theatre as a cultural and social event; what is important here is how the spectators perceive the production as a social practice, what cultural attitudes they bring with them when they come to the theatre, and what social practices they associate with going to the theatre. The internal dimension of the audience's experience is related to theatricality as a specific aesthetic experience: it is the spectator's experience of observing a fictional world displayed on stage. It is the intersection of these two frames of the audience's theatrical experience (the external one of theatre as a sociocultural experience, and the internal one of the artistic aesthetic perception) and their interactive nature that form the specific reception of theatre.

The extent to which the audience will engage with the dramatic action on stage depends on the extent to which it is perceptible to the audience – that is, the extent to which the audience is capable of grasping the specific artistic language. Bennett's employment of Jauss's concept of the horizon of expectation becomes important in

this respect, as she argues that theatre audiences come to any performance with a certain horizon of cultural and ideological expectations. This horizon of expectation is never stable and is always tested by artistic reality (Bennett 1997: 98). Bennett, like Jauss, believes that a new or altered horizon of expectation can emerge in the interpretation of an artwork: "Cultural systems, individual horizons of expectations, and accepted theatrical conventions all activate the decoding process for a specific production, but, in turn, the direct experience of that production feeds back to revise a spectator's expectations, to establish or challenge conventions, and, occasionally, to reform the boundaries of culture" (Bennett 1997: 207).

This paper applies Bennett's model as a methodological tool in order to understand the communicative structure of the early phase of Lithuanian theatre. Only by presenting it will we be able to understand how Aspazija's *Vaidelote* could have been interpreted by the Lithuanian audience of that time. Moreover, the question is not only how Lithuanian audiences interpreted Aspazija's drama, but also whether (and how) the artwork itself changed the expectations of Lithuanian audiences. Did it influence Lithuanian playwrights of the time as they, starting from around the year of the translation of Aspazija's play into Lithuanian, also began to employ the plot of a chaste young maiden sacrificing herself for the sake of her homeland?

Lithuanian Evenings and Their Repertoire

The end of the 19th century was particularly unfavourable for the development of Lithuanian culture. After suppressing the 1863–1864 uprising, the Russian government repressed Lithuanian culture by banning Lithuanian printing in Latin letters, removing the Lithuanian language from schools, and forbidding its use in public gatherings. Therefore, the amateur theatre movement in Lithuania started more than two decades later than in Latvia. The number of censored copies of plays preserved in the Saint Petersburg State Theatre Library clearly illustrates the quantitative difference between the theatrical processes in Lithuania and Latvia. During the period from 1886 to 1917, only 320 Lithuanian theatrical works were sent to the tsarist censors for evaluation. Meanwhile, 1700 Latvian plays were sent to the Censorship Committee between the 1870s and 1917³.

While it is difficult to pinpoint the exact beginnings of Lithuanian amateur theatre, Riga Latvian theatre (*Rīgas Latviešu teātris*) was established as early as in 1870 under the leadership of Ādolfs Alunāns, the "father of Latvian theatre".

3 The documents related to early Latvian theatre in the Saint Petersburg archives have been reviewed by Alfons Vilsons (Vilsons 1950: 97–108).

The problem is that Lithuanian theatre, the so-called Lithuanian Evenings, began as a secret resistance to tsarist policies. The Lithuanian Evenings were a mass movement of Lithuanian amateur theatre lovers that began in the 1890s and lasted for about 30 years, taking place in the ethnographic territory of the occupied Lithuania and also encompassing the Lithuanian colonies in the major cities of the Russian Empire, as well as in emigration. The movement reached its peak in the first and second decades of the 20th century. Initially, Lithuanian Evenings were secret, but since the lifting of the ban on the press in 1904 they became public, although restricted by tsarist censorship. The conspiratorial nature of the plays was linked to a specific feature of these amateur performances: they began in the countryside, in secret, far from urban civilization, and thus did not experience a direct influence of professional theatre (Trinkūnaitė 2007: 28–29). The local Lithuanian-language gatherings of singing, reciting, dancing, and having fun together was eventually expanded to include short performed scenes, which later grew into the evening's main event – a performance. Another important characteristic of Lithuanian Evenings is their musical origin. In the first Lithuanian Evenings, the main part of the artistic program consisted of recitals accompanied by music and songs. The predominance of the musical element seems logical, given the fact that at that time the type of theatrical communication where the audience and the performers are strictly separated was still in its infancy. Singing and dancing allowed everyone to join in the artistic process, and thus the communicative structure can be seen as a transition between the unstructured communal fun and the strictly separated audience and performers.

Lithuanian Evenings were usually organized by students who had returned to the countryside for holidays, as well as by local intellectuals (doctors, priests) who also involved the more active villagers. The writer Balys Sruoga proposed a metaphorical assessment of the early amateur theatre activities, which has become well-established in Lithuanian culture: they are considered to be “a fusion of the black-earthiness and the university style” (Sruoga 1930: 11). The “black earth” dimension of theatrical communication refers to the audience's horizon of expectation, regarding the effort to bring the theatrical process closer to the recipient's understanding. This is the audience horizon of the early Lithuanian theatre, above all the forms of folk theatre on which the actors focused in their performances: theatrical entertainments, calendar ceremonies, and family rituals. The “university style” or “civilization” element should be linked to the organizational impulses behind the Lithuanian Evenings – i.e. the self-imposed task of the organizers of this innovative artistic communication to educate and develop their audience.

Memories of theatre lovers and newspaper correspondence from that period confirm that at the beginning the theatre communication did not always work

smoothly – i.e. the audience in the Lithuanian Evenings did not always perceive the performance as a distinctive type of artistic communication (for instance, the spectators gave their remarks to the actors and wanted to intervene in the action). At this phase of Lithuanian theatre, it was necessary to establish the very perception of theatre as such. Namely, to accustom the audience to theatre as a sociocultural event and to teach them the proper behaviour – how to watch the play together with others, in silence and without disturbing the other audience members and actors. Even more lacking was the spectators' ability to adequately perceive the fictional action being shown. For example, the press of the time often pointed out that the audience had laughed at the most tragic parts of the performance. Such reactions are understandable, because the inner dimension of the theatrical experience, the perception of the fiction shown on stage as a unique artistic process, was still in its infancy, and at first the audience was interested in the outer dimension of theatrical communication – theatre as a social and cultural event. Theatre lovers' recollections of plays from that period confirm that Lithuanian Evenings at that time were primarily seen as a cultural get-together. Lithuanian historian and literature professor Mykolas Biržiška, presenting theatre statistics from the first decade of the 20th century, notes: "[T]heatre [...] for us is a substitute for clubs. It is, still like in the old days, an opportunity to get together, to see each other, to talk about things. In that respect, it is an institution that has earned a lot [of respect – B. A.] in society" (Nuobodėlis 1913: 50).

Because of the immature state of Lithuanian theatre at that time, theatre scholars tend to emphasize the political and civic significance of the Lithuanian Evenings, rather than their artistic form. These performances disseminated the use of the native language (their name alone is noteworthy), inspired to participate in the national movement, and fostered national consciousness. In other words, in its first phase Lithuanian theatre was not a space for aesthetic communication, but an arena for propagating national ideas (Trinkūnaitė 2009: 38). In this respect, the memories of the writer Gabrielė Petkevičaitė-Bitė, who contributed to the preparation of the first Lithuanian public performance, are telling. In 1899, a performance of Keturakis's (collective pseudonym of Antanas Vilkutaitis and Juozas Vilkutaitis) comedy *Amerika Pirtyje* (America in the Bathhouse), which took place in Palanga, attracted many spectators. Bitė describes the powerful feelings that she experienced while watching the play: "It could not be called a celebration of fine art, because there was hardly any fine art then. It was a celebration of the nation in the true sense of the word, and of people who were happy to be alive and who together took a strong stance against the shackles that constrained them" (Petkevičaitė-Bitė 1927: 42). In this quote it should be noted that Bitė does not consider the play itself to be true art, but points out the enormous importance of hearing Lithuanian spoken from a stage in front of a community.

Lithuanian theatre began to professionalize rapidly when, after 1904, the emerging cultural societies gradually turned Lithuanian Evenings into regular performances. The organizers soon became aware of their limitations and began to worry about the artistry of the performances and how to ensure it. Public discussions raised questions related to the functions of the performance director, organizational peculiarities, and theatre criticism. What had suited the common people was no longer satisfactory for the intellectuals of the time, as the playwright Kazys Puida pointed out in one of his articles: "Our playing is barely enough for us today because aesthetic fineness has developed and matured much higher in us than we have the opportunity to show it to the general public" (K.P. 1906: 1). The discussion in the Lithuanian press about theatre matters that followed the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the first Lithuanian performance also marks a threshold from which Lithuanian Evenings were held to a much higher standard of professionalism⁴.

Looking at the earliest repertoire of Lithuanian Evenings, it is hard to believe that such a great emotional impact on the spectator was exerted by the simple, short, household-based comedies and plays which didactically depicted rural life. This discrepancy between the exciting, uplifting mood of a simple comedy and the audience's experience of watching it can be explained by the gradual development of theatrical communication. In the earliest period of Lithuanian theatre, the external dimension of the theatrical experience was created (collective viewing of a performance in Lithuanian), while the internal, specifically theatrical communication was primarily based on those forms of theatricality that corresponded to the horizon of expectation of the rural audience. They were associated with the theatricality perceived by the villager: comic scenes on the occasion of calendar feast days and family events, theatrical elements of rituals and customs, vivid typecasts, and external comicality. These forms were expressed by the simple play and the didactic comedy that the professional theatre people of the time called the repertoire of folk theatre. Therefore, the Latvian playwright Rūdolfs Blaumanis's evaluation of the contemporary original Lithuanian dramaturgy is understandable. When Blaumanis saw the play *Meilę Suardyti – Nuodėmę Pagimdyti* (To Break up Love is to Give Birth to Sin), written by Lithuanian playwright Marcelinas Šikšnys-Šiaulėniškis in 1899 and staged by the Lithuanians in Riga in 1900, he eloquently stated in the press: "If we compare our [Latvian – B.A.] dramatic literature to a blooming plant, then our neighbours' [Lithuanian – B.A.] drama would have to be compared to a plant that has just sprouted two soft yellow leaves from the ground" (Nastopka 1971: 96).

According to newspaper data, more than 130 plays had been performed in the

4 More about this see in Laura Blynaitė's paper (Blynaitė 2005: 46–48).

Lithuanian Evenings by 1910. They generally circulated as manuscripts, and only a few have been published. Two-thirds of them (about 80) were translated and adapted from other languages, mainly Polish (more than 30), but also Russian, Latvian, German, French, and Ukrainian (Nuobodėlis 1913: 50). The predominance of translated drama shows that original theatrical works were initially in very short supply. Alongside the realistic type of drama, at the end of the 19th century (around the time when Aspazija wrote her *Vaidelote*) historical patriotic plays began to be translated and subsequently also written in Lithuanian. However, it was not until 1906 that an original historically-themed Lithuanian drama was turned into a performance, because the amateur stage of the late 19th century was simply not logistically capable of producing a more complex historical play which, when put on stage, would have had to deal with the issues of massed scenes or conditional scenery. Marcelinas Šikšnyš-Šiaulėniškis's poetic tragedy *Pilėnų Kunigaikštis* (The Duke of Pilėnai, 1905), based on a short story by the Polish writer Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, is the first original Lithuanian historical drama to be brought to the stage by the Vilnius *Kanklės* Society in 1906. This play became the most frequently staged work of historical themes of the time. Šikšnyš's tragedy brought to the stage the plot pattern of castle defenders refusing to surrender to their enemies and committing collective suicide, which was also characteristic of other Lithuanian historical dramas of the time, such as Vincas Nagarnoskis's *Pilėniečiai* (The People of Pilėnai, 1908), Juozas Jakštas's *Pilėnų Jurgutis* (Dear Jurgis of Pilėnai, 1911), and other plays.

Historical Lithuanian dramaturgy was characterized by a romanticized conception of history adopted from Polish literature: the artistic imagination ignored historical authenticity and created a magnificent past of the Lithuanian nation that was shrouded in legends (Trinkūnaitė 2007: 37). These dramas drew their plots from Polish-language Lithuanian literature of the first half of the 19th century, and created idealized Lithuanian characters whose heroic attitudes and exploits were to serve as an example for the participants of the national movement of the late 19th century. The Lithuanian playwrights' pen was guided by the ideology of nationalism: they were creating a narrative of the resilience of an honourable nation, reflecting the reality of the audience's time. It contained an idealized image of Lithuanians, a whole gallery of noble heroes ready to meet their death for the sake of the nation. As Trinkūnaitė says, Lithuanian historical plays were characterized by a rather monochrome, uncomplicated storyline, depriving it of the possibility of a dramatic conflict: Lithuanian playwrights created a legend of the reckless heroism of its people, emphasizing the idea that it is pleasant, easy and honourable to die for one's homeland and its freedom (Trinkūnaitė 2007: 49). It is clear from the press reviews dedicated to the first productions of historical dramas that this legend of heroism

was relevant to audiences of the time, who saw in it the repressed participants of the national movement in their own lifetime.

A brief overview of Lithuanian Evenings and their repertoire demonstrates that the dramaturgy of that time was completely dependent on the stage. Having emerged primarily as an external dimension of the theatrical communication model (i.e. as a common cultured viewing of a simple realistic comedy), the Lithuanian Evenings' stage rapidly developed the dramatic repertoire necessary for the internal dimension of theatrical communication. In addition to simple plays and realistic comedies full of external comic elements, there was also a need for historical dramaturgy, to which Lithuanian playwrights of the time responded in abundance. It was then that the Lithuanian amateur theatre scene became able to appreciate Aspazija's historical drama *Vaidelote* and tried to master it.

The Lithuanian Reception of Aspazija's *Vaidelote* and its influence

In a letter to Eduards Volters, Aspazija stated that her only source for her drama *Vaidelote* was the book on German history by Otto von Rutenberg (1859–1860) which also covered the history of Lithuania quite extensively, and that she “obviously had to create a lot out of her own imagination” (Nastopka 1971: 77). In fact, the play treats the pagan Lithuanian past quite freely, and specific details, as Nastopka points out, are taken from the Latvian context (Latvian names of the characters, as well as verses imitating Latvian folk songs). The author needs the Lithuanian past as a backdrop against which the audience watches the psychological development of the protagonist Mirdza. The five-act drama takes the audience back to the pagan times of the 14th-century Lithuania when it was ruled by King Olģerds. Olģerds wants to give his daughter Mirdza, who was brought up from a young age in the temple of the fire goddess Praurima, in marriage to the warrior Laimons who has distinguished himself in the fight against the Crusaders. However, Laimons loves the temple's chief priestess Asja, who has been forcibly turned into a priestess. The news that Laimons has been given the honour of marrying the ruler's daughter complicates their secret love. When their relationship is revealed, the lovers are condemned to death, and Mirdza herself first wants to sacrifice the sinners to the goddess. For this reason, she becomes a priestess. However, instead of sacrificing them, she commits suicide herself, thus appeasing the old gods and prioritizing the personal happiness of her beloved man Laimons, and the one he has chosen – Asja.

Interestingly, the earliest Lithuanian press review of Aspazija's drama performed in Riga in 1894 views the production among other aspects of the Latvian national

movement: the author first mentions an archaeological convention which is planned for Riga in 1896, praises Latvians for actively researching their own past, and compares their work to that of the inoperative Lithuanians. He then recounts the plot of *Vaidelote*, staged in the Riga Latvian theatre, and concludes as follows:

There was a large audience, and among them were our Lithuanians, none of whom knew that there were kings in Lithuania – kings, dukes, and other powerful men, so we must all say a hundred thanks to the authoress of the drama, Aspazija, and to all of our brothers Latvians, for at least taking the trouble to show it to our ignorant friends. When, oh when will the Lithuanians do it themselves? (Kiszkiš izs Kopustų 1894: 104)

The issue of the Lithuanian past is again raised when other Latvian productions of *Vaidelote* are mentioned in the press. When the Latvian production in Riga is covered in 1903, it is naively suggested that the Latvian audience had turned up in such large numbers to see the play only because they were curious about the Lithuanian past (Sodietis 1903: 39). A year later in 1904, in a brief discussion of the performance the author says: “As I watched and listened to *Vaidelote*, images began to rush into my mind, one after the other, of our antiquity. How beautiful it is, how much it contains excellent content for dramatic writing!” (Žaibas 1904: 3). Thus, we can say that Lithuanian audiences appreciated this drama following their expectations of the repertoire of the Lithuanian stage at that time – as an opportunity to present the heroic Lithuanian past in an idealized way, as it was done in Lithuanian historical dramas being written at that time.

Almost 15 years passed from the first mention of Aspazija’s *Vaidelote* in the Lithuanian press to translating it, and the manuscript translation that has reached us today was made in 1908 by the Riga amateur theatre lover Povilas Žaldokas. All we know about the translator is that he was the chairman of the first Lithuanian Benefit Society in Riga, founded in 1894, and was actively involved in theatre activities ([Anon.] 1920: 224). His pen is also responsible for the Lithuanian translation of Dāvids Šveņķis’s comedy *Smalki ļaudis* (Fine People) 1894, translated in 1907). The latter translation met a better fate, as it was published as a separate book in 1920 under the title *Intelligentai, arba parinktieji žmonės* (The Intelligentsia, or the Chosen People). However, the surviving manuscript of the translation of *Vaidelote* testifies about Žaldokas as a translator. It shows that his talent was far inferior to Aspazija’s, since the original poetic drama was translated into prose. This is not surprising, as the Lithuanian language was still getting adjusted to more flexible artistic forms (the first tragedy written in verse was *The Duke of Pilėnai* by the aforementioned Šikšnys-Šiaulėniškis). The process of developing the standard Lithuanian language is vividly illustrated by the varying translations of the Latvian word *vaidelote* (pagan priestess). Today’s standard Lithuanian word for it is *vaidilutė*; Žaldokas uses

vaidilaitė, but in the press of the time we also see variants such as *vaidelotė* (which remained the closest to the Latvian original), *vaideliotė*, and *vaidelytė*. However, the translator was hampered not only by the undeveloped standard Lithuanian language but also by the level of his own writing culture. The Lithuanian language in the translation remained very close to original, often adopting the syntactic structure of Latvian and translating literally. It is also noteworthy that Žaldokas was obviously undecided on how to denote Oļģerds: his titles vary from king to duke, and Mirdza is also called either a lady or a princess. Apparently when translating, Žaldokas brought the theatrical work closer to Lithuanian history – and, by simplifying the text, also closer to the possibilities of the amateur stage of Riga *Kanklės* society.

It seems that the simplified translation of Aspazija's drama turned into a simplified amateur production. In a critical review of the 1911 production by the Riga Lithuanian amateur theatre, the reviewer points out that the "beauty of the work has been diminished" because neither the dances nor the songs were performed (to which the audience in Riga was already accustomed to from the Latvian productions), and that the performance was also impaired by the poorly distributed roles, especially the priestesses who resembled female bears (Jonas 1911: 4). The review of the production of *Vaidelote* in Jelgava in 1913 (also staged by Riga theatre amateurs) is even shorter. Despite the praise for the evening, not a word is said about the play itself, only criticism about the local Lithuanians who had lost their moderation:

Mintauja⁵. The Lithuanian evening held here was a great success, with the participation of Riga's *Kankliai* artists who performed *Vaidilaitė*. There were a lot of people. Only the ending was bad-looking, and the reason for that was intoxicants. It would be very desirable for the Lithuanians of Mintauja to have a "sobriety" section. ([Anon.] 1913: 797)

In this publication, the most important thing is the sociocultural event that surrounded the performance – both its success (a lot of people came) and its failure (the "bad-looking" ending due to the overconsumption of alcohol). No further Lithuanian productions of Aspazija's *Vaidelote* could be found, and the mention in the press that the drama had been staged in Vilnius, Šiauliai, and other major Lithuanian cities ([Anon.] 1913a: 10) does not correspond to reality. We can guess that the play did not become popular on the Lithuanian stage because its staging (with dances, songs and mass scenes) was more complex than Lithuanian theatre lovers were used to. This would not have been the only example of such an issue on the Lithuanian stage at that time. The same happened to the historical drama *Kova ties Žalgiriais*

5 *Mintauja* is the Lithuanian name for Jelgava, cognate with its German name *Mitau*.

(The Battle beside Žalgiriai, 1906) by Lithuanian playwright Vincas Pietaris. This play, although it was included in the list of censored and government-authorized works, was never staged. Trinkūnaitė speculates that this was due to the impossibly complex set design and the theatrical limitations of the time. In Pietaris's drama, huge crowds of infantrymen and horsemen would gather on stage, and Vytautas the Great would ride in on horseback – something that the amateur Lithuanian theatre of the time did not have the means to show (Trinkūnaitė 2007: 57).

The popularity of Aspazija's *Vaidelote* on the Lithuanian stage is far inferior to that of other Latvian theatrical works – mostly realistic plays and comedies. The already mentioned comedy *Smalki ļaudis* by Dāvids Šveņķis, with the Lithuanian title *Inteligentai* (The Intelligentsia), was staged at least 5 times between 1908 and 1911 in the major Lithuanian cities and in Riga. Rūdolfs Blaumanis's *Zagli* (Thieves; first performed in 1890) enjoyed the same popularity and was staged at least 5 times between 1909 and 1914 under the Lithuanian title *Vagys* (Thieves), translated in 1907 by Juozas Pleirys. In 1913, Lithuanian theatre amateurs in Kaunas, Šiauliai and Saint Petersburg eagerly staged the play by Ādolfs Alunāns *Kas tie tādi, kas dziedāja* (Who Are Those Singing; 1888), translated as *Liūdna dainelē* (Little Sad Song) by Ona Pleirytė-Puidienė in 1909. It should also be noted that these theatrical works were often not so much translated as adapted for the Lithuanian stage. For example, Juozas Pleirys transformed Blaumanis's realistic two-act comedy into a four-act play, and his translation was published in 1909 as Pleirys's original artwork, with no reference to the Latvian author. Although Pleirys was criticized for plagiarism (L-nis 1912: 4), his style of adaptation was a relatively common practice of the time. This once again confirms the mutual dependence of dramaturgy and the stage – the most popular Latvian works were those pertaining to the genre that the Lithuanian audience was already accustomed to, and those which were easier to set and play on the amateur stage.

So, what were the possibilities for Aspazija's *Vaidelote* to influence the horizon of expectation of Lithuanian theatre lovers? Aspazija's name was essential to Lithuanian intellectuals of the time, as evidenced not only by the very positive assessment of her in the discussion about Latvian literature (Volters, Pleirytė-Puidienė 1908: 360), the translations of her poetry in the press (Kvašytė 2016: 285–286), and the invitation to readers to commemorate her jubilee ([Anon] 1913a: 10), but also by the influence she had on the contemporary Lithuanian dramatists. It is telling that Pleirytė-Puidienė, a Lithuanian writer and active participant in the Lithuanian Evenings, chose the pseudonym *Vaidilutė* after seeing a production of Aspazija's play in her hometown of Jelgava (Kubilius 2003: 31). Perhaps the influence of Aspazija's creative work could also explain the title of Kazys Puida's 1907 drama

Mirga (published in 1912) and his choice to make a young woman the protagonist of the plot. On the other hand, this was a general trend. As Aušra Martišiūtė points out, historical dramas written in the second decade of the 20th century often depict the fate of a priestess who has pledged herself to the gods. Whether a nobleman's daughter or a simple maid, the young woman becomes the main character, consciously sacrificing her life for the sake of her homeland. The researcher associates the origins of the theme with Adam Mickiewicz's Romanticist works *Żywila* and *Grażyna*, which glorified the national consciousness of women in defence of values important to the nation (Martišiūtė 2006: 126). Indeed, historical dramas with a female protagonist whose fate is somehow connected to the fate of the nation abound in the Lithuanian drama of the time. In the aforementioned Puida's drama *Mirga*, Duke Vytautas is rescued from prison by a maid called Mirga who swaps clothes with him, and a similar plot is recreated in Sofija Kymantaitė-Čiurlionienė's *Kalinys* (The Prisoner, 1911), as well as in many other plays of the same theme.

Could Aspazija's drama have pushed Lithuanian playwrights to take up, alongside the stories glorifying castle defenders' collective self-sacrifice, writing dramas that put a self-sacrificing priestess at the centre? Although the answer to this question is ambiguous, it should be assumed that the influence of Latvian drama was limited here as well, since this character was first created in the original Lithuanian drama in the second half of the 19th century already. Indeed, Aleksandras Fromas-Gužutis's drama *Vaidilutė, arba Žemaičių krikštas* (The Priestess, or the Christening of Samogitians) started a new plot pattern in Lithuanian historical dramaturgy – with a young girl at the centre of the story, just like in the drama by Aspazija. Fromas-Gužutis's work has a double plotline: the story of the baptism of Samogitia and the love affair between the pagan girl Rūtelė and the Christian man Jonas Doliva. The protagonist Rūtelė has been caught between two forces in history: the old pagan faith which its high priests want to preserve, and the Christianity spread by King Jogaila and Duke Vytautas. Which path should Rūtelė, who wants to marry the Christian Jonas Doliva, choose? The playwright does not offer any inner psychologism to resolve this question: the female character expresses her feelings in declamatory monologues and makes her decision quickly, without any hesitation. We have to agree with Martišiūtė, who argues that the most important character here is a collective one – the Samogitians who choose a new religion (Martišiūtė 2006: 125). This collectivity, appearing as the joint action of a group of characters or an individual's decision for the sake of the community, is also evident in other dramas with the plot of a self-sacrificing young woman. It is also significant that all the virgins in these dramas share the motives formulated by the protagonist in Puida's drama *Mirga*:

MIRGA. Oh, yes... yes – I will die, because I would rather die than live... What is my life worth against the future of the whole nation? – a shadow that no one will notice... – After all, everybody piles the most precious sacrifices on the altar of the homeland, so why can't I, a simple Lithuanian girl, give my most precious treasures to the homeland: my future happiness and life? (Puida 1912: 66)

In other words, a young woman voluntarily gives up her life herself for the sake of the community – i.e. for the same values for which the defenders of the castle killed themselves in the already established plot pattern of historical drama. Another drama that exalts the native culture is Pleirytė-Puidienė's *Skirmunda*⁶. The drama depicts the war between the Lithuanians and the Teutonic Knights in the 15th century. The protagonist Skirmunda, the daughter of the Duke of Eiriogala, becomes a priestess in order to escape from her wedding to the unloved Boleslovas. However, she is kidnapped by the Crusaders and held in their castle; there she is raped by the German Count Braunschweig and has a child. Her father comes to rescue her from captivity, but when he sees "this little dog", the Crusader's child, he throws him out of the window. After years of captivity waiting for her father, Skirmunda encounters in him a terrible judge. She protests his inhumanity by burning herself at the stake, and here again, in her last monologue, the exaltation of Lithuanian culture rings out in the highest tones: Skirmunda claims that her shame can only be lifted by Gabija, the Lithuanian goddess of fire. According to the logic of the drama, it is better to commit an honourable suicide than to bring up an enemy's child in dishonour.

Thus, the conscious sacrifices of the aforementioned protagonists coincide with Aspazija's female character's choice of suicide, but this is where the similarity ends. Undoubtedly, there was an aesthetic distance between the horizon of the Lithuanian audience's expectation and Aspazija's treatment of the plot of *Vaidelote*. This play does not glorify the heroic sacrifice of the ancient Lithuanians, as the audience of Lithuanian productions of historical drama was used to. In *Vaidelote* the conflict is not between collective pagan and Christian characters, but rather between the two contrasting female characters, Asja and Mirdza, and the psychological development of the latter is demonstrated.

Aspazija's historical drama *Vaidelote* was viewed according to the concept of early Lithuanian historical drama, which was also related to the limitations of

6 There is a confusion about the authorship of this drama. The uncertainty arose because there were two dramas with the same title. The first was written by Jēkabs Dravnieks and translated from Latvian by Juozas Pleirys as early as 1906 (Nastopka 1971: 203–204). This translation was mentioned in the press a couple of times by the translator's sister Ona Pleirytė-Puidienė (Pleirytė-Puidienė 1908: 2; Pl. 1906: 1). Unfortunately, the Lithuanian translation has not survived. Pleirytė-Puidienė on her part wrote a historical drama with the same title in 1912, based on her translation of the Russian writer's Gavriil Khrushchev-Sokolnikov's novel *Grjunval'dskij boj, ili Slavjane i nemcy* (The Battle of Grunwald, or Slavs and Germans; 1889, Lithuanian publication in 1922).

amateur theatre at that time. Thus, as the reviews published in the press make clear, the audience of this drama was not interested in the development of the inner dramatism, but in the background against which it developed – the heroic, majestic Lithuanian past. In other words, Aspazija's *Vaidelote* may have seemed too modern to the Lithuanian audience both in its theatrical language, which required a more professional performance than Lithuanian theatre artists of the time were capable of, and in its Neo-romanticist nature which put the main focus on the character's inner dramatism. This inner dramatism, which makes up the core of Aspazija's play, would later come to Lithuanian dramaturgy with works that no longer had direct links with the Lithuanian theatre scene of the time, and that were intended to be read rather than acted. These were the creative works of Vincas Krėvė-Mickevičius, Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas or Liudas Gira, which were moving into a new stage of drama – Neo-romanticism.

Conclusions

Although Lithuanian theatre amateurs perceived Aspazija's historical drama *Vaidelote* as topically relevant, and encouraged its translation and staging, the play never became popular. Plans to translate and stage this work emerged as early as the end of the 19th century. However, the first and only translation of the play was completed in 1908 by Povilas Žaldokas. Thanks to the efforts of Riga theatre enthusiasts, *Vaidelote* was performed a few times in Riga (1911, 1913) and in Jelgava (1913). The drama's complicated path to the Lithuanian stage, as well as the scarcity of its productions by Lithuanian theatre amateurs in Latvian cities, can be explained by the state of Lithuanian theatre at that time. It was still in its amateur period, lagging behind the development of Latvian theatre by a couple of decades. The Lithuanian Evenings movement, which emerged at the end of the 19th century, began by establishing external theatrical communication. It introduced its audience to theatre as a cultural and useful collective activity and then formalized the internal theatrical experience on the basis of those forms of theatricality that were understandable to the audience of that time. This is reflected in the Lithuanian Evenings' repertoire, which primarily offered short, simple plays and comedies. Thus, when it came to the Lithuanian stage, Aspazija's drama was also simplified — it was translated into prose without reproducing all the stylistic registers of the author's language.

Nevertheless, the name and works of Aspazija were important to Lithuanian writers of the time. This is evident in Pleirytė-Puidienė's pseudonym Vaidilutė, as well as in the similar historical themes of original Lithuanian plays. However, Lithuanian playwrights had to adapt their work to the amateur theatre stage, so

they presented the plot of a young woman committing suicide in a way that met the expectations of the Lithuanian audience. The Lithuanian public was not interested in internal conflict set against the backdrop of history, but rather in this decorative scenery itself – the noble, romanticized Lithuanian past, as in the early stages of Lithuanian historical drama this backdrop was supposed to create the legend of an ever-living, majestic state. While Aspazija exalted individual freedom and discussed personal dignity, Lithuanian historical dramas did not problematize the conscious sacrifice of the individual through internal conflict; rather, it was completely subordinated to the logic of collective sacrifice. Similarly, the artistic quality at the Lithuanian Evenings was sacrificed to draw an audience, and Aspazija's *Vaidelote* was too complex for the Lithuanian public at that time. However, when it was finally ready for the individual conflicts presented on stage, which were disconnected from the concerns of the national community, Lithuanian authors could offer original works analyzing this theme. This is why Aspazija's work had limited influence on Lithuanian drama at the time. Nevertheless, her play functioned as a source of inspiration for Lithuanian playwrights, providing a direction for the further development that ultimately led to the transition of Lithuanian dramaturgy into the Neo-romanticist paradigm.

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Transforming Literary Landscapes of an Emerging Nation: Wetlands in the Young Estonia Albums

Dzimstošas nācijas mainīgās literārās ainavas: mitrāju attēlojums “Jaunās Igaunijas” albumos

Keywords:

mire,
ecocriticism,
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modernization,
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symbolism

Atslēgvārdi:

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simbolisms

Summary

The Young Estonia (*Noor-Eesti*) movement can without reservations be called the most significant cultural phenomenon of early 20th-century Estonia, comprising a number of eminent authors, among whom the most outstanding were the poet Gustav Suits and the fiction author and essayist Friedebert Tuglas. The five anthological albums (1905–1915) of *Noor-Eesti* witnessed the development of Estonian literature from earlier realist tendencies towards symbolism and modernistic emphases. Their artistic transformations were accompanied by new evaluations of Estonian landscapes in literary representation. From the perspective of ecocriticism, this article seeks to explore the bog and fen landscapes of the Young Estonia texts, noting their significance for what is currently considered a national landscape, particularly in the popular image of Estonia as “a country of pristine nature”. The pragmatic views of mires held by 19th-century country-dwelling peasants in literary realism were gradually replaced by other modes of depiction. Mythologizing views of bogs and fens as mystical or supernatural sites have contributed to contemporary fascination with folk horror; the mire has also been used symbolically in ideologically loaded discourse to denote social ills, yet approached with curiosity and aesthetic sensitivity by authors attentive to the actual landscape (its plants, birds, animals), thus producing nature writing. In the *Noor-Eesti* albums, literary treatment of the mire shifts from the realist-anthropocentric toward the fantastic-ecocentric.

Kopsavilkums

Kustību “Jaunā Igaunija” (*Noor-Eesti*) var nešauboties nosaukt par visnozīmīgāko parādību 20. gs. sākuma Igaunijas kultūrvidē. Šī kustība ietvēra vairākus ievērojamus autorus, kuru vidū izcilākie bija dzejnieks Gustavs Suits un prozaīķis un esejists Frīdeberts Tuglass. “Jaunās Igaunijas” pieci antoloģiskie albumi (1905–1915) liecina par Igaunijas literatūras attīstību no agrīnajām reālisma tendencēm līdz simbolisma un modernisma izpausmēm. Stila un māksliniecisko paņēmienu transformācijas šajos albumos pavadīja arī pārmaiņas Igaunijas ainavu uztverē un literārajā attēlojumā. Šī raksta mērķis ir no ekokritiskas perspektīvas aplūkot “Jaunās Igaunijas” tekstos aprakstītos purvus, uzsverot to nozīmi šodien tā sauktajā nacionālajā ainavā, it īpaši populārajā priekšstatā par Igauniju kā “neskartas dabas zemi”. 19. gs. literatūrā lasāmos zemnieku pragmatiskos viedokļus par purvainu zemi vēlāk papildināja un pamazām nomainīja citi skatpunkti. No mitoloģiskajiem priekšstatiem par purvu kā mistiskā un pārdabiskā mājvietu ir izaugusi laikmetīgā aizraušanās ar etnošausmu žanru; ideoloģiska satura literatūrā purva tēls ir ticis lietots kā sociālu problēmu simbols, savukārt tie autori, kas iedziļinājušies reālajā purva ainavā (ieskaitot tam raksturīgos augus, putnus un dzīvniekus), tai veltījuši zinātkāres un estētisma pilnu dabas rakstību. Purva attēlojumos “Jaunās Igaunijas” albumos uzsvars pārvirzās no reālistiski antropocentriskā uz fantastiski ekocentrisko.

Introduction

Literary scholarship today is emerging from a social and intellectual context more urgently aware of environmental topics than any preceding period. The late 20th century veered away from an earlier focus on pure textuality in the humanities, meeting new challenges prompted by the so-called spatial and material turns. The period also witnessed the emergence and institutionalization of the branch of literary study most often referred to as *ecocriticism*. A widely accepted working definition of the field has been provided by Cheryll Glotfelty who saw ecocriticism broadly as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (Glotfelty 1996: xviii), and early ecocriticism was indeed predominantly concerned with the study of works in which representation of natural environments was noticeably foregrounded. More recently, engaging with acute environmental issues such as the global climate crisis has surpassed the emphasis on aesthetic or affective appreciation of nature in ecocritical studies. Still, the presence and function of particular environments in literary works, either as landscapes open to sensory perception or ecosystems accommodating multiple species, remain an important node of enquiry. Landscapes are considered as being continuously re-created and negotiated in an interplay of nature and culture. The materiality and agency of more-than-human (Abram 1997) nature is duly recognized, yet there is also an awareness that the idea, myth or vision of landscape, once established, will become as if its constituent part and provide a lens through which the landscape is generally perceived (Schama 1995: 61).

Not so long ago a couple of Estonian literary scholars were tasked with compiling a comprehensive survey of the state of the art of ecocriticism in the Baltic countries for the special issue on European ecocritical traditions of the online journal *Ecozon@*. The attempt to chart the still somewhat fledgling developments of the field in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania aimed to trace the individual research interests of scholars active in these three countries, as well as to detect the overlapping foci and common topics in the publications by Baltic authors of studies with an ecocritical slant (see Tüür, Soovik 2019). What tentatively stood out among the variety of publications and activities considered was an emphasis on landscapes, in particular the forest – a rather unsurprising observation whose obviousness is best encapsulated in the oft-quoted remark by the landscape scholar Denis Cosgrove that “the forest has been crucial in framing national identities in most countries north of the Alps” (Cosgrove 2003: 16). However, the woods were seconded by the salience of another type of ecosystem whose presence may not seem similarly

predictable – wetlands. These first and foremost emerged in the range of academic interests in the case of Estonian and Lithuanian ecocritics – a comprehensive contribution from the latter (Ragaišienė et al. 2007) even bears a suggestive title that in translation reads as *Ecocritical Bog Pools*.

Lithuanian ecocriticism has, for instance, touched upon the internationally explored topic of wetlands' parallels with femininity (Ragaišienė 2007);¹ and since the conducting of the survey, more critical attention has been paid to the role of swamps in selected Lithuanian fiction of the 20th and 21st centuries (Mažeikis 2019). As regards spatial arts, Gediminas and Nomeda Urbonas curated the Lithuanian pavilion at the Venice Biennale of Architecture in 2018, using the concept of the swamp as a curatorial strategy – a move inspired by the swamp's potential for futurity as suggested by Henry David Thoreau (Bailey-Charteris 2024: 91). As concerns Latvia's landscapes, it seems that both literary and art historical studies – which appear to draw more on the resources of ecocriticism's sister discipline of geocriticism (e.g. Daija, Kalnačs 2019; Kalnačs 2023) –, as well as geographers (cf. e.g. Skultans 2001; Bunkše 2012), have paid closer attention to pastoral rural scenery as central to the national identity than to the country's bogscapes. Still, the *Ainavu dārgumi* (Landscape Treasures) selected by public vote to celebrate the Republic of Latvia's centenary also include large natural bogs (Printsmann et al. 2019: 202).

In Estonia, the country richest in wetlands among the three, mire is currently being promoted to the status of something of an iconic national landscape, particularly as it can easily be used as a metonymic token of unspoiled and pristine nature with significant ecological value (see Pungas-Kohv et al. 2015). Indeed, in this capacity wetlands may be seen to serve as the closest this part of the world has to offer to approximate the elusive construct of "wilderness". Both the low-lying fens as well as the more visually striking bogs are currently approaching the role of a flagship landscape in Estonia's national self-image, and function as a trope for the country's inhabitants alleged "inherent closeness" to nature (the sentiment of being a "nature nation" is also embraced in the neighbouring countries, of course – cf. e.g. Printsmann et al. 2019). This is also evident in symbolic practices: for instance, a writers' outing to a fen was made a focal point at an international literary festival dedicated to wilderness (see Ling 2016), and Estonia even hosted a meeting of the Baltic prime ministers in its Riisa bog, complete with ceremonial fine dining on the boardwalk (Collier 2023). A new national park in the wetlands region of Alutaguse was founded among the nation's centenary celebrations (Printsmann 2019: 196).

1 For other work from the region around the Baltic Sea adopting this perspective cf. e.g. Parente-Čapková 2020, Bailey-Charteris 2024.

The question of the status of wetlands is topical not only in the Baltics. Studies of the position of wetlands in art and literature appear in numerous other cultures of countries where such types of landscape are prominent. A comparison could certainly be made with the even more wetland-rich Finland, where mires have historically been covering more than a third of the land surface – the respective proportion has been up to a third of the land in case of Estonia (Ilomets et al. 2007: 3), although the estimation for live mires today covers no more than 9 per cent of the latter country's territory. Despite the omnipresence and consequent familiarity of this landscape in Finland, a noticeable lack of interest in fenlands has been noted as concerns the history of Finnish arts. "The so-called Golden Age of Finnish art around the turn of the 20th century which served the nationalist ethos, regarded fens as too closed and miserable to be considered as a subject of art" and "[i]n the Finnish National Romantic imagery, fens were almost ignored and may have appeared as something of lesser value", Tiina Pusa et al. (2023: 57, 61) claim. Speaking of literature, Viola Parente-Čapková (2020: 145–146) confirms the marginality and anomaly of bogs and marshes in Finnish traditional literary ethnoscapings around the turn of the 20th century.

There are literary and cultural studies that touch on more generally Nordic wetlands with an emphasis on Danish bog bodies (see Sanders 2015), Irish bogs (Fairhall 2014, Gladwin 2019), swamps in the American South (Wilson 2016), and international comparative discussions of wetlands / peatlands (Giblett 2021, 2024; Proulx 2022). These generally point at wetlands as having historically been considered spaces of dubious value, zones of decay and despair, and realms of the liminal and the supernatural, at least as concerns the cultural mainstream. Interdisciplinary research combining geography and literary history has also been following the treatment and status of mires in Estonian national imaginary and their current role both in nature conservation as well as in the internationally marketed image of the country that targets the tourist industry (Pungas-Kohv, Soovik 2019). The pattern is familiar: in the 19th century, during the time of the formation of the nation as an imagined community, the (then even more widespread) mires of Estonia similarly received but scarce artistic or literary attention, even less so in terms of praise or admiration (Pungas-Kohv 2016). Yet the situation is clearly different today.

Thus, proceeding from the vantage point of ecocritical environmental humanities², the present article attempts to enquire into how mires began to transform on the Estonian literary scene, considering that even more than other arts, it is literature that is particularly capable of contributing to the ongoing invention of what can be considered a national landscape (see Larsen 1997, 2005).

2 For a survey of the environmental humanities as a field from a specifically Latvian vantage point, see Zariņa et al. 2022.

On some contexts and concepts

Indeed, Estonian literary mires initially appeared to be either passively useless or actively unpleasant places – a persisting evaluation that required countering in society as lately as in 1970 when the ecologist Viktor Masing had to enquire: “Are bogs really so awful?”³ in the very title of his groundbreaking appeal dedicated to wetland protection (Masing 1970: 386). It is mostly in the wake of the environmental movement of the 1970s that wetlands have gained their present currency in Estonia (Pungas-Kohv et al. 2015; Pungas-Kohv, Soovik 2019; see also Annus 2025). Yet, in order to find an initial turning point in Estonian literary mire representations, we need to look further into the past. A shift in the Estonian attitudes to wetlands in literature seems to have been launched, if not fully completed, in the rush for modernization during the first decades of the 20th century.

Piret Pungas-Kohv (2016: 2120) duly recalls the literary historian Tiit Hennoste’s observation that the Estonian neoromantic literature of the early 20th century invents and employs several “self-symbols”, one of which is that of the mire (Hennoste 2016: 155). Hennoste provides no definition of his term, yet it can be contextually interpreted along the lines of “a newly emerged symbol specifically typical of, or salient in, Estonian literature of the period”. An uncontested source of programmatic literary and cultural innovation at the time, which was also responsible for a great deal of “domesticated” symbolism in Estonia, was the *Noor-Eesti* (Young Estonia) movement – a cultural upheaval that explicitly claimed: “Our slogan is: More culture! More European culture! Let us remain Estonians, but let us become Europeans too.” (NE I: 17, quoted from Mathews 1950: 118). This exhortation came from the movement’s ideologist Gustav Suits, the leading poet of his generation whose status in Estonian poetry has been compared to that of Rainis in Latvia by several scholars (see Eglāja-Kristsone 2009; Pilv 2009; Mihkelev 2019).⁴

The extensive contributions that *Noor-Eesti* made to Estonian culture have received due critical attention, manifested in edited collections dedicated either to the movement as a whole (Lindsalu 2006) or to particular works by its members (Hinrikus 2006; Hinrikus, Undusk 2022), in special issues of journals (Laak, Olesk 2008), as well as in monographs (Sisask 2018). All these have analyzed a wide range of aspects in the movement’s texts and activities. It is now time to approach the

3 Translations from Estonian are by the author of this article, unless indicated otherwise.

4 Benedikts Kalnačs (2006: 40–41) points out, however, that the most apt Latvian parallel to the Young Estonia movement would rather be the so-called *Dzelme* group (1904–1910), since the first modern period when Latvian literature (with Aspazija and Rainis as its most prominent figures) was consciously engaging with contemporary European culture had occurred already in the 1890s.

Young Estonians from the perspective of the environment – particularly taking into account the authors' own awareness of the innovative potential of their approach to nature and landscape. Looking back at *Noor-Eesti* in 1929, Suits listed among their achievements that they

[.] proclaimed the emergence of a more impassioned way of living, taught refinement to young country-people in their progress towards self-education and urbanization, *discovered new points of vantage for the appreciation of local landscape*,⁵ and initiated linguistic reforms to meet the demand for a more flexible and europeanized mode of expression. (Suits 1929: 6, quoted from Matthews 1950: 119; my emphasis).

With this in mind, my article turns to the the evolving treatment of the mire in the texts published throughout the *Noor-Eesti* movement's albums – five anthological publications that appeared during the period 1905–1915. In addition to presenting a well-defined textual corpus, the albums also serve as a representative sample of the aesthetic development of the period's Estonian literature – from the stronger vestiges of realism included in the earlier volumes towards more pronounced symbolist takes, onto which the wetland representations can be mapped. Also, the intense events of the period are significant as such – to point at a Latvian parallel, the period's significance in "the transformation of the aesthetic and thematic scope of Latvian literature" (Daija, Kalnačs 2019: 68) was a decisive impetus for Pauls Daija and Benedikts Kalnačs's geocritical study of Latvians' mobility and the broadening spatial reach in Latvian novels written between 1900–1914.

Eventually, however, a brief detour should be made into the realm of terminology, as the terms in wetland vocabulary may seem virtually synonymous, yet can denote considerably different landscapes in English and even more so when there is translation involved.⁶ In landscape scholarship, the umbrella term used for the type of wetland to be met in Estonia and thus serving as a material referent for most literary depictions would be *mire* – according to one definition, it denotes peatland that is still capable of forming new peat (this happens predominantly due to the growth of sphagnum moss), while the existent peat layer should be at least 30 cm thick. The two main stages in the life of such a landscape are the *fen* (*soo* or *madalsoo* in Estonian), which is a low-lying mire that obtains most of its water from groundwater or soil, and the *bog* (*raba* or *kõrgsoo* in Estonian), whose peat layer has grown so thick that it rises higher than the surrounding land, which means it is a raised landscape

5 In the original, Suits specifically mentions "the charms of landscapes and waterscapes" ("*maastikkude ja veestikkude veetlusi*").

6 A Latvian case in point regarding the term *purvs* is discussed by Linda Ozola-Ozoliņa and Silga Sviķe (2023).

receiving its water from precipitation.⁷ Admittedly, the literary authors discussed in the present article did not necessarily differentiate between the two and may have used the words interchangeably, while in English-language literary scholarship dedicated to Baltic texts the terms *swamp* and *marsh* may be used. The translations of the text samples cited in this article generally employ *fen* and *bog* for *soo* and *raba*, respectively, and may occasionally resort to the umbrella term of *mire*, particularly when the specific type of the landscape remains indeterminate in the quoted text.

It is to charting these particular literary mires that the article now turns, specifically focusing on the discovery of “new points of vantage” for viewing fens and bogs among the landscapes brought forward by Suits. In broad outlines, the mires in the *Noor-Eesti* albums can be divided into four categories: (1) the mire as a socially significant landscape; (2) the mire as a liminal space or a landscape of the mystical Other; (3) the mire as a symbolic image; (4) the mire as a natural landscape, an ecosystem.

Destitution and poverty by bogs and fens

The above-quoted Finnish studies claimed that the mainstream artistic depiction of Finnish fens was scarce or dismissive as these were considered “of lesser value” and “too closed and miserable”. The question of value, i.e. perceived usefulness in rural economy, is obvious also in pre-Young-Estonia literary treatments of wetlands – bogs and fens appear as a poor, useless landscape whose inhabitants by contiguity are also poor and deemed worthless. Marshy land does not allow for good crops, make fine pastures nor grow valuable timber; those inhabiting the edges of such poor lands are beggarly, wretched or downright outcasts from society. A characteristic mire description of this type is offered when setting the scene for the novella *Vari* (The Shadow, 1894) by Juhan Liiv:

The peasant will not want it, even less the poor peasant from Nurmeküla, and the manor does not really know what to do with it either. There is one thing, though, for which it suits well enough. This is attested by various bones of horses, cattle, cats and dogs, lying bleached on the ground. If any of such animals perishes, be it either through illness, ennui or an arrow, it is considered befitting to cast their bodies there. This is done by the peasants living in the vicinity. (Liiv 1966: 3).

It is by this mire, in the poverty-stricken conglomeration of hovels called Kukulinn that the protagonist has his home. Beside being a social marker of poverty, the fen is also a place of the abject, fit only for those not accepted by respectable society.

7 A concise and reader-friendly survey of the concepts can be found online: <https://peatlands.org/peatlands/types-of-peatlands/>.

Characterized by “mucky water” and “peat as brittle as porridge”, the fen “into which the cadavers and other unnecessary leftovers are cast” deserves the condemning judgement: “Here, nature has provided nothing, neither beauty nor fertility, but only sand and the bog” (Liiv 1966: 4).

The first *Noor-Eesti* albums are not devoid of attitudes towards mires that reflect evaluations of the landscape’s meagre usefulness and perceived lack of aesthetic qualities either; such attitudes may be expressed both on the part of the authorial voice and of the characters. In Friedebert Mihkelson’s (later he was to become known as Friedebert Tuglas) short story *Nõiutud ringis* (In the Enchanted Circle), the mire is seen as a suitable place of disposal not only for animal carcasses but presumably also corpses of paupers and vagrants:

We are both lost and fallen men, we tread like demons in the dirt and mud of this world. There is no more hope for anything good in us. Our lives are lost, everything is lost! What remains is just the damned flesh that is good for nothing, the bone and skin that is barely fit for filling material for a boggy mire across which a road is being built... (NE 1905: 150).⁸

Such dehumanizing hopelessness, reminiscent of the protagonist’s desolation in Liiv’s story, is not surprising in a tale whose plot starts unfolding “in a hovel standing at the edge of the Rebase-raba Bog” (NE 1905: 134). Evaluation of the bog as an ultimately negative, marginal and even evil place, bearing the features of a realm of annihilation, is particularly evident in the folkloric curse integrated into a published extract from August Kitzberg’s play *Laseb käele suud anda* (Allows to Kiss the Hand) that is set in the 17th century: “Let you, let you, I am cursing – let you die into the mire, let you rot...” (NE 1905: 110).⁹

A less florid and more pragmatic evaluation of marshy and low-value poverty-stricken farm plots comes from the Finnish-Estonian author Aino Kallas who describes the landscape on the island of Saaremaa:

The heart is in such a curious pain when you think of your fields here. As small thin ribbons they curl somewhere beside a fen, with poorly dug ditches, and poorly fertilized. Even the crops are different from those on the fields of the manor, the straws are spread thin, grow short, the ears of corn are empty (NE 1905: 43).

Kivisaare Toomas (Toomas of Kivisaare) by M. J. Wunk explicitly links social injustice and inequality with miry plots allotted to peasants by the manor owners: “[T]he manor compensated for the land it had taken with meadows ‘in the fen’ and ‘across

8 In-text references to *Noor-Eesti* albums are to NE.

9 The formula has been registered in the Estonian Folklore Archives [Rapla ERA II 293, 374 (42). 1941] and occurs also in the Estonian national epic *Kalevipoeg*; the ending reads: “upon a tussock”.

the bog', these being such plots that did not grow timber, and thus no profit whatsoever could be made from them" (NE 1907: 183). In Reinhold Kamsen's story *Murede maa* (The Land of Sorrows) a character is swearing: "[T]his damn place, it sent the man to an early grave. To pay the manor two hundred roubles in rent for such waste, for pity's sake! What could he have been thinking, taking on such a hole in the fen" (NE 1907: 81).

On the other hand, some texts point at a certain hypothetical potential of such boggy places, which prefigures Anton Hansen Tammsaare's (who briefly contributed to the third album) characters' famous struggle with the mire in *Tõde ja õigus* (Truth and Justice), his *magnum opus* that has been sending curious readers to visit the author's birthplace on a farm in Järva County and to explore its boggy surroundings ever since the publication of its first volume in 1926 (Pungas-Kohv, Soovik 2019: 299). The Young Estonia albums, however, contain but a dream of a mireless farm: "Wouldn't it be beautiful if this high and dry hill were not there, nor that low muddy fen by the river either! If there was flat dry land full of lush grass and low alder bushes that throw no shadows..." (NE 1907: 138), finally reaching a conclusion: "Think of this muddy fen – there is much fruitful soil there" (NE 1907: 142). However, no actual mire melioration works (unlike logging and subjugating wild nature to cultivation in general) are depicted in the albums. In this respect, *Noor-Eesti* appears to have served as but a half-way stop on the road towards Tammsaare's influential work that has been jocularly labelled a "five-volume mire draining handbook" (Printsmann et al. 2019: 197). Incidentally, in 2025 the annual exhibition of the Tammsaare Museum established at the author's birthplace – a location that served as inspiration for the novel's setting of the fictional Vargamäe –, bears the title *A Hundred Years of Draining Fens at Vargamäe*.

As concerns the traditional outlook expressed in a broader corpus of contemporary realist literature, Pungas-Kohv sums it up as follows:

It seems it was not possible in the context of the time to look at the mire through rose-tinted glasses for in no way could it be transformed into the desired field or woodland, no matter how industriously it was drained. In Estonian literature the mire emerges as the embodiment of poverty and hardship. An environment that is wet and squishy, muddy and with non-existent roads helps to emphasize the weight of people's worries. (Pungas-Kohv 2016: 2118)

Nevertheless, one practical way to utilize a bog still emerges in the *Noor-Eesti* texts and that involves taking refuge in the inaccessible landscape. The fen may function as a sanctuary – a trope familiar from place lore and earlier historical fiction, e.g. Andres Saal's *Vambola* (1889), that is increasingly revisited to this day in both literary and extra-literary contexts. Thus Lilli Luuk's critically acclaimed recent novel *Õöema* (Night Mother, 2024) employs a detailed and authentically depicted mire

setting that also serves as a hiding place, while an official from the Ministry of Climate greeted the Republic of Estonia's anniversary with a programmatic opinion piece "*Wetlands Are Security*", recalling the historical role of wetlands as refuge and specifically mentioning the large Alutaguse boglands close to Estonia's North-Eastern border (Zingel 2025).

As regards the *Noor-Eesti* albums, in the above-mentioned Kitzberg's play it is suggested that young serfs who have to flee from the manor lest they be sold to Latvia go into hiding. Father teaches the young couple: "Then, children, run to the Sussi Fen, this lies towards Riga. They say there are still old refuge huts standing upon a hillside. I know the way." (NE 1905: 119) It is onto a fen that the eponymous mentally anguished "dark child of man" disappears in Jaan Oks's story (NE 1912: 214), and it is in a bog that sheep thieves hide from their pursuers in Tuglas's *Vabadus ja surm* (Freedom and Death, NE 1915: 160). In this sense, the *Noor-Eesti* mires are certainly not places without any use, but as hideaways they can (and are even likely to) shelter those whose activities do not conform to social rules and who are suspicious or downright illegal, thus possibly undermining the social edifice in its entirety.

The liminal and the mystical mires

The capacity of the mire to harbour dark secrets leads us to the second subdivision of the proposed typology. Here, the mire serves as a liminal zone, a mystical Other. This is an internationally widespread notion: for instance, when speaking of the Irish bogs, Derek Gladwin claims that "when they are included in Irish literature and culture bogs often evoke Gothic associations through the mysterious, mesmerising and macabre" (Gladwin 2016: 2), and Karin Sanders (2017: 641–650) dedicates her discussion of liminality in Nordic literature to Danish bog fiction. In the Estonian case, this category is dominated by one outstanding sample – the novella *Jumala Saar. Torgla soo muinasjutt* (The Island of God. A Fairy Tale of the Torgla Fen) by Tuglas, essayist and author of prose fiction and the other outstanding ideologist of *Noor-Eesti* beside Suits. The mire here again functions as a refuge, in this case meaning a place where something ancient, supernatural and possibly evil may be preserved. It is an alternative space in which the rules of the dimension of ancient paganism are seeping through everyday reality:

The forest sighed and in this eternal moaning mires and bog pools burst into being, and, as centuries passed, grey cranes would stand on the banks of the water and sing their songs in a choir, resounding like trumpets.

And hawks came, perched on the black stumps reaching out of the water, and vainly admired themselves in the dark liquid mirror.

Torgla lived a great and profound life, as mysterious and obscure as itself. And there is an eternal struggle, birth and death in it.

Alone, divorced from the mainland, the Island of God stands among the old forest and quagmire. The blue of the tops of its oaks is visible from the bank but there is no road to guide one there. Only black posts stand in the deepest fen among the stunted pines, and it is along these that the path to the Island of God leads. But there is no one who would know the path. They rest in the ground. The white of the skulls of some is visible by Torgla's bogpools, and wolves have scattered their bones. (NE 1907: 12–13)

The horror of the mire is caused not only by the objective dangers it may pose (losing one's way, drowning, predatory animals), but also by the interpenetration of the everyday environment with the supernatural. The mire serves as a possible gateway to a temporally dislocated spacetime, or as a liminal borderland between different orders of reality that Gladwin (2016: 1–2) has observed when writing about Ireland's literary bogs that he for that reason considers as inherently Gothic spaces.

Retrospectively commenting on the genesis of his work, Tuglas (1966: 181–182) recalled that during the Christmas break of 1904/1905 he was reading Vladimir Korolenko's story *Les shumit* (The Forest is Soughing), which took over his imagination at the time, although the eventual extent of obvious borrowing was confined to the first sentence: "The forest was soughing." Also, as Korolenko's text contained a woodland spirit, it must have served as inspiration for the spirit of the fen in *The Island of God*. Tuglas feverishly worked on the novella for a month and a half, visualizing the ancient landscape – partly drawing on the nature from around his childhood home at Ahja in Southern Estonia, partly recalling his father's tales about grandfather who had been a forester. He also points out that subconsciously he must have been interpreting the romantic-revolutionary atmosphere of the era: "Everything around me was on fire and I was on fire myself" (Tuglas 1966: 182), and that it was at this moment that he abandoned his earlier realism in favour of a romantic approach. The symbolic quality of the bog and particularly its dramatic going up in flames seem relevant in the year of the 1905 revolution and the burning of manors. Tuglas himself was involved in the revolutionary events that led to his arrest and subsequent exile where he finished his manuscript. Thus, the conflagration of the mire also appears as a symbol of an old world order that is disappearing.

What is particularly significant in the context of the present article, however, is Tuglas' explicit admission that, without realizing this at the time, he turned out to be the first author to subconsciously employ the motif of the mire in Estonian literature, while other authors such as Suits and also Oskar Luts and Richard Roht would later use it consciously (Tuglas 1965: 182). The historical turmoil would pass, yet the dimension of the uncanny dread remained to haunt later literature. Mire depictions of a similar hue appear in works by the above-mentioned authors whose plotlines

otherwise do not dwell on the supernatural, and also vividly emerge in explicitly fantastic writing. Thus, August Gailit begins his short story *Libahunt* (Werewolf, 1926) as follows:

Behind thick forests and bogs, in the midst of the moaning Urgvee Bog lies my father's poor and wretched hut. It stands on the unstable ground like the others in that vast fen, covered with moss, boughs and stones, a little window opening on the fen like a narrowed eye. Cold grey mists rise from the fen as if from a steaming kettle and swirl above the people and their cabins.

The people living in Urgvee are known to be sorcerers and werewolves; it is a call to become a wolf in the fen that the protagonist submits to in Aino Kallas' Finnish-language Estonia-set *Sudenmorsja* (The Wolf's Bride, 1928). The horror- and fantasy-prone Gailit's work leads towards the gradually emerging genre of Estonian ethno-horror, suggested by today's author Indrek Hargla to be a truly Estonian phenomenon in the realm of fantasy and sci-fi (Helme 2018: 51). Pungas-Kohv (2016: 2132–2133) has discussed a few representatives of the genre who have a propensity for using more detailed bogland settings, including works by Hargla as well as ethno-horror's earlier, ground-breaking representative Herta Laipaik. The most sustained recent example of such use of the mire setting is played out in the Estonian region of Soomaa ("Fenland" in translation) in Mehis Heinsaar's 2022 novel *Kadunud hõim* (The Lost Tribe). The critic Jaan Sudak's review of Heinsaar's novel for international audiences is a telling example of currently established mire tropes. It contextualizes the novel, embracing the notions of liminality and the supernatural, recalls the role of mire as a space of refuge, and, above all, frames it as an aestheticized, inherently Estonian space:

Bogs are, to Estonians, a mysterious and threatening borderland; a breathtakingly beautiful wilderness full of unbridled forces. Will-o'-the-wisps bewitch wanderers, causing them to stray from their chosen path. For millennia, Estonians have sought sanctuary in bogs from great plagues and wars. (Sudak 2023: 46)

Thus Tuglas was certainly not mistaken to have acknowledged in the 1960s that he had introduced something new into Estonian fiction half a century earlier, although he had no way of predicting its persistence still half a century later.

Mystical and liminal bog scenes possibly involving supernatural elements did not remain confined to prose, but also emerged in poetry, where they were likely to display an eroticized atmosphere blending the forces of Eros and Thanatos. A remarkable example was the suggestive and ballad-like poem of warning and invitation *Soolaul* (The Swamp Song, 1928) by Estonia's leading woman poet Marie Under, followed by the love- and drowning-themed poems with fen and bog settings by the members of the 1930s group *Arbujad* (The Soothsayers). It was

Gustav Suits, though, who had impressively introduced the trope of mires into Estonian poetry, and in his case the main emphasis was rather on scathing social symbolism.

Symbols and society

Suits has been rightfully seen as the country's foremost symbolist poet, with his second collection *Tuulemaa* (Land of Wind, 1913) marking the style's definitive arrival on the Estonian literary scene. And, as Tuglas duly pointed out in his memoir, among other things Suits excels as someone who refined Tuglas's own intuitive application of the mire motif. His fen poem "*Soolaugastel*" (Pools in the Swamp, [1908] NE 1909: 213–214), that had been published in a Young Estonia album, was included in that groundbreaking book of poetry as was another remarkable fen poem "*Laul Eestist*" (The Song of Estonia, Suits 1913: 15–16). The mire in Suits's poetry from the *Noor-Eesti* period is a social symbol. The former poem has been translated into English by W. K. Matthews:

Pools in the Swamp

The surface of the swamps holds pools unnumbered.
Can it be rusty water that lies tongueless and still
Or mindless pain that stares with mute eyes that numb the will?

The surface of the swamps holds pools unnumbered.

Slow, silver bubbles globe upon the water.
O yearnings, secret wishes that hide in the swamp's night!
O dreams that blot out suddenly, failing in mid-flight!

Slow, silver bubbles globe upon the water.

Clowed to the earth, the stunted birches cower.
The treacherous virid floor of the swamp hollows and quakes
To straying feet, and the turbid glass of the water breaks.

Clawed to the earth, the stunted birches cover.

The live swamp teems with myriads of midges.
They fill the eyes and nostrils, and suck blood from the vein,
And choke desire, and creep into the heart, and daze the pain.

The live swamp teems with myriads of midges. (Suits 1953: 41)

A state of mind is conveyed that intermingles the predominantly personal with the suggested social, resulting in a "despairing symbolism" (Matthews 1950: 122). On the one hand, the landscape is depicted with an aestheticizing detachment of an external observer whose gaze encompasses the whole scene of multiple pools as if

from a higher vantage point¹⁰. On the other hand, the bodily presence encasing the central consciousness is underscored by the deeply experiential realistic incorporation of the hordes of midges that must have physically pestered any of Suits's readers who happened to have spent time outdoors in a natural environment – as Estonian countryside people were likely to. Still, instead of just allowing the insects serve as yet another embodied hardship on the list of plagues that harsh surroundings will heap on humans, even the midges become symbolic, appearing as a powerful metaphor for an embodied suffocation that pierces the whole body. The thwarted human condition as such was rendered in marshland imagery already in Johannes Aavik's translation from the Finnish author Juhani Aho, registering it as a bitter fate to be born as a stunted birch between two tussocks in a liquid fen (NE 1905: 183). In Suits' "*A Song of Estonia*", however, it is social criticism at its sharpest that becomes foregrounded: "History as horrible as an excretion, / a downtrampled, powerless breed, / crooked and hunched stunted birchs, / with roots and rootless in the muddy quagmire." (Suits 1913: 15). To use the assessment of Suits' translator Matthews, in this poem "his despair sounds its bitterest depths" (Matthews 1950: 120).

The dimension of social suffering and hopelessness enscribed in a marshy landscape can also be found in Jaan Oks's *Vaevade maa* (Land of Woes, NE 1915: 95): "Land of woes – land of poverty – land of hungers. The clouds are brooding on the tired fields with their sick pastures; forests decay into quagmires where the blubber of grass warms the roots of willows until even shoots of mosses die in the tarry water." In the same album that saw Oks's text in print, Aino Kallas points out in her article *Gustav Suits lüürikuna* (Gustav Suits as a Lyricist) that it is especially in poems such as the above that "Estonian landscape, Estonian soul begin to adopt an ever clearer outline side by side with a growing patriotic pessimism" (NE 1915: 175). I believe that what Kallas has detected here is the ultimate arrival in poetry of what Hennoste labelled "self-symbols" of Estonian literature.

Such takes on fens and bogs actually conveyed the reality of local scenery more accurately than the fairly standard or bland 19th-century tropes of *loci amoeni*. At the same time, they were harnessed in an internationally established tradition of employing fen-related metaphors in social criticism. The literary historian Herbert Salu, writing in exile in post-WWII Sweden, points out that the metaphor of a mire standing for bourgeois society was familiar from Romain Rolland's works *Vie de Beethoven* (Life of Beethoven, 1903) and *Jean-Christophe* (1904–1912) (Salu 1984: 143).

10 A comparable point of view overlooking a stretched-out bogscape covered with pools would later be occupied in Konrad Mägi's famous painting *Norwegian Landscape with a Pine* from the period 1908–1911.

The condemnation of the bourgeois society as a bog would be repeated after the cessation of the *Noor-Eesti* movement, in the Tarapita manifesto of 1921 signed by ten writers who also included Suits and Tuglas. In this text Salu (1984: 142) detects similarities with the lexicon of the Clarté movement in France (1919–1921), including the bog trope. And the scathingly critical manifestoes written by the poet Henrik Visnapuu in 1919 in which he states: “The life river of our people finds itself unavoidably in a mire. – What stood in front of us was an eternally gurgling fen with its rotting depths” (quoted in Salu 1984: 147) were, in Salu’s estimation, directly drawing on Suits’s images. As concerns other material published in the *Noor-Eesti* albums, Eduard Vilde (NE 1909: 107) uses an extended metaphor of the bog seething with imaginary gross invertebrates to convey disgust with the depraved debauchery of the bourgeoisie.

The power and potency of Suits’s poetic mires as tools of social criticism is maybe most tellingly indicated by the incorporation of his line “The surface of the swamps holds pools unnumbered” in the poem “*Soolaulikud*” (Swamp Bards) by the Soviet Estonian poet Juhan Schmuul (Smuul) published in 1950 in the newspaper *Sirp ja Vasar* (Sickle and Hammer). It appeared on a special page topped by the current party-line slogan: “Writers and artists, fight for the implementation of the Stalinist plan for the transformation of nature!”. The line from Suits appears as a refrain in the poem “*Swamp Bards*” whose first part comments on the oppressed life in pre-war independent Estonia, where “[s]wamp dispirits, swamp reigns, swamp destroys” – a state of things which, as the second part promises, would of course be effectively abolished by the implementation of the said plan, which in Estonia predominantly meant draining of mires.¹¹ Nevertheless, this denouncement paradoxically meant a repeated and explicit, although anonymous, reference to the banned and discredited “bourgeois” author Suits (who at the time lived in exile in Sweden) – and obviously expected the Soviet readership to recognize and to resonate with the line.

Bogs, fens and nature writing The albums included not only original texts by Estonian writers, but also translations among which the French *fin-de-siècle* was characteristically prominent. Kaia Sisask (2019: 63) has found that the selected texts illustrate the main keywords of symbolism, aiming to evoke dark, vague and musical sensations, but also surmises that the texts’ suitability into the framework

11 For instance, mire-draining is the central Soviet feat in Hans Leberecht’s Stalin-prize-winning novel *Valgus Koordis* (Light at Koordi, 1948), the Estonian Stalinist literary work *par excellence* that was also adapted into a film in 1951.

of Estonian nature poetry may have been a factor supporting the selection. As a side note it may be pointed out here that Suits explicitly introduced a bog pool into his translation of Paul Verlaine's poem "*La lune blanche*" (The White Moon) – a move which certainly resonates with his own imagery: "*L'étang reflète, / Profond miroir*" is translated as "*Kui sügav peegel / soosilm täis vett*" [As a deep mirror, / a fen pool full of water] (NE 1909: 2).

Thus, nature as the Young Estonians knew it need not have been far from them even at their most cultured, refined and European-trending. So its presence appears in Bernard Linde's story *Hallid juuksed* (Grey Hair) in which a character is experiencing boredom at another's monotonous speech which for him resembles the expanse of a wetland:

Just like an uneven low-lying land where only high marsh grasses, branches of bog bilberries in scattered bushes of crooked birch, and stakes of spruce and pine grow, behind which long-legged and long-necked swamp birds scarcely can hide – thus flowed Jürgenson's speech. [...] John listened. Initially his thought, just like a gaze upon a fen landscape, could not rest on anything – everything was uniformly flat. (NE 1909: 250).

The extended metaphor indicates the character's, and by extension the author's, deep familiarity with this type of landscape and testifies to his ability to draw on a remembered experience that obviously has been lived through and stored at the back of his mind, which materializes in a fragment of credible nature writing.

A similar knowledge of nature is manifested in the details of the texts by Tuglas. For instance, his story *Asuja* (The Settler) opens with a scene depicting a primordial "wilderness":

Before, only ancient forest had been soughing here whose heart was but rarely touched by the feet of a living man, where only wild animals roamed and caught their prey. Across dozens of miles stretched a long wild domain with its dark thickets, sturdy pines, bent juniper bushes and squishy mossy fens inaccessible to larger animals, where only birds of prey lived as did long-legged storks who caught frogs while splashing around in the deep waters from spring to autumn and built their nests on top of the trees growing on the scattered fen islands. All manner of snipes, curlews, wild geese and ducks appeared here in great numbers and in the autumn they flew back towards the south in long lines under the grey sky. (NE 1905: 21).

What is particularly attention-worthy here is the fact that, although the author does not name a particular species, it is clear that he is aware of the habits of the "symbol of Estonian wilderness", the rare black stork who indeed builds its nest on top of preferably old trees close to swamps and bodies of water in large forests, keeping away from human habitation – unlike white storks who prefer cultivated lands, or cranes whose nests are on the ground.

Even though such passages may be meant to serve as scenes evoking a

hypothetical virgin wood before the arrival of humans, they do not seem to be purely relying on imagination. Tuglas's work can be read as approaching nature writing by someone familiar with Estonian countryside and its non-human inhabitants, especially when considering the ecocritic Lawrence Buell's claim that in nature writing "[the] nonhuman environment is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history" (Buell 1995: 7). This can be suggested even despite the fact that Tuglas's sustained literary efforts in constructing natural scenery were later criticized for their continuity errors by Juhan Luiga, a doctor and man of letters. Luiga himself also contributed to the Estonian literary mire discourse in an interesting way. In 1908, the year following the publication of Tuglas's *The Island of God*, Luiga published an essay entitled "*Soo hing*" (The Soul of the Fen) that approaches mires from a virtually scientific perspective. Contrary to contemporary dreams of melioration, Luiga ([1908] 1995: 552) deems mires too much of a hassle to be cultivated, which is precisely the reason why they are worth visiting. For him, they are basically interconnected ecosystems that grow their own flowers, their own plants "that the mire has re-fashioned according to its own character" (Luiga [1908] 1995: 553), and thus have agency as well as constitute a realm deserving closer study.

The following decades of the 1920s and 1930s would produce a wave of non-fictional nature writing that to a great degree involved detailed observations of plants and birds (see Maran, Tüür 2016: 287). Several passages from Young Estonians would not seem out of place in the works by Kustas Põldmaa, whose *Kodumets* (Home Forest) appeared in 1937 and contained a chapter on children's risky trip across a fen, or Johannes Piiper whose classic *Pilte ja hääli kodumaa loodusest* (Pictures and Sounds from the Nature of Homeland) came out in 1935. Both of these authors, whose above-mentioned works were incidentally given out by the *Noor-Eesti* Publishers, are noted for their aestheticizing approach to nature and were instrumental in consolidating the genre of nature writing in Estonian literature. The works of the Young Estonians published a couple of decades earlier had most certainly been available to them, likely providing the vantage points for the appreciation of nature's charms that Suits had listed among the movement's contributions to Estonian literature and culture.

Conclusion

In the 21st century it may seem that the presence of the mire, comprising both fens and bogs, is an established feature in the Estonian cultural self-imaginary. However, if we look further into the past, it appears that its status as an "officially recognized" landscape supporting the image of Estonians as a "nature

people" does not seem to reach back particularly far – the connotations of mires in people's minds have for a long time mostly been negative, and bogs and fens used to be assigned the role of an antagonist in texts that juxtapose humans with nature or seek to establish human mastery over it. Nevertheless, it may be suggested that the seeds for various variations of today's image of the mire in different literary genres were sown already in the early 20th century by the Young Estonia movement. It also appears that the group's main ideologists Gustav Suits and Friedebert Tuglas were actually aware of the movement's novel approach to Estonian land- and waterscapes in general and to mires in particular.

Since then, in addition to the pragmatic takes on the mire from the perspective of country-dwelling peasants that appear in 19th-century literary realism, mythologizing views on bogs and fens seen as liminal places of mysticism and the supernatural have led towards the contemporary fascination with folk horror. The mire has been symbolically used in ideologically loaded discourse to denote social ills and shortcomings, amounting to a literary "self-symbol", yet also approached with curiosity and a keen sense of aestheticism by authors who have been focusing on features of the actual landscape, comprising nature writing. Among this rich legacy, it is particularly the strains of the fantastic and the ecological that seem to flourish a hundred years later, as the pragmatic agricultural evaluations and evocative imagery of ideological criticism (that was clearly also related to denigrating value judgements passed on mires) appear to have become (at least to a certain extent) *passé*. Today's pragmatic take would rather be an ecological one, valuing mires as carbon sinks and sources of biodiversity, or a monetized one deriving from the tourist industry and seeking out the most marketable features of mires (Pungas-Kohv et al. 2015). Mire landscapes deserve attention as providers of ecosystem services and are valued from an environmental perspective as complex systems of biodiversity in their own right.

Writing on non-human spatiality in fiction, Michael Karlsson Pedersen has proposed "a clear-cut division between literature oriented toward the human and literature oriented toward the nonhuman" (Pedersen 2022: 52). To use the terminology that Pedersen draws from the sci-fi author Ursula LeGuin, the literary mire discourse initiated by the Young Estonia currently seems to be faring better in the category of the *fantastic-ecocentric* than in the realm of *realistic-anthropocentric*. LeGuin has pointed out that interest in the non-human leads literature away from realism, which means uniting genres such as sci-fi, fantasy and horror on the one hand, and regional or nature-oriented writing that values landscape as humankind's Other on the other hand (ibid.). A development of mires from an objectified backdrop over which the human narrative may preside towards their greater autonomy

and even agency accompanies the departure from literary realism through the successive *Noor-Eesti* albums.

To return to the cross-Baltic survey mentioned at the beginning of this article, it might also be worth the while observing comparatively the roles that the arising of literary modernisms and the tumultuous history of the 20th century have played in fashioning national landscape imaginaries in the respective literatures of the Baltic countries, specifically as concerns wetlands whose importance in the climate crisis is ever increasing. As Karin Sanders has put it: “[B]ogs, swamps, and wetlands have served as eco-libraries full of stories to be dug out and read” (Sanders 2017: 643).

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Young Minni Kurs-Olesk: the Formation of a New Woman behind the Scenes in 1905

Minni Kurs-Oleska jaunībā: "Jaunās sievietes" rašanās 1905. gada aizkulisēs

Keywords:

Baltic provinces,
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William Thomas Stead

Atslēgvārdi:

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Summary

Minni Kurs-Olesk (1879–1940) was one of the founders of the Estonian women's movement, as well as of social democracy and social welfare. She played a part in the politics of the newly formed Republic of Estonia, having been elected as a representative of the Estonian Social Democratic Labour Party to both the Constituent Assembly and the commission responsible for drafting the Estonian constitution. In 1905 the young Minni Kurs returned from London, where she had seized the opportunity to study at institutions such as the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). As a social democrat, she became actively involved in the revolutionary events unfolding in the Baltic provinces of imperial Russia. This article examines materials from a police dossier about her which are now held in the Latvian State Historical Archives. The archived correspondence between the offices of the Prime Minister of the Russian Empire and the Provisional Governor-General of the Baltic Governorates contains a note from the renowned London journalist, William Thomas Stead. (Upon hearing from mutual acquaintances in London that Minni Kurs-Olesk had been arrested and sentenced to corporal punishment, Stead wrote to protest her treatment.) Examples from the memoirs and correspondence of her contemporaries illustrate the restrictions that prevented women from fulfilling their dreams in the Russian Empire.

Kopsavilkums

Minni Kurs-Oleska (1879–1940) Igaunijā bija gan viena no sieviešu kustības dibinātājām, gan arī sociāldemokrātijas un sociālās labklājības sistēmas aizsācēja. Kursai-Oleskai bija liela loma jaundibinātās Igaunijas Republikas politikā, jo viņa kā Igaunijas Sociāldemokrātiskās Darba partijas pārstāve bija ievēlēta gan Satversmes sapulcē, gan arī komisijā, kas bija atbildīga par Igaunijas konstitūcijas izstrādāšanu. 1905. gadā Kurs-Oleska atgriezās no Londonas, kur bija izmantojusi iespēju studēt tādās mācību iestādēs kā Londonas Ekonomikas un politikas zinātņu augstskola. Kā sociāldemokrāte viņa aktīvi iesaistījās revolucionārajos notikumos, kas risinājās cariskās Krievijas Baltijas provincēs. Šajā rakstā analizēti materiāli no policijas dosjē par Kursu-Olesku, kuri šobrīd glabājas Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvā. Tur atrodamā sarakste starp Krievijas impērijas premjerministru un Baltijas guberņu pagaidu ģenerālgubernatoru citstarp ietver slavenā Londonas žurnālista Viljama Tomasa Steda rakstītu vēstuli. (Dzirdējis no kopīgiem Londonas paziņām, ka Kurs-Oleska esot apcietināta un viņai piespriests miesassods, viņš izteica protestu pret šādu rīcību.) Savukārt Kursas-Oleskas memuāri un korespondence liecina par ierobežojumiem, ar kādiem saskārās sieviešu centieni Krievijas impērijā.

In 1888, amidst the debates on women's rights that had been ongoing throughout that decade, the editor Lilli Suburg¹ published an essay entitled "*Emancipirt!*" ('Emancipated!')² in her magazine *Linda*. In the essay, she explains the meaning of the word in its title, emphasizing the aspects of belonging to someone without free will and being "freed from slavery" (Suburg 1888). From there she moves on to men's power over women: this power, as she stresses, is based on women's lack of education which keeps them in the dark. Therefore, Suburg encourages Estonian women to take every opportunity to learn and to sharpen their minds, as men and women are equal in their intellectual abilities. Her essay takes a programme-like approach to the concept of a new type of woman that emerged at the end of the 19th century (Undla-Põldmäe 1981: 286; Annuk 2012: 73–76). In the magazine *Linda*, Suburg also discusses the legal status of (peasant) women (Suburg 1889: 224–226), and opposes the argument that women who write publicly (we can elaborate: who engage in intellectual debate) allegedly lose their femininity (Suburg 1887: 2). In her essay on emancipation, Suburg highlights the advantages that Finnish women then had over their Estonian contemporaries, citing their proficiency in foreign languages and their extensive network of contacts which even reach as far as America (Suburg 1888).

Lilli Suburg is regarded as the first Estonian feminist (Annuk 2021: 46): the first Estonian girls' school was founded by her, as was the first women's magazine *Linda* (established in 1887 and subsequently edited by her as well). Suburg also expressed her ideas through fiction, including the short story *Liina* (1877) which explores gendered nationalism (Annuk 2021). Fiction about women's rights, however, was not solely her domain. At the end of the 19th century Eduard Vilde, the founder of Estonian socio-critical realism, also emerged as a persistent advocate of feminist ideas and became one of the most steadfast defenders of women's freedom and dignity in his works (Lindsalu 2006: 296).³ For example, in his novella *Astla vastu* (Against the Sting, 1898), which is considered the first European novel in Estonian literature, Vilde highlights the inequality faced by women, as well as other issues, in a rural province of Tsarist Russia (*Estlitee* 2025). Vilde's interest in women's emancipation was

1 Lilli Suburg (1841–1923), Estonian writer, journalist and educator.

2 The author informs that the German word *emancipirt* (= *emanzipiert* in modern German spelling) is a borrowing from the Latin word *emancipare*. Throughout the essay, she only uses the term as a quotation and does not provide an Estonian translation.

3 Eduard Vilde (1865–1933), a classic of Estonian literature.

awakened during his stay in Berlin during 1890–1892, when he was introduced to socio-democratic ideology and read August Bebel (Lindsalu 2006: 297).

As regards the term 'New Woman', it originated in France in the 1830s. It was first introduced by the writer George Sand (Amantine-Lucile-Aurore Dudevant), gained currency in Russia during the 1850s in the debate over Nikolai Chernyshevsky's controversial novel *Čto delat?* (What Is to Be Done?, 1863), and subsequently was used in 1894 in the public debate between the Irish writer Sarah Grand (Frances Elizabeth Bellenden Clarke) and the English writer Ouida (Maria Louise Ramé) to describe feminist, educated, and legally and economically independent women (see also Kirss 2006: 76–78; Kirss 2015; Ross 2023: 775). As a "precursor to the modern Western female professional" (Das 2023: 464), this "woman suddenly appears on the scene of man's activities, as a sort of new creation, and demands a share in the struggles, the responsibilities and the honours of the world, in which, until now, she had been a cipher" (Tusan 1998: 169). As a character in fiction – such as Nora in Henrik Ibsen's play *Et dukkehjem* (A Doll's House, 1879) – the protagonist reflected not only her own aspirations but also society's reaction to them. In the real world, the New Women were trying to effect change in society, particularly with regard to women's rights (see Buzwell 2025).

Drawing on the life of Minni Kurs-Olesk, I will discuss what it meant to be a New Woman in the Baltic provinces at the beginning of the 20th century. I will consider the invisible barriers they had to break through, and how often they encountered "an impenetrable crystal vault" (*une voûte de cristal impenetrable*) (Sand 1988: 59–60).⁴ My article is additionally based on archival research that I published last year, aiming to clarify Kurs-Olesk's biographical details and her studies abroad (Talivee 2024).

Minni Kurs-Olesk and her contemporaries have already been referred to as New Women in various studies (Hinrikus 1997; Kirss 2004, 2006, 2011). She is a fine illustration of this phenomenon, being one of the founders of the Estonian women's rights movement, social democracy, and social welfare. She played a role in the politics of the newly formed Republic of Estonia, having been elected as a representative of the Estonian Social Democratic Labour Party to the Constituent Assembly and the commission responsible for drafting the Estonian constitution (Viljamaa; Hillermaa 2020). Kurs-Olesk also promoted vocational training opportunities, alongside trade union work. She additionally became involved in child protection, organizing care for orphans, infants and young mothers, as well as for domestic workers, the blind, the war wounded, etc. (Kurs-Olesk, 1939). Kurs-Olesk participated in women's organizations both in Estonia and internationally. The first female students in Tartu

4 "J'étais une femme; car tout à coup mes ailes se sont engourdies, l'éther s'est fermé sur ma tête, comme une voûte de cristal impénétrable, et je suis tombé, tombé [...]" (Sand 1988: 59–60).

recalled the moral support they received from Kurs-Olesk and the generous invitations to the Olesks' home, including the opportunity to use their extensive library (Mirka-Linnus 1939: 10–13). Kurs-Olesk tried to find practical solutions for making women's lives easier and improving their working conditions. At the same time, she wanted to encourage them to strive for the same goals as men, which was far from self-evident for women at that time – for example, she encouraged them to enter politics (Kurs-Olesk 1924). She also wrote about these issues in newspapers.

Minni Kurs-Olesk's contribution to society has been discussed in connection with her jubilee birthdays (e. g., Jansen 1929; A. T-nn 1929; *Väsimatult ühiskonda...* 1939), and the Estonian Association of University Women compiled a book of tribute essays to Minni Kurs-Olesk for her 60th birthday in 1939, with contributions from several authors. This book gives a detailed account of her work in state and local government, social work, the women's movement, women's vocational training, and journalism (Kurs-Olesk 1939). Kurs-Olesk has also been portrayed in a book on the history of Estonian women's movement published by the Estonian community in exile after World War II (Mäelo 1957), while in the Soviet Union she was not considered worthy of research. However, in independent Estonia literary scholars once again brought her legacy to light: Sirje Olesk was the first to re-examine Minni Kurs-Olesk (Olesk 1993), and Peeter Olesk has published several accounts about his grandmother (e.g. Olesk 2006; 2010). Tiina Kirss has published and commented on Minni Kurs-Olesk's correspondence with her partner Lui Olesk (Kirss 2019 and 2020).⁵ The legacy of Kurs-Olesk was also discussed in Piret Karro's study *150 Years of Estonian Feminism* (Karro 2022) and in an exhibition based on it (2023–2024).⁶

A note from William Thomas Stead

At the beginning of the 20th century, Tartu (then officially called Yuryev in Russian and Dorpat in German) was certainly one of the hotbeds of New Women in Estonia. On the eve of the 1905 Revolution, dissatisfaction with the Tsarist government was growing. Young people of both sexes were gathering in groups and secret circles, which led to a turbulent year full of turmoil. By the spring of 1906, 27-year-old Minni Kurs-Olesk had crossed so many borders that her name appears in a police dossier now kept in the Latvian State Historical Archives.

5 This correspondence is archived in the Estonian Cultural History Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum.

6 Piret Karro is a researcher and curator whose academic background lies in semiotics and gender studies.

The file contains correspondence between the Office of the Prime Minister Count Sergei Witte of the Russian Empire, and the Office of the Provisional Governor-General of the Baltic Guberniyas, Vasily Sollogub.⁷ On 9 March 1906, Sollogub had received a secret request to inform Witte urgently about the fate of a young woman: the Prime Minister wanted to know whether Mina⁸ Olesk (maiden name Kurs) had been arrested and sentenced to corporal punishment.⁹ The reason for the investigation was revealed in a letter dated 14 March from a lady-in-waiting at the court, State Lady (*Stats-Dama*) Yelizaveta Narishkina¹⁰, which contained a copy of an English-language note requesting further information:

Minny Olesk, nee Kurs, is a young and beautiful Russian girl who recently spent a year or two in London and Paris, perfecting her education. On her return to Russia married a lawyer named Olesk. She is a Social Democrat and addressed a workmen's meeting during the disorders in the Baltic provinces. For this offence she was arrested, and sentenced at Dorpat to 300 strokes with a birch rod. As she was enceinte, the infliction of the flogging was postponed until after childbirth. My friends who knew her well in London declare that she is a refined and sensitive girl to whom the prospect of degradin torture awaiting her after confinement means death. After sentence she was removed to a prison some little distance from Dorpat where in close confinement away from her husband she awaits maternity and its sequel. Inquiry into the case asked for and if the facts are as stated a remission of the sentence as inhuman.

W. T. Stead¹¹

Narishkina mentioned her intention to take Stead's appeal to the Tsar if the circumstances were as stated. The inquiry at the highest level demanded urgent

7 Count Sergei (Sergius) Witte (1849–1915) became the first Chairman of the Council of Ministers in 1905 and served as the first Prime Minister of the Russian Empire after successfully negotiating favourable terms for Russia at the end of the Russo-Japanese War. Vasily Sollogub (1848–1917) was appointed Provisional Governor-General of Livonia, Estonia and Courland in 1905, and resided in the restless Riga. Sollogub survived a bomb attack in Riga in autumn 1906.

8 Minni Kurs-Olesk was born Minna Caroline Marie Kurs. 'Mina' is the Russian spelling of 'Minna'. In her correspondence from England and the documents used there, she used the form 'Minny'; and in the tribute album, her name appears as Vilhelmine-Marie-Karoline Kurs. This version was used quite widely afterwards.

9 LVVA, 6989.2.23, p. 1. From Director of the Police Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Empire, Zubovski, to the Office of the Provisional Governor-General of the Baltic States, 9 March 1906.

10 Yelizaveta Narishkina (Žiži Naryškina, née Kurakina, 1838–1928). Personal connections probably played a role: Kirill Naryshkin, the son of the high-ranking court lady, was the husband of Count Witte's stepdaughter Vera.

11 LVVA.6989.2.23, p. 8. From William Thomas Stead to Yelizaveta Narishkina.

action. Telegrams and reports signed by the Provisional Governor, various officers, and the Chief of Police went back and forth, and by 16 March 1906 it was clear that the person in question was not on the list of persons taken into custody by the police or punitive expedition squads. Fortunately, only two guesses in Stead's note proved to be true. Firstly, there was a prisoner named Olesk – it was the aforementioned lawyer Lui Olesk, who had been arrested for defending his client.¹² Secondly, Minni Kurs-Olesk was indeed pregnant at the time – the first daughter of the Olesk family, Olga Desideria, was born a month later on 16 April 1906.

The author of the note that sparked the correspondence was the journalist William Thomas Stead (1849–1912), one of the pioneers of British investigative journalism. Stead began his career in North-East England, but his passionate coverage of Bulgarian atrocities earned him a job in London in 1880 at the influential *Pall Mall Gazette* (Prévost 2013). In 1885 Stead had published one of the most controversial series of articles in Victorian society, "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" (Stead 1885): a journalistic experiment that exposed a market of child prostitution in London where girls in their early teens were bought from impoverished or alcoholic parents for wealthy clients.¹³ A long-time campaigner for women's rights, Stead was also a friend of the Pankhurst family¹⁴ who supported suffrage. When Emmeline Pankhurst became leader of the Women's Social and Political Union in 1903 – the organization through which the suffragettes campaigned militantly for women's right to vote –, Stead was also one of the first to support their activities, including speaking on behalf of imprisoned suffragettes (Davies 2019: 60).

Stead was also intrigued by the Russian Empire (Prévost 2013) and had met both Tsar Alexander III and Tsar Nicholas II.¹⁵ Otherwise critical of Russia, Stead was dazzled by the new emperor's peace plans – as he, too, was a proponent of world peace (Ashton 2004). In September 1905, Stead travelled to Russia hoping to

12 Lui Olesk's arrest was brief, since prominent social figures in Estonia (such as the newspaper editor Jaan Tõnisson) stood up for him.

13 The backlash that followed the detailed reporting of the experiment forced Parliament to raise the age of sexual consent from the current 13 to 16 (1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act). Stead also contributed to another important change in the law: the journalist died on the *Titanic* in 1912, and the obituaries published in the press helped to give final impetus to England's first law against sex trafficking that same year (Attwood 2021).

14 GBR/0014/STED 1/59. Correspondence with Richard Marsden Pankhurst and Christabel Pankhurst.

15 Stead published a book *Truth about Russia* (1888) about his first visit to Russia. His first interview with Nicholas II took place in Livadia Palace in Crimea in 1898.

persuade the Tsar of the validity of the rebels' demands, and Nicholas II, who generally avoided the press, made a favourable impression on him in a private meeting at Peterhof where Stead also met the Empress Alexandra. The 17 October Manifesto may have appeared to Stead even as a vindication of his aspirations (see Ashton 2004).

The news of Minni Kurs's possible arrest and imminent flogging, which reached Stead through their mutual friends in London, may have had an intriguing resonance: as the suffragettes had just begun their militant campaign, the actions of the young Baltic revolutionary seemed very similar to theirs and happened within the same timeframe. Minni Kurs spoke at the meetings through the autumn of 1905, and the first arrest of British suffragettes took place on 13 October 1905, when Christabel Pankhurst¹⁶ and Annie Kenney¹⁷ attempted to question a parliamentary candidate at a political meeting in Manchester about his support for women's suffrage, and resisted the police who escorted them out of the meeting (see *Missive from a militant*, 2018). The physical interference (Pankhurst had either punched or spat at the policeman) and the choice of imprisonment rather than bail is generally regarded as the beginning of the suffragettes' radical public protest. The subsequent jailing of Pankhurst and Kenney in Strangeways prison made news around the world, spreading their message "Votes for Women".

A girl with a wicker trunk¹⁸

The correspondence compiled in the file suggests that Kurs should have been punished for her behaviour, even though she was not arrested. The deputy governor's office describes in its reply how "during the street riots in Yuryev, shortly after the publication of the Manifesto on 17 October 1905, Mina Kurs /or Olesk/ appeared at the open window of her house dressed in red and carrying a red flag. It is said that a Cossack passing through the streets pointed his rifle at her for a moment, and Mina Kurs immediately hid".¹⁹ The author of the

16 Dame Christabel Harriette Pankhurst (1880–1958), a suffragist leader, was a lawyer educated at the University of Manchester but barred from practicing because she was a woman.

17 Annie Kenney (1879–1953), a former Manchester cotton mill worker, was a trade unionist who joined the suffragettes in 1904. She became one of the leaders of the Women's Social and Political Union.

18 In a letter, Minni Kurs mentions a travel basket that could hold all her belongings. (EKM EKLA, f 185, m 27: 20, p. 13/39, Minny to Lui, London, 4 April 1903).

19 LVVA.6989.2.23, p. 15. Translated from Russian by the author of this article.

report attributes cowardice to her hiding, rather than condemns the targeting of a woman with a gun.²⁰ The report also tells how Mina Kurs, after returning from abroad, began to promote all kinds of freedoms (including free love) among school-girls in Tartu, citing her own partnership with Lui Olesk as an example.²¹

A little introduction is needed for this young woman's relationship with the city of Tartu and the restless young revolutionaries. Minni Kurs grew up in Tartu as the only child of a single mother Liina Kurs who ran a sewing workshop. Her father, a tailor named Johann Ludvig Kurs, had left the family for good, and her sister died as an infant (Olesk 2006: 286; Minni Kurs-Olesk 1939: 7). She was (probably) educated at Alfred Grass's girls' school (Minni Kurs-Olesk 1939: 7) and the city of Tartu allowed her to take an examination to become a governess in 1895 (possibly in Riga).²² She won a scholarship to study at the German Women's Teachers' Seminary, from which she graduated in 1898 (Minni Kurs-Olesk 1939: 7).²³ Although German was spoken at her family home, she learned Estonian from her grandmother and relatives in the countryside. Her social circle in Tartu included students of Estonian origin. In 1897, Minni Kurs met law student Amandus Louis (Lui) Bernhard Olesk (born Norrmann, 1876–1932)²⁴ who was an illegitimate son of a widow, raised by his uncle.²⁵ Lui Olesk graduated from *Imperatorskij Jur'evskij Universitet* (now University of Tartu) in 1902 and, alongside beginning a career in law, became active in journalism. Since 1899, the two young people began an intense but intermittent correspondence; in the spring of 1903, they switched from German to Estonian at Lui's request. The need to exchange letters arose from Minni's work and study abroad. Why did the young woman leave Tartu in the first place? Like many of her contemporaries, she "wanted to see the

20 The report reflects the atmosphere of the autumn of the 1905 revolution in Tartu. Red was the colour of the flags welcoming, among other things, the October Manifesto which promised to guarantee civil liberties (e.g. freedom of speech, press and assembly), to establish a broad franchise, and to create a legislative body (the Duma). However, martial law was declared in Livonia on 22 November, extended to Tallinn and Harju County in December, and the tsarist government began to restore order by force.

21 LVVA.6989.2.23, p. 15, V. Sollogub to Y. Narishkina, 18 March 1906.

22 EKM EKLA, f 185, m 30: 1, p. 1. Documents of Minni Kurs-Olesk, 14 October 1895 – 25 August 1922.

23 *Lehrerinnenseminar zu Dorpat.*

24 EKM EKLA, f 185, m 29: 4, p. 1/1. Louis Olesk to Teures Fräulein (in German 'Dear Miss') Kurs, 25 June 1899.

25 RA, EAA.3148.1.46, p. 25/88. (Parish register.)

big world" (Olesk 2006: 286), but there may also have been other circumstances at play, and then one thing led to another.

First of all, a woman could not study at university in the Russian Empire. Only Finland was in a more exceptional situation in the Russian Empire, as women had been allowed to study at the University of Helsinki under special conditions since the 1870s.²⁶ An Estonian from Tartu, Hella Murrik-Wuolijoki who would later become a renowned Finnish writer, was admitted to the University of Helsinki in 1904. In Tartu, the first women interested in higher education were allowed to listen to lectures at the university from the autumn of 1905 – as the university administration took advantage of the chaotic situation in the political life of the Empire – but until 1915 they were not taken in as full-time students and were not allowed to sit exams.

Secondly, to employ a female teacher at school in the provinces of Livonia and Estonia was, although not prohibited, not an established custom (see also Kirss 2020: 129–131). All of this offers an explanation for why Minni Kurs, aged only 20, left for Bessarabia in 1899. Till 1901, she worked as a teacher of Russian and arithmetic at an Evangelical Lutheran school in Kishinev (now Chişinău, Moldova).²⁷ Later, Kurs-Olesk recalled that her interest in the causes of social inequality had already begun at the girls' school in Tartu. However, it was in Kishinev that she became acquainted with revolutionary youth – the Jewish socialists. Next, she became a teacher of conversational German in the family of the Reverend Johan Wilhelm Warttinen in Paimio near Turku in Finland. Her worldview seems to have broadened in Finland and must have given her the impetus to travel abroad for further study: she has mentioned Warttinen's admiration for N. F. S. Grundtvig, the promoter of a public education and founder of folk high schools (Kurs-Olesk 1938: 75–76). She also remembered meeting the members of the Finnish women's movement, including its leaders Alli Trygg-Helenius and Aino Malmberg (Minni Kurs-Olesk 1939: 8). Either of the latter could have served as her role model. The trips to England and the USA in the capacity of a representative of the Finnish Women's Association are often cited as important turning points in Trygg-Helenius' activities (Ilola 2025). As a leader of the temperance movement, she paid particular attention to helping the socially disadvantaged. The English teacher Malmberg, an ardent supporter of Finnish

26 In 1905, Helene Taar provided an overview of women's suffrage and educational opportunities in a publication by the *Noor Eesti* (Young Estonia) movement (Taar, 1905). She argued that English women had the most organized women's rights movement in Europe, whereas Finnish women were given the opportunity to study. She also asked why young Estonian women willing to study abroad could not easily find support, despite cases of fundraising for male students.

27 EKM EKLA, f 185, m 30: 1, p. 3. The documents of Minni Kurs-Olesk.

independence, also visited London several times since 1895 (Krohn; Pares 1933: 202–204; Pohls 2022).²⁸

It was probably the contacts that Minni Kurs had made in Finland that led her to study in England. She left Tartu in autumn 1902 and most likely first stayed at the home of Ludvig Enqvist, who was the chaplain for Finnish seamen in London at the time (*Kirkkomaa.fi* 2025; *SKS Henkilöhistoria* 2025). At the end of December that year, the Estonian newspaper *Postimees* (The Postman) anonymously published Kurs's first newspaper article written as a New Year's greeting. This was quite a Suburg-like call upon the Estonian women to educate themselves and to acquire skills for supporting themselves, citing the example of female sanitary inspectors in London (*Eesti õdedele...* 1902).

The institutions that Minni Kurs chose for self-improvement in London illustrate her need for cheaper education, her desire to learn and to acquire a profession that would ensure independence and broaden her world view. One letter mentions her studies on the edge of Battersea Park.²⁹ This might have been the Battersea Polytechnic Institute, founded in 1891 under the City of London Parochial Charities Act (1883) scheme to establish Polytechnic Institutes throughout London (*Exploring the Battersea Polytechnic Archive* 2025). In August and September 1903, Minni Kurs learned to make butter, soft cheese, and Stilton, Derby and Cheddar cheeses at the Midland Agricultural and Dairy College.³⁰

For financial reasons, Minni Kurs expressed a wish to move to Toynbee Hall for the summer of 1903.³¹ This institution was established to help and educate low-income citizens. Named in honour of the British economist and social reformer Arnold Toynbee, the charity was founded in 1884 in the East End of London. The buildings were designed to resemble university buildings, and Oxford and Cambridge students were invited to live and work there as volunteers. It also offered free legal aid, which was often used by Russian and Polish immigrants, among others. Following Toynbee Hall's example, the idea of establishing such charitable institutions spread to other parts of the world in the following decades, especially to the United States. Tiina Kirss has mentioned an ideological parallel between Minni Kurs and

28 Aino Malmberg became a political refugee in London in 1909, remaining there until Finland gained independence.

29 EKM EKLA, f 185, m 27: 20, p. 9/25, Minny to Lui, London, 23 March 1903.

30 EKM EKLA, f 185, m 30: 1, p. 5–6. The documents of Minni Kurs-Olesk.

31 EKM EKLA, f 185, m 27: 20, p. 12/37, Minny to Lui, London, 26 March 1903.

Jane Addams, the American feminist and pioneer of social work with the poor (Kirss 2020: 130). Addams was one of those who spread the idea of institutions like Toynbee Hall in North America.³²

These free educational opportunities and institutions in London are associated with the Fabian Society, founded in England in 1884. The Fabians were the leaders of the workers' education movement and held moderately socialist views about social justice and welfare, rational economic planning, and a tolerant and active democracy. They held one of their first lecture evenings at Toynbee Hall. Along with the Social Democratic Federation and the trade unions, the Fabian Society was also involved in the birth of the Labour Party. Wishing to improve society by studying the causes of poverty and inequality, socialist Fabians such as Beatrice and Sidney Webb, Graham Wallas and George Bernard Shaw founded the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) at the University of London in 1895. In 1900, the LSE joined the University of London, becoming the first to offer degrees in the social sciences. In the Michaelmas term of 1903, the name of "Miss Minny Kurs, teacher" appeared in the student register of the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).³³ She was undoubtedly one of those students who needed such educational facilities for economic reasons, and who also shared the worldview of her benefactors. According to correspondence, Kurs was not only a student, but also worked as a nanny and private tutor.

The daughters of revolution

In the spring of 1903 in London, Minni Kurs defined herself as a revolutionary, socialist, trade unionist, positivist, and a fighter for the rights of women³⁴, but as a socialist above all. In addition, her correspondence with Lui discusses the relationship between nationalism and social democracy. She became a member of the Social Democratic Federation in London and indeed must have been closely associated with the Federation and its activities. The names of several trade unionists and Fabians appear in her letters, including James Keir Hardie, Benjamin Tillet and James Ramsay MacDonald, as well as the Belgian socialist Emile Vandervelde. She also mentions visiting factories and learning about the living conditions of English workers, the activities of trade unions, as well as public libraries and various educational institutions. In 1904, she even attended

32 Toynbee Hall 1884–1951. A/TOY/21/15.

33 LSE Institutional Archives, LSE/UNREGISTERED/19/16, p. 110.

34 EKM EKLA, f 185, m 27: 20, p. 10/30, Minny to Lui, London, 24 March 1903.

the 6th Congress of the 2nd Socialist International in Amsterdam which decided to support women's suffrage alongside the class struggle of the proletariat, the eight-hour workday, and world peace (see Kent, Pearson 1904). In his letters, Lui Olesk repeatedly asked Minni to refrain from excessive and risky political activity, which could have had an aftermath if she returned to her homeland and tried to find work as a schoolteacher.

It is fascinating to follow how Minni Kurs becomes interested in women's rights. Her background was characterized by domestic hardships, primarily due to her upbringing as the child of a single mother who had experienced a dysfunctional relationship. In her first article, Kurs discussed careers for which women are better suited because of their unique abilities, as viewed from a position of social feminism. In this, Minni Kurs again reiterated the Lilli Suburg-like principle that "a woman must learn" and added to it the hope that women in her home country would soon be given more opportunities to study. In an interview in 1939, Kurs-Olesk has also mentioned meeting Emmeline Pankhurst and trade union leader and suffragist Margaret Bondfield while living in London (Minni Kurs-Olesk 1939: 76). By then, Pankhurst had been supporting suffrage for decades, although the radical Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) had only been founded in 1903 and was not yet dominating the scene.

Back in Tartu, Kurs-Olesk in 1905 became one of the first women who cut their long hair short. As if to clarify the conceptual framework of equality feminists, a slightly younger contemporary of hers, Lilli Ibrus³⁵, later recalled that they had just learned that "we women could be just as independent and intelligent as men" and that "a broad field of work emerged alongside the revolutionary goals – developing women's self-awareness and independence"³⁶, and the quest for women's rights also meant a change in appearance: "It meant first and foremost to be like a man, even in appearance. A girl of that time could not imagine any other emancipation. Everything visibly feminine was discarded, hair was cut short, and clothes were chosen to be as monotonous as possible." (Ibrus-Köstner 1932: 53–54) Minni Kurs's hairstyle soon became a source of irritation for the writer Aino Kallas:

As a matter of fact, she [Minni Kurs] did not impress me at all. I can be attracted to a refined woman, but never by a boyish performance. How she ruins her face with that ugly hairdo! Short, wild, curly hair framing that big, proud face, almost carved out of stone! (Kallas 1954: 295)

35 Lilli Ibrus-Köstner (later Liina Varus, 1885–1949) wrote about women's rights during 1904–1905 in the social democratic newspaper *Uudised* (The News).

36 This and the following quotes have been translated from Estonian by the author of this article.



Figure 1. Minni Kurs after returning from London (1904 or early 1905). Writer Karl August Hindrey recalled her wide-brimmed English hat as a symbol of female emancipation. Estonian Literary Museum, EKM EKLA, A-149: 3.

1. att. Minni Kursa pēc atgriešanās no Londonas (1904. gadā vai 1905. gada sākumā). Rakstnieks Karls Augusts Hindrejs atcerējās viņas angļu platmali kā sieviešu emancipācijas simbolu. Igaunijas Literatūras muzejs, EKM EKLA, A-149: 3.

The young women were politically just as active as their male comrades. Memoirs of a friend of Ibrus, Alma Ani, show how her support for the Social Democrats included organizing, attending and speaking at meetings, as well as printing leaflets and proclamations.³⁷ Ani lost her brother to the 1905 revolution: he was shot; her foster brother received 50 lashes with a cane, and her fiancé narrowly escaped arrest and death. Ani went to St Petersburg and came back with explosives hidden under her dress. (In this case, women's clothing gave her an advantage.) She had to hide, was arrested several times and escaped to Finland, where she had to stay for 5 years (Ast-Ani 1932: 37–51). Writing to newspapers and organizing meetings also included writing and speaking about women's rights, or rather the lack thereof (Ibrus 1932: 54, 56). The young women also aspired to further their education as Minni Kurs had done before. Ibrus then went to Moscow to take courses at an institute of economics, while Alma Ostra went to St Petersburg to study at courses of

37 Alma Ast-Ani (1884–1958) was a dermatologist, gynaecologist and urologist.

philosophy.³⁸ It was Alma Ast-Ani who in 1924 — by then in the independent Republic of Estonia — graduated from the University of Tartu, having studied medicine.³⁹

In the police file of 1906, Kurs-Olesk is mentioned as a promoter of free love. In 1905, several young women from the girls' gymnasium in Tartu, and Linda Jürmann, a close friend of the writer Eduard Vilde, were publicly accused in the newspaper *Postimees* of having immoral relations with revolutionaries (Ibrus 1932: 57). *Postimees* devoted a seven-part series to this subject, in which it also condemned long-term relationships that were not approved by the Church (*Postimees* 1905; Aru 2008: 142). Minni Kurs and Lui Olesk seem to have given a very personal answer to this topic: after the second part of this series had appeared in February 1905, Olesk and Kurs decided to live together in a common-law marriage (Olesk 1932: 88). Although such a decision was considered immoral at the time and was later interpreted as a protest against the only form of marriage accepted at the time – a church wedding (as civil marriage did not exist in the Russian Empire) –, such a union also represented the protection of women's rights at the time. The Baltic Private Law Code of 1864 placed a married woman under the personal and financial guardianship of her husband, on an equal footing with children and the mentally ill. Instead, the lawyer Lui Olesk and Minni Kurs, who considered themselves married, probably established their rights by a legal contract on 1 February 1905 and informed their friends of their marriage with a card.⁴⁰ It was also a very personal decision: something in her parents' brief relationship had filled Minni Kurs with a fear of any kind of dependence. In their correspondence, as Lui makes plans for their future together, Minni expresses her fear of being legally subordinated to someone else,

38 Alma Ostra-Oinas (1886–1960) was arrested in 1905 for her involvement in an illegal printing press, and was sent to Siberia, Tobolsk Governorate. She escaped imprisonment in 1906 and attended the Russian Social Democratic Party Congress in London in 1907.

39 All three of them, Ast-Ani, Ibrus-Köstner and Ostra-Oinas, married their comrades-in-arms. Karl Ast was imprisoned in Riga from 1907 to 1910, later becoming a writer and politician. Nikolai Köstner studied in Moscow and went on to become a politician, economist, diplomat and academic. Aleksander Oinas was a long-serving politician and member of the Estonian Parliament (*Riigikogu*), serving three times as a government minister. However, the biographies of both Ibrus and Ostra contain interesting episodes: they were fictitiously married to other revolutionaries before joining their lives with their life partners. Ibrus married Ferdinand Kull (imprisoned 1907–1910) to shorten his prison sentence, and Ostra married Jaan Anvelt to get rid of her maiden name which was associated with prohibited activities. This hints at the attitude of the young women revolutionaries of 1905 towards the institution of marriage, as well as the trust they had in their comrades (in contrast to Minni Kurs-Olesk).

40 EKM EKLA, f 185, m 30: 5, p. 22–25, Lui Olesk. Minni Kurs-Olesk. Varia.



Figure 2. Political prisoners released from Riga prison in October 1905.

Front row: Alma (Ast-)Ani and Olga Liebert. Middle row: Emīlija Kalniņa (Kurševica), Karl Ast(-Rumor) and Karl Tūrna. Lilli Ibrus-Köstner is in the middle of the back row. Estonian Literary Museum, EKM EKLA, A-57:21. See more about Emīlija Kalniņa (Kurševica):

<https://www.womage.lv/personas/emilija-kursevica>

2. att. Politiešlodzītie, kas tika atbrīvoti no Rīgas cietuma 1905. gada oktobrī. Pirmajā rindā: Alma (Asta-) Ani un Olga Līberte. Vidējā rindā: Emīlija Kalniņa (Kurševica), Karls Asts(-Rumors) un Karls Tirna. Pēdējās rindas vidū: Lilli Ibrusa-Kestnere. Igaunijas Literatūras muzejs, EKM EKLA, A-57:21.

Par Emīliju Kalniņu (Kurševicu) vairāk skat.: <https://www.womage.lv/personas/emilija-kursevica>

and he understands her arguments. Lui Olesk and Minni Kurs-Olesk had four daughters without the blessing of the church. They grew up to support their parents' principles (see Talivee 2024: 66–67). Similarly to the Olesk family, Eduard Vilde and Linda Jürmann announced their civil marriage in the autumn of 1905 in the newspaper *Uudised* (The News), dating the event (namely, the day of signing a legal contract that established the rights of their future children) with 9 September.⁴¹

In a letter to Lui in 1903, Minni may have been referring to Henrik Ibsen's play *Doll's House* when she explains her reasons for staying in London to study after her mother's sudden death: "I must be completely free from living like a doll, which I hate with all my heart – I want to be worthy of my mother".⁴² Although spared in 1906,

41 Linda Jürmann (1880–1966) defied public opinion in another respect, too. Eduard Vilde was already married and unable to get a divorce. The couple became political refugees in Europe and the United States from 1905 to 1917.

42 EKM EKLA, f 185, m 27: 20, p. 8/23, Minny to Lui, London, 22 March 1903.

the young family was affected by the aftermath of the 1905 revolution between 1908 and 1910, when Lui was sentenced to resettlement in Vologda, a political exile destination. Minni stayed in Tartu and visited her partner twice. She also began to use her English skills in order to earn a living and has left her mark on the history of Estonian translation. She was one of the first Estonians to translate English literature from the original language (Lehtsalu 1960: 682).⁴³ Minni Kurs-Olesk translated works by Thomas Hardy, George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, John Galsworthy and Rabindranath Tagore, among others. She also translated from German.

What could it mean to be arrested and convicted for participation in the 1905 Revolution events for a woman? Ani and Ibrus both recall the Riga prison in the autumn of 1905: the cells were tidy, and the head of the women's section was intelligent and kind. Notably, the sister of Pauls Kalniņš, the future Speaker of the Saeima and the Acting President of Latvia, was held in a neighbouring cell (Ani 1932: 45). However, Ibrus was captured again in Moscow or St Petersburg in 1909 and taken to Tartu in a prisoners' railcar, and she recalls how "[t]he journey was extremely nasty. I was the only woman in a wagon full of men, most of them soldiers" (Ibrus 1932: 59).⁴⁴ The first issue of the newspaper *Vaba Sõna* (The Free Word)⁴⁵ edited by Lui Olesk from January 1906 reflects, among other things, on the deeds of the court-martial in the aftermath of the revolution: shootings, hangings, burning of farms, imprisonment, and floggings (including of women). A young schoolteacher Helmi Einberg⁴⁶, arrested in 1906, was taken to Puurmani Manor and, at her insistence, was placed with the lady of the manor separately from the men. She recalls: "[The manor mistress] cried all night and offered to help me if I was to be beaten: she said she would then agree to shoot me" (Pöld 1932: 128). Firearms and other weapons, too, were no strangers to the young women. Ibrus and Ostra often carried pistols; Pöld had a knife with her. Marta Lepp received two bullet wounds while taking part in the 16 October protest meeting in Tallinn. After her arrest, Lepp's path crossed in Moscow prison with that of the socialist

43 The other two were Aleksander Ferdinand Tombach-Kaljuvald, who was the first person to translate William Shakespeare's works into Estonian, and A. H. Tammsaare, who would become a classic author himself.

44 Ibrus borrowed a wig to cover her short hair and played the role of a pathetic naive girl at the trial in Riga. She thus managed to avoid a conviction.

45 The censor shut down the radical socialist newspaper that "fiercely attacked everything" after its trial issue in January 1906. LVVA.6989.2.23, p. 15, V. Sollogub to Y. Narishkina, 18 March 1906.

46 Helmi Pöld (born Einberg, 1882–1969), educator, was also active in temperance movement.

revolutionary terrorist Maria Spiridonova who had endured brutal torture and rape (Lepp 1922: 100).⁴⁷

Conclusion

The struggle for women's rights is one of the important keywords that characterize the beginning of the 20th century. The first wave of feminism dates to the late 19th century, when the context of urban industrialism and liberal, socialist politics made it possible to look for ways of opening up more opportunities for women. The biographies, memoirs, and correspondence of women in the Baltic provinces of the time shed light on the restrictions that prevented women from fulfilling their dreams in the Russian Empire. The Baltic countries were, in a sense, also part of the German Empire by virtue of its German nobility. Here, political freedoms were new for both women and men, but women also had to circumvent or challenge several other boundaries. The debate about women's rights had begun in Estonia in the 1880s and was then addressed by Lilli Suburg, the editor of the first Estonian women's magazine *Linda*, who was also the first to outline the concept of the so-called New Woman here. Two decades on, the biography of a young social democrat Minni Kurs provides a glimpse into the life of a New Woman in the Baltic provinces in 1906. The lives of Minni Kurs and her contemporaries demonstrate their boldness, innovation, steadfastness, purposefulness, tenacity and creativity. Receiving an education, enjoying relationships based on equality with their partners, and pursuing professions and careers were things they aspired to. They wanted to change the law and make their voice heard. It is also worth looking at how their views became intertwined with nationalism further on.

Almost all their wishes met with obstacles. For a New Woman in Tsarist Livonia to achieve professional and personal development, it was necessary to study and often work abroad in order to acquire a specialization that would guarantee independence. Expressing opinions and performing actions that might not have met the Tsarist government's censorship requirements could get punished with what an English journalist called inhumane punishments. Thus, these women had to be on their guard against both the police and marriage. Nevertheless, they continued to search for themselves both internally and externally, and found opportunities to learn and share their knowledge with others. When conditions changed even slightly, the New Women set about implementing their intentions and working for the benefit

47 Marta Sophia Lepp (later Maarda Utuste, pen-name Sophia Vardi, 1883–1940), later a writer and religious leader. Tsarist troops fired at the peaceful crowd in Newmarket (now a square behind the Estonia theatre building), killing at least 95 people. Lepp was arrested and sent to Tobolsk, Siberia. She repeatedly escaped from detention.

of those who needed it more than they did. Sometimes they received crucial support even from distant friends. (A note written by the London journalist William Thomas Stead is one example of this.) These women also had the support of their partners, as was the case with Eduard Vilde and Lui Olesk. Tiina Kirss has described the development of Minni Kurs-Olesk and Lui Olesk's relationship into a genuine and intense intellectual partnership as "a path to free thought and equality" (Kirss 2020).

As a New Woman of the 20th century, Minni Kurs-Olesk and her contemporaries undoubtedly merit thorough biographical research, both in the context of 1905 and in a much broader sense. Just as the 1905 revolution laid the foundations for the establishment of the Republic of Estonia, the actions of some young women in the whirlwind of the uprising paved the way for women's movements and, more broadly, for women's participation in politics – as well as some other areas, such as social welfare.

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From Amusements¹ to Love: Forms of Women's Emancipation in the Early Works of Šatrijos Ragana

No līksmības līdz mīlestībai: sievietes emancipācijas formas Šatrijas Raganas agrīnajos darbos

Keywords:

women's emancipation,
"long nineteenth century",
love,
amusement,
cheerfulness,
new family

Atslēgvārdi:

sieviešu emancipācija,
garais 19. gadsimts,
mīlestība,
izpriecās,
līksmība,
jaunā ģimene

1 This paper analyses a sensual experience, a personal characteristic, collective activities, and a place, expressed in Lithuanian using words of the same root "linksmas", "linksmybės", "linksmumas". However, it is not possible to find a single English equivalent that fully captures all the Lithuanian variants of these words. Therefore, in this paper, the terms "amuse", "amusements", "cheerful", "cheerfulness", "merry", and "merriment" are used.

Summary

This paper analyzes Marija Pečkauskaitė–Šatrijos Ragana's (1877–1930) early works, short stories, and letters, revealing the diverse forms of women's emancipation represented in her work. For this purpose, it outlines strategies for portraying women in relation to their evolving sense of self and emotional life. The different stages of a woman's journey towards self-discovery are marked by specific emotional experiences, such as amusement and love. The merriment expressed in the letters and the short story *Aukso valandėlė* (The Lovely Golden Hour) creates a sense of togetherness that empowers a woman to envision a future beyond traditional roles as wife and mother. Meanwhile, in the novella *Viktutė*, the experience of love leads the protagonist along the traditional female path to marriage. This paper also examines how in Šatrijos Ragana's work, portrayals of women both innovate and preserve tradition, reflecting different ideological visions of women's inclusion in society during "the long nineteenth century".

Kopsavilkums

Rakstā analizētas Šatrijas Raganas (Marijas Pečkauskaites pseidonīms, 1877–1930) agrīnās noveles, stāsti un vēstules, atklājot daudzveidīgās sievietes emancipācijas formas viņas daiļradē. Tiek parādīts, kā autore teksti konstruē sievietes rīcībspēku attiecībās ar pašizziņu un emocionālo pieredzi, kur svarīgas robežzīmes ir izpriecās un mīlestība. Vēstulēs un stāstā *Aukso valandėlė* (Skaistā zelta stunda) attēlotā līksmība un kopības sajūta rada iespēju domāt par sievietes nākotni ārpus tradicionālajām sievas un mātes lomām, savukārt novelē *Viktutė* mīlestības pieredze virza varoni pa ierasto ceļu uz laulību. Raksts parāda, kā Šatrijas Raganas tekstos sievietes tēlojums vienlaikus nes jaunas emancipācijas iespējas un saglabā tradīciju, atspoguļojot dažādas ideoloģiskās vīzijas par sieviešu iekļaušanu sabiedrībā garā 19. gadsimta kontekstā.

Introduction

Šatrijos Ragana (Marija Pečkauskaitė, 1877–1930) is one of the most prominent Lithuanian women writers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. At the start of her creative career, she was perhaps the most thorough in depicting the transformation of a woman's self-concept and her becoming part of the modern Lithuanian movement. The early stories of Šatrijos Ragana were characterised by the presence of female protagonists, who were often young noblewomen searching for their purpose in life. These protagonists openly expressed their dreams, which were occasionally very radical, especially for their time. It should be noted that in several of her early works, including the novella *Viktutė*, the narrative culminates with the girls expressing their hopes and long-term plans, while their subsequent lives remain beyond the scope of the text. In this sense, Šatrijos Ragana's early work can be seen as visionary and future-oriented, resonating with the spirit of the journalistic texts published in the illegal Lithuanian press of the time. This paper focuses on Šatrijos Ragana's early work, much of which lies outside the established Lithuanian literary canon. It aims to examine the images of women, their self-perception and emotional experiences, while clarifying the traditional and innovative aspects of these depictions. This research aims to demonstrate that works excluded from the canon contain a reservoir of female representations, alternative life scenarios, and emotional experiences that have been overlooked by emerging modern societies¹.

The causes of shifting traditions and emerging signs of rupture in Šatrijos Ragana's early works mirror the period in which they were produced: at the end of the 19th century, the Lithuanian national movement was gathering momentum, promoting a new modern worldview and redefining social structures. Various ways for women to participate in public affairs were also being actively proposed. As Solveiga Daugirdaitė (2004: 224) points out, "The period of the press ban was an important turning point in the history of Lithuanian women, as they became literary subjects rather than mere objects." In order to understand the traditional and innovative depictions of women, as well as the life choices and coming-of-age

1 Before entering the public sphere, women's writing usually had to be approved by the male reading community, which set specific standards for these texts. The correspondence between Šatrijos Ragana and Povilas Višinskis (1875 –1906) – a publicist, critic, and public figure – shows that the manuscripts of her works were evaluated by Lithuanian students in Moscow, who also performed an approving function.

narratives in Šatrijos Ragana's early works, it is necessary to consider the political context and societal transformations of the time, and the evolving concept of women and their roles within the family and society. The socio-cultural approach is used to contextualise the narratives and to reconstruct the ideological dimension of the analyzed stories. Following the evolving representations of women, the description of their roles in a gradually modernizing society is grounded in the notion that:

1. the meanings attributed to femininity as a historically changing social construct are reflected in both publicist and fictional texts;
2. the models of femininity presented in these texts were influenced by, and had an impact on, the real-life situation of women.

Moving on to analyze the characters' experiences – particularly their emotional dimension – the socio-cultural descriptive method is supplemented by a phenomenological approach. This methodological tool enables a precise description of emotional experiences and their significance for the characters' self-perception, interpersonal relationships, and overall engagement with the world. Grounded in key theoretical propositions, this approach allows us to reconstruct the structure of emotional states.

This research on emotions is based on several foundational assumptions: emotions are understood as a culturally defined, transmitted, and learned phenomena, and identity is realized through relationships. From a phenomenological perspective, feelings acquire meaning only within the context of an individual's behavior and their lived world. Fuchs (2007: 424) argues that subjective experience is not located within the "psyche" or the brain, but rather emerges from the body's relationship with the world. The importance of the emotional bond between human beings and their environment is emphasized, with feelings seen as mediators that engage us in interaction with the surrounding world. But this is not merely a private inner space; feelings also connect individuals to the interpersonal sphere and foster the internalization of collective aspirations and commitments (Szanto, Landweer 2020: 9).

Recognising that our feelings arise in specific situations can deepen our understanding of our emotional relationship with the world and with others. As Fuchs (2020: 323) points out, we do not live solely in the physical world; rather, the experiential space surrounding us is always permeated by feelings. From a phenomenological perspective, the world around us is imbued with affective qualities (Fuchs 2013: 612), and research in this tradition has come to conceptualize feelings as a spatial phenomenon encompassing the body, the self, and the world. This means that the emotional experience links the experiencer to their environment so that the individual is not the sole participant in the experience; the surrounding world also

contributes to the generation of feelings. From this perspective, feelings are seen as co-created².

Another important aspect is that feeling can be understood as a mode of action linked to the values that emotions bring to the fore. This means that our feelings arise in situations that are important and meaningful to us. In this view, values are understood as the meanings we attribute to and discover within the experienced world. The phenomenological position is, as Fuchs (2013: 620) argues, radical: "Without emotions, the world would be without meaning or significance; nothing would attract or repel us and motivate us to act." Emotions play a decisive role in making sense of experience, committing to values, and motivating action. It emphasizes not only conscious engagement and rational decision-making, but also situational judgment and context-appropriate action.

Thomas Szanto and Hilge Landweer use the term 'emotion' to refer to a broad spectrum of emotional experiences, including affects, emotions and feelings (Szanto, Landweer 2020: 1–37). In this paper, the terms 'emotion' and 'feeling' are used interchangeably, with no significant distinction between them. To gain a better understanding of the emotions expressed in the early works – particularly the short story *The Lovely Golden Hour* – I draw on Matthew Ratcliffe's definition of existential feelings as "existential backgrounds that shape all our experience" (Ratcliffe 2008: 40)³.

Considering the aims of this paper, the second part provides an overview of the political and social context of the 19th century, which shaped women's position in society. It reviews the representations of women that emerged during "the long nineteenth century" in journalistic texts – mostly written by men – focusing on the newly formulated expectations and goals for women. The third part analyzes one of Šatrijos Ragana's earliest texts, the short story *The Lovely Golden Hour*, by examining the images of women it constructs, with particular attention to their self-awareness, emotional experiences, relationships with others, and the plans they make for the future. The analysis demonstrates that Šatrijos Ragana's early short stories and letters to Povilas Višinskis also reveal a significant sensual dimension that correlates with the emergence of a new female self-perception in modern Lithuanian culture of the time. By describing the structure of this experience – its interpersonal nature, interconnectedness with space, and the woman's sense of self – this paper attempts

2 A more detailed phenomenological approach to emotions can be found in my paper *Gailestis: jausmo patyrimo fenomenologija* / *Compassion: a Phenomenology of the Affective Experience* (Bleizgienė 2024).

3 The chapter *Amusement: One Way for Women to Achieve Liberation* provides a more detailed description of this emotional experience.

to uncover alternative forms of women's self-perception that have remained not only on the margins of the Lithuanian literary canon, but also on the periphery of modern Lithuanian consciousness. The fourth part examines a woman's coming-of-age narrative as presented in the novella *Viklutė*. Its focus is on shifts in narrative perspective, the girl's self-understanding, her emotional experience, and its movement toward the dominant imagery of the time.

The Long Nineteenth Century: Representations of Women in Political and Social Context

"The long nineteenth century" was a period of profound transformation, marked by political revolutions, the formation of new states, and the Industrial Revolution, which drew large populations from rural areas to rapidly growing cities. It was also an era of class realignments, the development of the mechanized press, increasing literacy, the introduction of compulsory primary education, and the so-called "invention" of leisure. According to Rachel G. Fuchs and Victoria E. Thompson, women across countries and social classes experienced some of the most dramatic and lasting changes in their family, work and political lives during this period (Fuchs, Thompson 2005: 1).

Lithuanian historians note, however, that the processes that shaped modernization in Western Europe unfolded more slowly and took on a distinct character in territories under Tsarist Russian rule. In 1795, following the Third Partition of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, Lithuania lost its sovereignty and entered a prolonged period of dependency on the Russia Empire. The autocratic imperial government dictated the economic, social and cultural development of Lithuania (Bairašauskaitė et al. 2011: 28).

From a Western European perspective, the 19th century heralded struggles for political freedoms and social rights, including the women's emancipation movement. In Lithuania, however, these processes were overshadowed by Tsarist oppression. The Lithuanian "long nineteenth century" is conventionally divided into three periods. The first period began at the end of the 18th century and ended in the 1860s. The beginning of the second period is debated: either 1861, when serfdom was abolished by imperial decree, or 1863–1864, marked by the January Uprising, and followed by a period of severe repression, including the ban on all Polish and Lithuanian publications in the Latin alphabet. The transition to the third period is dated to 1904–1905 when the press ban was lifted, societies were legalized, and the teaching of the Lithuanian language in primary schools was permitted. At the beginning of the 20th century, Lithuanian society mobilized to fight for political autonomy and,

eventually, independence, which was declared in 1918. The publication of the first illegal magazine *Aušra* (Dawn), in 1883 – printed in Lithuanian using the Latin alphabet – marked the beginning of the modern Lithuanian national movement. As the movement promoted the consolidation of Lithuanian national identity, the struggle for women's emancipation acquired new forms and directions.

When examining changes in women's situations during "the long nineteenth century", it is important to recognize that representations of women and the social roles assigned to them were shaped by the political context and the circulation of contemporary ideologies, including positivism, nationalism, and other intellectual movements. The collapse of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and radical political and socio-cultural transformations at the end of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century increased the importance of the family as an important sphere for preserving national and cultural identity (Mastianica 2012: 52–53). According to social revisionists of the time, women's primary social roles were those of wife, mother, and housekeeper (Miknyūtė 2009: 35).

Public discourse reflected these expectations: women were encouraged to be active and express themselves only within the domestic sphere, that is, in private space⁴ (Mastianica 2012: 36–37). They were considered promoters of moral norms within the family and, by extension, in society in general⁵. This aligned closely with trends seen across Europe: "The female, or private sphere, was the realm of home and family. It was characterized by nurturing, morality, and virtue. Europeans believed that women were designed to bear and raise children, to teach these children to be moral citizens, and to provide a comforting and regenerative atmosphere in the home." (Fuchs, Thompson 2005: 2). Although notions of women's autonomy, initiative and broader horizons occasionally surfaced in the mid-nineteenth century, it was not until after the January Uprising that attitudes toward women's social roles began to change. A significant re-evaluation of women's place in society first appeared in the St Petersburg press, and later spread to Warsaw, where it was argued that

4 In a particularly revealing statement by one of the first women to be published in the press in the early 19th century, she argued against the notion that women from higher social classes should receive more education: "A woman's scientific work is to make her husband happy, educate her children properly." (Quoted by Mastianica 2012: 54.)

5 Richard Stites (1990: 15-17) describes a similar attitude toward women's role in Russian society that prevailed at the beginning of the 19th century: "The early nineteenth century witnessed a conscious attempt by Russia to reject 'French' values. With the rejection came a romantic idealisation of the Russian woman as the embodiment of Virtue and Maternity. [...] The woman as 'citizen-mother', the bearer and molder of patriotic sons-of-the-fatherland was another aspect of this image."

confining women to the private sphere had detrimental consequences for society as a whole. The Positivists, who published their writings in the St Petersburg newspaper *Kraj*⁶, shared with their Western European liberal contemporaries a belief in the transformative power of education and economic progress to change society. Their program included the emancipation of peasants, workers and women through education (Miknyė 2009: 44). It emphasized that socio-economic transformation should encourage women to enter new spheres of social life and to achieve economic independence (Mastianica 2012: 62–63). In the post-revolutionary period, Eliza Orzeszkowa, writing for the Warsaw-based newspaper *Kraj*, championed positivist ideals, portraying the modern woman as well-educated, who is independent-minded, with distinct interests, and responsible for the wellbeing of both her family and society⁷.

Focusing on the Lithuanian context at the end of the 19th century, it is important to emphasize that improvements in women's circumstances were closely linked to the growing momentum of the Lithuanian national movement. During the period, the movement's ideas – now enhanced with additional ideological content – were disseminated through the illegal Lithuanian Catholic, liberal and social-democratic press. When comparing the role envisaged for women in the national movement with that anticipated in a future modern Lithuanian society, Catholic discourse stood out for its pioneering character. This ideological press was the first to emphasize the principle of gender equality, affirming the importance of independent, politically active women for the new society. Notably, articles published in this press portrayed the status of unmarried women in a positive light and assigned them significant roles within the national movement. This suggests that women, at least in the realm of political imagination, had transcended the private sphere to emerge as equal political and social subjects of the public sphere.

The Lithuanian liberal press, which actively sought to reform the public sphere, did not limit its efforts to this: one of the principal means of national self-creation –

6 According to Jurga Miknyė (2009: 42–44), the St Petersburg newspaper *Kraj* reflected the ideas of two ideological camps: the conservatives, who declared their loyalty to Tsarist Russia, and the positivist-liberals, whose ideal was an urban Western culture. At the time, this newspaper was the most accessible periodical to readers in historical Lithuania.

7 The influence of Eliza Orzeszkowa's positivist ideas on Šatrijos Ragana's development as a writer, and the intertextual connections between their works, has been consistently highlighted by two scholars: Inesa Szulska (2006) and Brigita Speičytė (2008). In the work analyzed in this paper, *The Lovely Golden Hour*, the protagonist Alenutė admits that she aspires to be a writer like Orzeszkowa. Speičytė (2008: 54) argues that Orzeszkowa was important to Šatrijos Ragana not only as a talented author but also as the first woman to earn a living through writing.

or national renewal – was grounded in the idea of constructing a new model of the national family. As Dalia Leinartė notes, “[t]he creation of a new national family model became part of the programme of revival” (Leinartė 1999: 74). The scholar argues that “the first generation of secular Lithuanian intellectuals, who graduated from Russian universities in the 1860s and 1870s, resembled the Russian intelligentsia in terms of their education, their social position, their rarity and their public criticism of gender relations in traditional society” (Balkelis 2012: 151). Irina Paperno, in her study of Russian intelligentsia thought in the mid-19th century, points out that marriage was perceived by these young people as a stimulus for active professional, social, and also spiritual engagement (Paperno 1988: 55, 90). Marriage was also understood as a means of reshaping the identity of wives through education and ideological influence. Within this social context, the “women question” emerged, linked both to critiques of traditional marriage and to calls for women’s personal emancipation⁸. Through this envisioned “new” marriage, women were to be liberated from domestic violence and guided by men to undergo a transformation of their self-awareness, enabling them to move toward social progress. In these projects for transforming the family, women and society, the man was positioned as both educator and savior.

The Russian-educated liberal Lithuanian intellectuals sought to transform the concept of the “new family” into that of a “national family”, envisioned as an ideal environment for nurturing a Lithuanian identity in children. *Varpas* (Bell, 1889–1905), one of the leading liberal newspapers, developed a polemic on women’s education, directly linking its necessity to the Lithuanian national family project. A significant challenge faced by the educated Lithuanian men involved in this endeavor was the scarcity of suitable wives or partners capable of implementing the national family program. It was argued that a woman who had matured solely within the private sphere, shaped exclusively by family relations, was an entirely unsuitable partner for an intellectually ambitious man. The ideal woman, as formulated in *Varpas*, was both an intellectual companion and a nurturing mother. The proposal suggested that young Lithuanian intellectual men should marry simple village girls and educate them. While some attempted to put these “theoretical” models into practice, such efforts often ended in failure.

It is worth noting that social reform at the time was increasingly pursued

8 According to Stites (1990: 7): “But she [woman] had almost no separate civil identity; without her husband’s express permission, she could not work, study, trade, or travel. [...] Before marriage, the girl’s movements and activities were similarly guarded by her parents, particularly the father. In many ways, the wife-daughter’s status under the husband-father was analogous to that of the landlord’s serf”. The situation of unmarried women was even worse.

through feelings. According to Paperno, this heightened emphasis on feelings profoundly influenced literature, which began to explore human affect as a subject of analysis. Texts published in *Varpas* reveal that at the turn of the century, there emerged a need to justify the identity of a nationally conscious, purpose-driven individual. Rational arguments alone were no longer deemed sufficient; instead, emotion came to play a central role. Feelings, it was argued, bound individuals to the nation, and to one another through invisible inner ties. This emotional connectedness was believed to be first learned in the home, particularly from mothers. The ability to feel – to passionately love one’s homeland, to experience “familial” emotions toward compatriots, and to cultivate a deep affective bond with the wider Lithuanian community – became in male-authored texts, perhaps the most significant marker of personal self-awareness and commitment to the nation.

Finally, one more important point should be noted in concluding this review of “the long nineteenth century”. From the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, public debates on women’s educational opportunities and increased political participation were largely centred on women of the gentry. According to Richard Stites (1990: 3), “In Russia, as in the rest of Europe, the woman question did not emerge from among the ranks of working and peasant women. Except as the distant objects of revolutionary vision, the female masses at the bottom of the social order played almost no role in the women’s movement until the beginning of the twentieth century.”

The emergence of the Lithuanian national movement brought a radical shift: ideological groups began to prioritize the broader involvement of the peasantry in the national movement.⁹ Peasant women came to be perceived as guardians and transmitters of Lithuanian cultural traditions. Although the liberal press sometimes harshly criticized the low level of national consciousness among peasant girls, it was with them that new “national family” projects were developed. In contrast, women like Šatrijos Ragana – raised in pro-Polish noble families – were often viewed with suspicion by young intellectuals, who perceived their cultural influence as a potential threat. Šatrijos Ragana belonged to a social group whose involvement in the Lithuanian national movement was regarded as problematic. This may help explain why the protagonists of her early works are often noble girls who undergo a transformation in their national self-perception, as she had proposed several arguments demonstrating how noble women could become part of the Lithuanian

9 Olga Mastianica-Stankevič’s monograph *Bajorija lietuvių tautiniame projekte (XIX a. pabaiga – XX a. pradžia)* / (*Nobility in the Lithuanian National Project (the Late 19th – Early 20th Centuries)*) demonstrates that the project of a new Lithuanian family was closely intertwined with efforts to involve the nobility in the creation of a new Lithuanian society at the turn of the twentieth century.

national movement and proving that such a transformation – from a pro-Polish to a Lithuanian identity – was indeed possible.

Amusement:

One Way for Women to Achieve Liberation

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, Šatrijos Ragana's early texts focus on young female characters of noble origin. The stories, written in a realistic mode, depict women's everyday lives, their individuality and specific emotional experiences. This section analyzes how women's images were constructed through narratives that convey an emotional experience largely overlooked in previous scholarship – an experience described in English as "merriment" or "amusement".

First of all, I would like to draw attention to the earliest letters written by Marija Pečkauskaitė to Povilas Višinskis. One of the most frequently mentioned emotional states in this correspondence is "amusement", typically experienced during various domestic gatherings and festive occasions. The same people are often present in these descriptions: Marija herself, her sister, her brother, and several close friends, among whom the priest Kazimieras Bukontas and his brother Dominykas are regularly mentioned.

A letter dated 16 February 1885 makes it clear that these amusements involved music, singing, games, and eating sweets. Often, these amusements were accompanied by a sense of liberation. Marija writes that the singing took place while sitting on the ground "in Turkish style". One can surmise that for a girl of noble birth, this way of sitting (especially since it is mentioned in the letter) was certainly not appropriate for her class and gender. The letter concludes with Marija's confession: "Oh, how amusing, how amusing it was!" (Šatrijos Ragana 1886: 24).

The letters reveal that amusement was most often experienced in natural environments, involving activities rather uncharacteristic for a young lady of the manor, such as catching crayfish. In describing this pastime, which included many young people, Marija records a clear departure from conventional norms: she notes that she removed her shoes, rolled up her skirt, and joined in catching crayfish. The mood of the whole day is summed up as follows: "We sang on our way, it was so cheerful and peaceful" (Šatrijos Ragana 1886: 41).

The next letter continues the theme of amusement, describing the celebration of Shrove Tuesday. The day itself has the potential to be cheerful: "The Tuesday has come. We considered to ourselves, let's entertain ourselves in some way and sense that cheerful day" (ibid.). This festive day also offers "cheerful" ways to celebrate, drawing on traditional forms. Marija recounts how she, her sister, her brothers, and

the young men who work on the estate, dressed up and went to visit their friend, the Catholic priest Kazimieras Bukontas. The masqueraders' intention was to trick the priest by pretending to be real wedding participants.

The carnivalesque nature of Shrove Tuesday unsettles the usual social order and opens opportunities to try out new and different roles, to transcend the boundaries of established social relations. These descriptions of amusement and cheerfulness include frequent mention of laughter and joking.

Marija mentions in her letters that she enjoys telling her friend about what "excites, amuses, or makes her laugh" (Šatrijos Ragana 1886: 33). It is likely that Povilas, as a member of this group, also participated in various youthful entertainments, or heard about these amusing gatherings through these accounts. Recalling cheerful shared experiences helped the friends sustain their bond even across distance. Letters functioned as a means of maintaining a sense of emotional connection: Marija admits that she feels cheerful whenever she receives a letter from Povilas.

A key element of this convivial letter exchange was the use of the Lithuanian language. In one letter, Marija asks him not to write to her in Russian, because "it is so joyous, '*przyjemnie*' to read Lithuanian scripts" (Šatrijos Ragana 1886: 38). The use of Lithuanian thus creates a reading pleasure that contributes to the shared cheerful atmosphere. This heightened emphasis on language and its capacity to evoke cheerfulness suggests that such collective emotional experiences were closely intertwined with the spread of modern Lithuanian nationalist ideas.

Because of the impact of cheerfulness on those who experience it and its power to momentarily disrupt the established order, it also appears to have been experienced as a temporary loss of reality and the sense of self. This strange state of uncertainty strikes Marija in the forest while she is taking part in merry activities with friends. She describes the moment in one of her letters: "It was fun in the forest, but when I was getting back, my head turned around; I don't recall how I walked home, and yet I don't know much about what was there in the forest and then during the whole day. In a word, I began to wander in my mind..." (Šatrijos Ragana 1886: 36). This temporary blackout frightens Marija and she fears that she is slowly losing her mind. The letter captures not only the intensity of the experience, but also its liminal and potentially destabilizing character.

The Lithuanian word for "wandering in one's mind", *blūdyti*, also carries the meaning "to get lost" or "to lose one's way". This double meaning reveals a direct correlation between feeling and place: a person who is wandering in one's mind – *blūdiija* – not only loses the sense of certainty about their self, but also becomes spatially lost. The forest, as a place prone to disorientation, both evokes cheerfulness

and confuses the merry participants, causing them to feel as if they are out of their minds.

The semantic field of *linksmas*, the Lithuanian word for “cheerful”, further underscores this connection between emotion and place. According to the *Dictionary of the Lithuanian language*, the saying *Apie mumi yra linksma vieta* (“It is cheerful at our place”) illustrates that *linksmas* can describe the beauty, charm, or attractiveness of a place. In another example, *linksmi laukai* (“cheerful fields”) conveys the prominence of a locality. This usage suggests that emotional qualities are not simply projected onto a place by the experiencer, but that certain places possess an inherent capacity to evoke cheerfulness. Marija’s letters mention several such sites: the area around St. Martin’s Cross and the little grove of Želviai. The latter was believed to be the location of an ancient Lithuanian sacred site, featuring a statue of Perkūnas – the Baltic god of thunder, lightning, storm, and rain.

In the context of amusement as a form of everyday collective entertainment, creative work assumes a different character. In her letters to Povilas, Marija mentions texts composed for various festive occasions: poems written to celebrate a name day, plays likely intended for home theatre performances, and “living pictures”, among others. Because the central figure of these entertainments is a community of people, the creative work produced in support of the amusement is not “authorial”, in the modern sense. Rather, the question of authorship as the result of an individual creative act is of little significance in this context.

In one letter, Marija tells Povilas – having just admitted that God has not given her the talent to write – that she has begun working on a novel (Polish: *powieść*). Its “source”, as can be inferred, is a true story that took place in 1891, likely related to a conflict Marija herself had experienced with a governess employed in their household. When describing the plot of the planned work, Marija refers to specific people known to Povilas and to actual events. She also notes that she begins to “laugh when writing, remembering her jollifications and sentiments”. Here the aim of writing is merely to portray amusing events, with Marija concerned only that the story be entertaining rather than boring.

The meanings and functions of cheerfulness revealed in Marija Pečkauskaitė’s letters are echoed in her early literary work. Due to the limited scope of this paper, I will focus on one of Šatrijos Ragana’s first short stories, *Aukso valandėlė* (The Lovely Golden Hour), written in 1895 – the same year as the letters to Višinskis, just discussed. The plot of the story essentially mirrors situations described in several of those letters: it recounts a picnic of young people at St. Martin’s Cross. The characters of the story – two sisters Alenutė and Onytė, the Catholic priest and his brother Dominykas, and Mr. Jonas – enjoy a joyful picnic together. They talk at length, admire

the scenery, sing, play games, joke, read aloud, catch butterflies, and treat themselves to sweets. At the very beginning of the story, an important idea is expressed: “everyone is more cheerful, better together”. Being in a group of peers – young people of similar self-concepts, engaged in shared enjoyable activities – produces a collective emotional experience: cheerfulness.

In this work, cheerfulness is created by the surrounding landscape; it is said that birds sing cheerfully. The girls’ clothing also contributes to this atmosphere, with a detailed description of the “ancient Lithuanian garments” they wear. Their appearance, like the landscape around them, is striking: they radiate “health, youth, and cheerfulness”. This triad aptly captures the essence of the collective agent of the story.

Notably, in Lithuanian, the word *linksmai* (“cheerful”) can also describe natural processes: for example *Visi augalai nepaprastai linksmai auga* (“All plants grow unusually cheerfully”). This usage reflects a sense of natural vitality, spontaneity. Similarly, the young people in the story – playing, joking, wearing clothing that harmonizes with their surroundings – blend seamlessly into the landscape, and seem to embody this innate spontaneity, naturalness. The story draws a parallel between the cheerful singing of the larks and the continuous talking of Alenutė: the “speech” of both the birds and the young girl expresses the same shared cheerfulness. The hypothesis is that through this analogy between nature and youth, the collective agent of the story – the cheerful, healthy, lively young people – comes to represent the ideals of modern Lithuanian national ideology.

It should be noted that this collective cheerfulness also includes some degree of gentle flirting between the girls and young men at the picnic. However, the erotic dimension of the story remains deeply hidden. Onytė and Dominykas go off to pick blueberries, while Alenutė and Mr Jonas look for a place to sit and read a book. Alenutė lightly teases her sister Onytė, saying that she is probably “joyously playing with Mr Dominykas”. The eroticism that emerges here is part of the same general atmosphere of cheerfulness: the young people pair off naturally and just as easily return to the larger group.

In this atmosphere of shared amusement, ideas central to the modern Lithuanian movement begin to emerge. First of all, the collective mood transforms the picnickers’ relationship with the world around them: everything they see takes on a “magical” quality – the rural farms, the site they visit (St. Martin’s Cross), and the surrounding forest. The landscape is not only admired but also experienced as one’s own, as the most suitable environment to live in.

More importantly, the environment is perceived as inherently poetic and capable of inspiring creativity among its observers: “Such a beautiful place! If I had a talent

towards poetry, I would describe it at once!" (Šatrijos Ragana 2008: 9). Within this context, the question of creativity in the Lithuanian language is also raised, together with reflections on the still modest state of Lithuanian literature, and its urgent need for new talents.

Another significant point is that, in the atmosphere of shared amusement, the protagonist of the story, Alenutė, begins to talk openly and share her plans for the future with her friends. She talks about her intention to go to Warsaw in the autumn to study beekeeping. In her imagination, these studies are a means of creating a self-sufficient and financially independent life. She dreams of keeping bees in the summer and treating poor people in the countryside during the winter¹⁰.

Another important theme that emerges in the text is Alenutė's desire to write in Lithuanian. Notably, when the young girl begins to talk about her aspirations and life plans, her emotional state also shifts: she moves from collective amusement to an individual experience of happiness. Sharing plans for the future is imbued with the experience of happiness ("how happy I am that I will go to Warsaw this year" (Šatrijos Ragana 2028: 14)). Peer support plays an equally important role. The protagonist of the story, Mr. Jonas, who listens to Alenutė's plans, approves of her "life program". His support is significant, yet at this stage he is not seen as a life partner with whom the new life program could be realised.

The narrative expresses the idea that a life structured according to one's own wishes and desires – and aligned with the ideology of modern nationalism – must be a happy one. Happiness arises when a person senses the prospect of a meaningful life, when that future beckons and attracts.

The collective state of cheerfulness described in Šatrijos Ragana's letters and in her short story *The Lovely Golden Hour* can be understood as a form of existential feeling. Phenomenologist Matthew Ratcliffe (2020: 250) defines them in the following way: "They are 'feelings' (in some sense of the term) and they also amount to ways of relating to the world as a whole". They are not said to be specifically localized in the body, but to unfold as an "all-enveloping sense of reality" or "of being rooted in the world" (ibid.). This emotional experience is emphasized to be essentially about a person's relationship with the world. They are foundational experiences that define all other personal relations and the experience of situations: "I already find myself in a world, situated in a realm where it is possible to direct oneself towards entities, and situations in these and other ways" (Ratcliffe 2020: 251).

10 "[...] a good many Russian women raised in a manorial environment experienced the first delicious and painful impulses of altruism through the mechanism 'social daydreaming' – fantasies in which the privileged gentry girl comes to the aid of the oppressed, and defends them against the common enemy; cold and loveless authority" (Stites 1990: 9).

Typically, these feelings are described as a sense of feeling ‘at home’ in the world, characterized by security, peace, and harmony with one’s surroundings. In contrast, Thomas Fuchs identifies their negative pole as the feeling of being cut off from the world – a state accompanied by a loss of meaning. These feelings shape not only our relationship to our environment but also to other people: we can feel welcome, close, connected, or alienated, disconnected, rejected, or isolated. These experiences involve a fundamental trust in others or a cautious, suspicious stance (Fuchs 2013: 614–616).

Ratcliffe highlights another crucial feature of these feelings: they shape how we perceive and experience the possibilities the world presents. As our existential feelings shift, so too does the horizon of opportunities available to us. When the world feels like home, it is experienced as rich with possibilities for feeling, acting, and relating to others. If one feels alienated from the environment, these possibilities narrow, and relationships with others are weakened.

The experience of joy described here appears to have been felt as a sense of being in one’s own place, of feeling at home in the world. In this state – which seems to have been sustained over time – the lived world was perceived as offering a variety of “cheerful” activities. The relationship with others, especially with fellow participants in the amusements, is close, allowing both the author of the letters and the characters in the story to engage in shared activities. Walking, catching butterflies, picking flowers, weaving wreaths, and similar pastimes all represent a realization of the possibilities offered by the world.

More importantly, this all-encompassing state of mind enabled both the letter-writer and the story’s protagonist, Alenutė, to boldly outline the prospects for her future life: to dream of beekeeping studies and of living an independent life. One might say even more strongly that “cheerfulness” not only revealed these prospects but also created and sustained the confidence that such possibilities were attainable. Ultimately, cheerfulness created a sense of belonging – to both a place and a group of people.

From Amusements to Love in the Novella *Viktutė*

Published in 1903, the novella *Viktutė* is one of the most important examples of Šatrijos Ragana’s early work. Written in the form of a diary, it tells the story of a young woman of noble origin, who experiences a profound self-image crisis after meeting and falling in love with a newly arrived doctor in a small town. *Viktutė* gradually embraces the ideas of modern Lithuanian national consciousness and resolves to speak Lithuanian. In the final part of the text,

she envisions family life with a man from a lower social class, working together in a hospital to implement a “social project” aimed at helping the poor. As noted at the beginning of this paper, in this work, marriage – understood as a partnership of equals, both capable of action – emerges as the only possible form of female emancipation.

Amusements also appear in the novella as collective activities that create shared experiences. The text depicts cheerful evening gatherings, filled with music and singing. Traditional celebrations – such as children’s christenings or Christmas – also provide occasions for amusement. Gradually, however, one of the essential conditions of this experience becomes the presence of the beloved man. In this way, an additional layer of meaning emerges. When describing the entertainment enjoyed by the servants of the household, amusement is portrayed as a form of rest after a day of hard work. The narrative tells of dances organized by the young servants of the manor, in which the female narrator participates for the first time. Here, it is work that legitimizes these amusements.

In this work, the entertainment of high society, which in the story *The Lovely Golden Hour* had created a collective experience of youthful amusement, gradually acquires a negative connotation. It comes to be seen as a waste of time – an empty, meaningless form of leisure. Here, at the beginning of the story, Viktutė recounts a cheerful letter from a school friend. In it, the friend describes attending a high society ball, enjoying oneself, and “having fun”. The diary narrator’s reaction to this friend’s letter is negative; she admits that even reading about such entertainments is boring, and wonders how it is possible to live without any meaningful work. (Šatrijos Ragana 1903: 8) Little by little, amusement thus becomes justified as a brief period of rest accompanying hard work.

The story’s narrator confesses that she is no longer attracted to the youthful amusements held in the houses of the landed nobility: they no longer meet her expectations, they bore her, etc. In this regard, Šatrijos Ragana echoes the critical stance of Eliza Orzeszkowa toward women in high society: “A passive creature, superficially taught to be admired; a lady in a salon and an affectionate little piece of furniture for a man [...]” (Miknyūtė 2009: 46). In the life of a young woman moving toward greater political and social awareness, these high-society amusements are replaced by reading and playing the piano.

Another significant shift evident in this work is that cheerfulness becomes an individual trait. The narrator repeatedly describes her beloved man as *cheerful* – a quality mentioned alongside intelligence, good education, and physical attractiveness. Gradually, communal and collective experience becomes embodied in her beloved man, who attracts and charms the young woman. As the novella approaches

its culmination, and the mutual nature of their feelings becomes clear, cheerfulness as an emotional state becomes increasingly tied to the participation of one particular person – the loved one – in various family gatherings and celebrations: “I’m so glad the doctor will be with us for Christmas. I seem to feel more cheerful and better with him... he’s so appealing, he’s so kind that it’s like he’s bringing warmth with him.” (Šatrijos Ragana 1903: 42) Viktutė mentions many times that conversations with him are engaging, that his opinions seem right; playing music with him feels special.

One of the doctor’s distinct talents is his ability to write poetry. However, unlike in *The Lovely Golden Hour* or Šatrijos Ragana’s letters, this poetry is not intended for public sharing. The poems are kept private; the doctor only gives the poems to Viktutė to read. It appears that the novella’s conception of creativity is gradually moving toward a more modern understanding.

It is obvious how, little by little, the “cheerful” relationship between the lovers takes on a unique, unprecedented quality. The doctor’s implicit declaration of love is also accompanied by laughter, and frolicking that includes other family members. Seeing the doctor’s infectious amusement, Viktutė admits for the first time that her feelings for him are love.

The narrative describes the cheerfulness experienced while decorating the Christmas tree together – the mood is already imbued with erotic undertones. The playful actions are both a display of mutual attention and a form of flirtation. Yet the erotic dimension of this relationship remains veiled beneath the playfulness, as Viktutė condemns overt attempts by women to “amuse” men in order to attract attention, or secure a partner, considering such behavior as degrading. Perhaps the “social” meaning attached to this amusement helps to legitimize the playful interaction between Viktutė and the doctor, since the tree is decorated for the servants’ children (those of lower social status).

Tellingly, this flirtatious play ends with the doctor articulating a life program for Viktutė: “As one can, so let one contribute to the common well-being. You’ve got education – give it to others; you love your country – inspire that love in your fellow countrymen; one can do it without money, too.” (Šatrijos Ragana, 1903: 45) The cheerfulness created by the beloved man thus carries a clear “ideological” dimension. Through him, the modern ideas of the national movement enter the young woman’s worldview. Gradually, the man, by cultivating a cheerful, playful bond with her, becomes a guide, showing her how she might shape her future life.

After the matchmaking, as the lovers make plans for their shared future, the husband reveals his dream of opening a hospital, where his wife will be able to fulfill her dream of being useful to others by working there. The fiancée joyfully declares, “And how happy I am, Antanas, our home will be purely Lithuanian, because

Lithuanian is the language the two of us are speaking and we will speak it forever". (Šatrijos Ragana, 1903: 86) In envisioning a married life based on shared professional activity, the couple senses that they are challenging the established order by embodying in their lives the ideas promoted by the national movement. These ideas are not only cultural but also carry a strong dimension of social reform. Viktutė dreams not only of working in a hospital but also of continuing to teach peasant children. Their marriage is imagined as a vehicle for spreading Lithuanian national consciousness and bridging class divisions.

At the end of *Viktutė*, the protagonist experiences a feeling of profound happiness, signaling her impending social integration into the emerging modern society, along with spiritual fulfillment and emotional maturity. As defined by Michela Summa, "'happiness' is alternatively used to designate an emotional state – feeling happy about something essentially means feeling satisfied – or a judgmental stance we take about our life" (2020: 416). However, the key to attaining this state of happiness for Viktutė is another person: a husband, a beloved man. She chooses a socially sanctioned path for women, in which marriage enables all other forms of public engagement. This ending reflects a traditional resolution for the question of a woman's place in society: marriage is presented as the only socially legitimate route for a woman to integrate into the new social order. Through partnership, women are able to participate in social work; it serves as the foundation empowering women to act and transform their environment.

Conclusions Focusing on Šatrijos Ragana's letters and early works – many of which remain outside the Lithuanian literary canon – this paper examines the portrayals of female characters, their distinctive modes of self-perception and their emotional experiences. Two different strategies of women's emancipation are identified, each shaped by distinct ways of portraying women and by the emotional experiences associated with them.

An analysis of Šatrijos Ragana's early letters to Povilas Višinskis and the short story *The Lovely Golden Hour* reveals that depictions of young women's leisure activities, accompanied by enjoyable experiences, serve as a catalyst for imagining forms of liberation plans not related to marriage. By creating a distinctive narrative atmosphere inextricably linked to amusement, the text portrays the emergence of a young woman's self-awareness and her future-oriented aspirations – to pursue education and achieve financial independence.

Significantly, the female protagonists host gatherings and formulate future plans within their own homes, thereby transcending traditional roles assigned to

women as wives and mothers. This transformation of women's spatial agency is crucial in this period. Eliza Orzeszkowa employed spatial metaphors to critique conventional perceptions of women and the limitations they faced, argued that a traditional woman's experience of the world was confined to what she could see through the window. By contrast, the heroine of the analyzed short story overcomes these spatial restrictions: she does not plan for marriage or motherhood.

This shift reflects the positivist ideology of the late nineteenth century – which challenged conservative views on women and promoted economic independence – as well as the impact of modern Catholic thought, which allowed women to imagine meaningful lives outside marriage. At the same time, however, traces of traditional views remain: economic independence is not presented as an end in itself, and the figure of the financially independent woman continues to be framed as a caregiver of the “weak” members of society, and an educator of young people.

As the analysis has shown, this image of the emancipated woman is closely tied to specific emotions and to the experience of merriment. Šatrijos Ragana's letters, as well as one of her earliest short stories, *The Lovely Golden Hour*, reveal that cheerfulness functioned as a sustained emotional state. According to the phenomenological classification of emotional experiences, this feeling can be understood as an existential feeling. Cheerfulness allowed those who lived through it to experience the world as safe, welcoming, and accepting. It also created a strong emotional attachment to particular places, often marked by historical or sacred significance. Certain locations – such as St. Martin's Cross or the grove of Želviai – and religious celebrations like Easter seemed to have the power to arouse and awaken a feeling of cheerfulness.

Cheerfulness also permeated social relations, especially among those who shared it. Participants in collective amusements were experienced as emotionally close, as members of one's own circle. This state of being opened up the world as a space of possibilities. In these moments of amusement, both the letter-writer and the fictional character Alenutė speak freely about their future plans – such as studying beekeeping in Warsaw, later establishing a beekeeping business, and building an economically independent life from its income. Within this emotional framework, female emancipation appears autonomous, not reliant on partnership with a man; the woman's life trajectory appears as separate and self-sufficient.

The novella *Viktutė* reveals how this image of women in Šatrijos Ragana's work gradually shifts. The coming-of-age narrative, presented in diary form, enables readers to witness the turning point in the girl's self-perception from her own perspective – stylistically innovative for Lithuanian literature of the time. Yet the story also contains clear signs of social convention. The girl's transition to adulthood

unfolds within a traditional domestic setting and culminates in her decision to marry the doctor. This narrative, in which the heroine marries and becomes her husband's assistant reflects the broader transformation of part of the small nobility into the intelligentsia – a newly emerging social class¹¹.

The analysis of this work, particularly the feeling of love experienced by the young woman and man that leads them to dream of an equal partnership within the family, shows that it aligns with the partnership models prevalent in late nineteenth-century culture. In the novella a woman's life fulfillment is depicted as inseparable from partnership – specifically, from a family relationship with a man. The content of this "life program" reflects the ideology of the modern Lithuanian family, while the form of its realization corresponds to the models of the "new" Lithuanian family promoted by the liberal participants of the national movement. These partnership ideals, which were dominant in the liberal press of the time, also shaped real-life decisions: in the early 20th century, a number of intelligentsia families were formed under the influence of this ideal. These models were reflected in the plots of literary works, and their influence is evident in the shaping of women's biographical narratives as well as in the discourse surrounding their emancipation. Moreover, the stories that have survived in cultural history, as well as those being reinvented today, reinforce the idea that without such partnerships, women's emancipation at the turn of the century would not have been possible. This notion is supported by Vytautas Kavolis (1992: 84), one of the first scholars to introduce feminist ideas in Lithuania after 1990, who interprets the image of a husband and wife working together, sharing creative ideas, and supporting each other. The love between a man and a woman, culminating in a harmonious family life, emerges as one of the most recognizable emotional experiences characteristic of the late 19th- and early 20th-century Lithuanian national movement. This emotional experience is embedded in the new family projects envisioned by the participants of the national movement.

In the novella *Viktutė*, earlier amusements gradually turn into an empty form of passing the time. This is particularly evident in how feasts held by the high society are evaluated. Amusements increasingly become a type of leisure justified by hard work or assigned a social function – for example, decorating a Christmas tree for children from a lower social class. Moreover, amusements lose their broader meaning of connection to the surrounding world and become tied to one significant person: the beloved man. Without the presence of this "cheerful" man, previously meaningful leisure activities lose much of their joy and significance. In this way, the beloved man

11 As Miknyūtė (2009: 190) points out, the minor nobility, in an attempt to preserve their social position, began to pursue education and gradually became part of the intelligentsia.

gradually becomes a prerequisite for a meaningful, happy life. In this work, instead of the girl imagining and shaping her own future, the man directs how her aspirations for a meaningful life can be fulfilled.

In the short story *The Lovely Golden Hour*, by contrast, – the idea of women's emancipation – achieving financial independence and freeing oneself from traditional roles such as wife and mother – is presented in a more visionary and forward-looking way. The joyfulness that corresponds to the self-image of a "new" woman is linked to the experience of women from a higher social class, a space seemingly more receptive to women's emancipation projects. In *Viktutė*, however, the protagonist's family is depicted as losing its social position, which enables a noblewoman to marry a peasant intellectual from the younger generation. Viktutė's story thus reflects the realities faced by women of the declining upper class at the time, which may explain why the narrative aligns more closely with traditional paradigms of women's lives.

This paper has sought to reveal a broader spectrum of emotions in the literature of this period, with particular attention to shared experiences of amusement. Looking ahead, one promising direction for further research concerns the relationship between modern nationalism and emotions. To understand how national identity becomes an internal conviction for individuals, emotions can serve as a key concept for explaining how the ideas of national movements are internalized. Recent studies on nationalism raise a central question: "How do people become national?" (Styene et al. 2020: 1). These scholars emphasize that emotions play a crucial role in understanding how nationalism shapes the lives of ordinary people. Feminist scholarship has further contributed to the study of emotions and nationalism, challenging the notion of nationalism as a homogenous phenomenon. Further analysis of literary works by women from the period of the Lithuanian national movement could shed light on how men and women were assigned different roles in nationalist projects, and how these roles informed the formation of distinct models of identity.

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Aspazija un 1936. gadā izdotā enciklopēdija “Mūsu laika ievērojamās sievietes”

Aspazija and the Encyclopedia *Notable Women of Our Time* Published in 1936

Atslēgvārdi:

enciklopēdija,
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sieviešu kustība

Keywords:

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the women's movement

Kopsavilkums

1936. gadā Prāgā iznāca biogrāfiskās enciklopēdijas "Mūsu laika ievērojamās sievietes" (*Bedeutende Frauen unserer Zeit*) 1. sējums, kurā apkopotas ziņas par 64 sievietēm no visas pasaules. Izcilo sieviešu vidū bija arī latviešu dzejniece Aspazija. Līdz šim vienīgā zināmā informācija par šo izdevumu bija redaktora Paula Husareka Aspazijai sūtīta apliecinājuma vēstule. Sākoties Otrajam pasaules karam, Aspazija sev tik nozīmīgo dokumentu uzticēja draudzenei Annai Stundai, kura, dodoties trimdā, paņēma to līdzi, bet vēlāk aizsūtīja literatūrzinātniecei Saulcerītei Viesei. Pašlaik Husareka vēstule glabājas Latvijas Nacionālā rakstniecības un mūzikas muzeja krājumā. Rakstā sniegts konspektīvs ieskats dažos Latvijā izdotos biogrāfiskos izdevumos, aplūkots Husareka vēstules ceļš no Prāgas līdz Latvijai, kā arī pētīti jauniegūti materiāli par enciklopēdiju "Mūsu laika ievērojamās sievietes".

Summary

In 1936, the first volume of the biographical encyclopedia *Bedeutende Frauen unserer Zeit* (Notable Women of Our Time) was published in Prague, comprising information about 64 women from all over the world. Among the notable women mentioned was also the Latvian poetess Aspazija. Until now, the only known information about this publication was the letter of confirmation sent to Aspazija by the editor Paul Hussarek. When World War II began, Aspazija entrusted this personally very important document to her friend Anna Stunda, who took it with her when she went into exile, but later sent it to literary scholar Saulcerīte Viese. Currently, Hussarek's letter is kept in the collection of the Latvian National Museum of Literature and Music. The article provides a concise overview of some biographical works published in Latvia, examines the path of Paul Hussarek's letter from Prague to Latvia, and studies newly acquired materials about the encyclopedia *Notable Women of Our Time*.

levads

19. gadsimta beigās un 20. gadsimta sākumā Eiropā popularitāti iemantoja nacionālas biogrāfiskas vārdnīcas un dažāda veida enciklopēdijas. Kā atzīst skotu vēstures pētniece Elizabete Jūena (*Elizabeth Ewan*):

Neviena biogrāfiskā vārdnīca nav patiesi neitrāls uzziņu avots. Pēc būtības tā tāda nevar būt, jo tās skatījumu veido atlases principi un jomas, kas tiek uzsvērtas atsevišķos ierakstos. 19. gadsimta nacionālo biogrāfisko vārdnīcu izdošana mēdza attīstīties patriotiskos nolūkos, cildinot nācijas ievērojamu vīriešu (un reizēm arī sievietes) darbus. (Ewan 2019: 121)

Arī Latvijā šajā laikā radās pirmais, kaut visai nosacītais biogrāfiskais izdevums – 1887. un 1890. gadā divās burtnīcās iznāca dramaturga Ādolda Alunāna darbs “Ievērojami latvieši. Skices un atcerējumi”. 1. burtnīcas priekšvārdā Alunāns raksta:

Visas citas lielākas tautas tiek, tā sakot, bagātīgi barotas ar ziņām un dzīves aprakstiem par saviem patriotiem, rakstniekiem, māksliniekiem, zinātniekiem, politiķiem. Tikai latviešiem trūka līdz šim pavisam tādu grāmatu un rakstu, jo, izņemot “Rotu”, kura šai ziņā sākusī strādāt, mums nav tikpat kā nekādu aprakstu par ievērojamiem latviešiem. Tas bija tas iemesls, kas mani paskubināja šo grāmatu sarakstīt. Kas viņā meklēs pilnīgu dzīves aprakstus, tas maldīsies. (Alunāns 1887)

Izdevumā Alunāns ievietojis apceres par 23 latviešu kultūras darbiniekiem, piemēram, Krogzemju Miku (Ausekli), Juri Alunānu, Frici Brīvzemnieku, Andreju Pumpuru, brāļiem Kaudzītēm, Baumaņu Kārli, Jurjānu Andreju, Andreju Dīriķi, Māteru Juri, Jēkabu Lautenbahu-Jūsmiņu, advokātu Jāni Klāviņu, kā arī vienīgo sievieti šajā sarakstā Mariju Pēkšēnu, priekšvārdā uzsverot, ka tas ir viņa, Alunāna, subjektīvs redzējums, kā arī personiski iespaidi un atmiņas.

Pirmās Latvijas Republikas laikā klajā nāca vairāki izdevumi, kas lielākā mērā atbilda biogrāfiska izdevuma raksturam, piemēram, 1926. gadā iznāca Alberta Prandes sastādīta grāmata “Latvju rakstniecība portretēs”. Priekšvārdā Prande uzsver grāmatas unikalitāti (beidzot lasītājs var vaigā skatīt iemīļotus autorus), kā arī pamato šāda izdevuma noderīgumu, jo

grāmata pa daļai aizpilda arī trūkstošā latvju rakstnieku leksikona vietu. Viņas alfabētiskais rādītājs un attiecīgās biogrāfiskās ziņas dod iespēju viegli orientēties katram, kam vajadzība pēc nepieciešamākā biogrāfiskā materiāla (Prande 1926).

1929. gadā iznāca Paula Krodera sastādīta grāmata “Latvijas darbinieku galerija, 1918–1928”, kas akcentē aprakstīto personu nacionālo un valstisko nozīmību, iekļaujot tajā daudz plašāku personību loku. Izdevums veidots hierarhiski (nevis alfabēta secībā), parādot indivīda vietu un svarīgumu attiecībā pret valsti. Pirmā

sadaļa apskata "vadošās personības Latvijas uzbūves darbā," nākamā ir "Tautas padome, Satversmes sapulce, Saeima, valdība," tad seko "sūtņi un konsuļi," "armija, flote un aizsargi," plaša sadaļa veltīta Latvijas kultūras darbiniekiem, kam seko valsts darbinieki, rūpnieki, tirgotāji, saimnieciskie un pašvaldību darbinieki. Informācijas apjoms ir ārkārtīgi dažāds – tie var būt gan pāris teikumi, gan plašāks apraksts ar fotoattēlu, arī vienots apraksta princips netiek ievērots.

1939. gadā iznāca Žaņa Unāma sastādīta biogrāfiskā vārdnīca "Es viņu pazīstu", kas veidota pēc toreizējā Valsts prezidenta Kārļa Ulmaņa ierosinājuma (atkārtotā izdevumā ar Unāma ievadu, pēcvārdu un atsevišķi pievienotiem papildu datiem, nemainot grāmatas pamattekstu vai šķirkļus, tā iznāca 1975. gadā trimdā). Vārdnīcā iekļautas 6336 biogrāfijas. Kaut gan ievadā tā nosaukta par pilnīgāko un plašāko biogrāfisko izdevumu, vārdnīcai nepārprotami ir ideoloģisks raksturs:

Ikviens latvieša pienākums ir pazīt un atcerēties tos vīrus, kas modinājuši un stiprinājuši tautas pašapziņu un neatlaidīgi strādājuši un cīnījušies par viņas labklājību un labāku nākotni. Mums ir jāciena vīri, kas radījuši vērtīgus darbus, paiduši lielas un derīgas idejas un guvuši ievērojamus panākumus valsts darbā, zinātnē, mākslā vai saimnieciskā un praktiskā dzīvē. Mums jāpazīst arī tie vīri, kas visdažādākās dzīves nozarēs kā celmlauži ar labiem paraugiem iet pa priekšu vai darbojas vadītāju amatos mūsu garīgās un materiālās kultūras druvā – laukos un pilsētās, iestādēs, sabiedriskās organizācijās un uzņēmumos, valsts drošības un aizsardzības darbā. (Unāms 1975: 5)

Šajos izdevumos uzmanība lielākoties pievērsta vīriešiem un viņu darbībai, sievietēm atvēlot vien atsevišķus šķirkļus, bet 1936. gadā iznāca literāta Jāņa Ķelpes sastādīta ievēribas cienīga grāmata "Sieviete latvju rakstniecībā". Tas ir biogrāfisks izdevums, kas sniedz arī plašu kultūrvēsturisku kontekstu. Grāmatas ievadā Ķelpe uzsver:

Sievietes nozīme izpaudusies visās darba nozarēs un visos laikmetos. Tā bijusi ne vien ģimenes kopēja un bērnu māte, ne vien audzinātāja skolā, bet arī liela politiķe, zinātniece, rakstniece un māksliniece. Sieviete ir centusies pēc līdzvērtības vīrietim, un viņas cenšanās nav bijusi veltīga. To apliecina sievietes panākumi dažādās darba disciplīnās. Spožas personības kā augstas koku galotnes paceļas no visām tautām un viņu slava iesniedzas dziļi nākotnē. (Ķelpe 1936: 3)

Izdevumā ir plašāka informācija – gan formālu biogrāfiju, gan autobiogrāfiju veidā – par 33 latviešu literātiem, piemēram, Annu Brigaderi, Aspaziju, Birznieku Latīņu, Birznieku Sofiju, Zemgaliešu Birutu, Angeliku Gailīti, Paulīni Bārdi, Elzu Stērsti u. c., kā arī sadaļa par "citām latvju literatūras darbiniecēm" ar lakonisku un koncentrētu datu apkopojumu par mazāk zināmām vai kādu citu iemeslu dēļ plašāk neapraktītām latviešu autorēm.

Aspazija pieder tām nedaudzajām izcilajām Latvijas sievietēm, kam nacionāla mēroga sastādītāji un redaktori uzmanību veltījuši gandrīz visos biogrāfiskajos

izdevumos, taču viņas vārdam vēl dzejnieces dzīves laikā izdevās gūt starptautisku skanējumu, ar ko viņa pati ļoti lepojās.

Vēstule no Čehoslovākijas

Latvijas Nacionālā rakstniecības un mūzikas muzeja krājumā glabājas *Dr. phil.* Paula Husareka (*Paul Hussarek*, 1903–1964) Aspazijai adresēta vēstule (Hussarek 1936), kas ilgi nodarbinājusi pētnieku prātus un bijusi ļoti svarīga arī pašai dzejniecei.

1936. gada 19. janvārī laikrakstā “Pēdējā Brīdī” lasāms, ka “dzejniece Aspazija pēc nesen pārciestās gripas un bronhīta stipri sagursi. Viņai vēl joprojām paaugstināta temperatūra, un dzejniece cietusi no bezmiega un sirds vājuma” (–li.¹ 1936: 1). Ārsts Jēkabs Nīmanis ir devies uz Jūrmalu un aizvedis dzejnieci uz savu klīniku Rīgā.

Slimnīcā Aspazija ārstējās līdz pat aprīļa sākumam, tur arī 16. martā sagaidīja savu 71. (vai, kā tolaik tika uzskatīts, 68.) dzimšanas dienu. Tieši ar dzimšanas dienu saistās notikumi, kas sākotnēji nekonkrēti un poētiski aprakstīti 1968. gada “Raiņa un Aspazijas gadagrāmātā” publicētajās literātes Annas Stundas atmiņās, bet pēc tam, domājams, par pamatu ņemot Stundas publikāciju un atmiņas, literatūrzinātnieces Saulcerītes Vieses Aspazijas dzīvei un daiļradei veltītajā darbā “Mūžīgie spārni”:

1936. gada pavasarī dzejniece slimnīcā atradās visai ilgi. Nīmanis ar saviem kolēģiem kārtējo reizi bija palīdzējis atgriezties dzīvē. Taču dzejniecei viss bija vienaldzīgs, draugi un paziņas, kas nāca ciemos, slīdēja garām apziņai kā miglas tēli. Apātiju pārtrauca brīdis, kad starp vēstulēm, kas krājās uz slimnieces galda, viņa ieraudzīja svešādu aploksni ar Prāgas zīmogu. Reizi izlasījusi, viņa to satraukta pārlasīja vēl un vēl. Prāgā tika izdots monumentāldarbs “Mūsu laika ievērojamās sievietes”. Izdevniecība paziņoja, ka no divdesmit sešām dažādām valstīm tajā ievietošanai izvēlētas sešdesmit četras sievietes: – Un es, Elza Pliekšāne-Aspazija, kā viena no pirmajām pārstāvu savu zemi, savu valsti... Beidzot bija pienākusi necerēta un negaidīta starptautiska atzinība. Aspaziju “labais Prāgas dokuments” atsauc dzīvē. Tas bija tas, ko viņa bija klusībā gaidījusi, ka viņas darbam ir vērtība cilvēces kultūrā kopumā. Un ka viņas mūžs nav bijis vien sakrāla kalpošana citam radošam garam. Vēstuli, kas palīdzēja atgriezties dzīvē, viņa nodeva Annai Stundai ar lūgumu: – Anniņ, Dvēselīt, paņem tu pie sevis Prāgas dokumentu. Šis raksts man ir ļoti svarīgs, tādēļ glabā to rūpīgi un, ja gadās iespēja, izlieto pēc savas pārliecības kā labāk. (Viese 2004: 430–431)

Minētā vēstule – “labais Prāgas dokuments” – ir Husareka parakstīta un datēta ar 1936. gada 17. decembri. Līdz ar to Aspazijas dzimšanas dienā 1936. gada martā tā nekādi nevarēja būt iejūkusi starp citiem sūtījumiem. Skaidrojums rodams 1936. gada 17. marta avīzē “Pēdējā Brīdī” publicētajā rakstā “Dzejnieci Aspaziju

1 Iespējams, ka autors ir tas pats, kas citās laikraksta “Pēdējā Brīdī” publikācijās parakstīties ar šifru ili. Grūti noteikt, vai tā ir drukas kļūda, autora paviršība vai vēl viens pseidonīms.

čehoslovāku redaktors uzskata par ievērojamāko latviešu sievieti". Raksta autors, kurš publikāciju parakstīja ar pseidonīmu "ili.", ir viens no daudzajiem, kurš dzejnieces dzimšanas dienas priekšvakarā ciemojies Dr. Nīmaņa klīnikā, un Aspazija viņam stāstījusi:

No Čehoslovākijas man piesūtīts raksts, kurā lūgts sniegt par sevi dažus datus redaktora Paula Husareka grāmatai "Mūsu laika ievērojamās sievietes". Čehi mani atzinuši par ievērojamāko latviešu sievieti. To jūtu kā gandarījumu par savu darbu. (ili. 1936: 1)

1938. gada martā žurnālā "Atpūta" Jāņa Plauža rakstā "Drosmes un skaistuma dzejniece Aspazija" jau lasāms, ka "nesen Čehoslovākijā izdotā rakstu krājumā "Slavenākās sievietes pasaulē" Aspazija ierindota pirmajā vietā" (Pļaudis 1938: 24).

Ir zināms, ka Husareka vēstule glabājās pie Stundas līdz pat 1971. gadam, jo tikai tad tā pārsūtīta Viesei un nonāca J. Raiņa Literatūras un mākslas vēstures muzeja (tagad Latvijas Nacionālais rakstniecības un mūzikas muzejs) krājumā.

Aspazijas draudzene Stunda bija lieltirgotāja un bankas direktora Dāvida Stundas un Jelgavas Latviešu biedrības teātra aktrises Annas Sārtones-Stundas meita. Ar Aspaziju Anna iepazinās 20. gadsimta 20. gadu sākumā, kad kopā ar māti gaidīja vilcienu Rīgas dzelzceļa stacijā. Stunda palīdzēja Aspazijai iekāpt vilcienā, bet vēlāk dzejniece atzinusies, ka tieši mātes Sārtones aktierdarbs reiz mudinājis viņu pievērsties dramaturģijai, un uzaicinājusi jauniegūto paziņu ciemos. Pamazām viņu attiecības kļuva ciešākas, un Anna Stunda arvien vairāk iesaistījās Aspazijas dzīvē – bieži vien ciemojās pie dzejnieces, atbalstīja sadzīvē, kļiedēja vientulību un palīdzēja darbā gan rokrakstu atšifrēšanā, gan 1937. gadā iznākušās grāmatas "Rainis un Aspazija. Dzīvē un mākslā" sagatavošanā, kļūdama par Aspazijas pēdējo gadu tu-vāko draudzeni. 1944. gadā Stunda devās trimdā – vispirms uz Vāciju, tad uz ASV, kur nodzīvoja līdz pat savai nāvei 1986. gadā (Viese 2001: 3).

Kad 1970. gadā Viese aizstāvēja disertāciju par Aspazijas dzīvi un darbību, sākās literatūrzinātnieces un Stundas sarakste, sākumā piesardzīga, vēlāk arvien atklātāka. Stunda Viesei adresētajās vēstulēs uzticēja atmiņas par Aspazijas pēdējiem dzīves gadiem, vēlāk sūtīja dažādus ar dzejnieci saistītus materiālus, tostarp "labo Prāgas dokumentu". 1971. gada 20. aprīlī Stunda vēstulē Viesei raksta:

Mīļā Saulcerīte, pienācis beidzot tas laiks, kad varu teikt ar vislielāko apziņu, ka Aspazijas man uzticēto "Prāgas dokumentu" esmu rūpīgi glabājusi un saglabājusi cauri daudzām likstām, lai tagad to nosūtītu atpakaļ uz to zemīti, kur tam jābūt, un ceru, ka oriģināls sasniegs savu mērķi tāpat kā piecas kopijas, kas jau ir Latvijā. [...] Un te, mūsu Mičiganā, mūsu pašu pilsētā, cik ļoti daudzas reizes ir bijusi lielā trauksme nejaukajiem "tornēdo" – viesuļvētrām, kad jāskrien patverties, – vienmēr man "dokuments" bijis klāt. Tāds mazs apmierinājums man bij tas, ka pirms aizbraukšanas no Vācijas es norakstus no dokumenta un Aspazijas vēstulēm biju nosūtījusi uz Brazīliju, kur ir kāds latviešu privātarhīvs. Dažus gadus vēlāk

dabūju zināt, ka tie tur arī glabājas. Un Amerikā man ir bijusi iespēja Aspazijai tik svarīgo dokumenta saturu darīt zināmu daudziem jo daudziem gan ar Zviedrijā iznākošo Raiņa un Aspazijas gadagrāmatu, gan ar šeit iespiesto žurnālā "Treji Vārti". Tagad, mīļā Saulcerīte, es Aspazijas dokumentu nosūtu Jūsu gādībai un rīcībai un (es ceru, kas tas laimīgi aizies) es zinu, ka arī Aspazija uzticētos Jums tāpat kā es. Tikai labprāt gribētu zināt, kur Jūs to domājiņiet novietot, jo Jums jau ir izvēle. (Stunda 1971).

1936. gada 17. decembrī datētajā izdevuma "*Bedeutende Frauen unserer Zeit*" (Mūsu laika ievērojamās sievietes) redaktora Husareka parakstītajā apliecinājuma vēstulē Aspazijai teikts, ka sākotnēji drukātas nelielas brošūras vienu līdz divas reizes mēnesī, kas vēlāk apvienotas sešos sējumos. Grāmata, kas jau izpelņījusies kritiķu un publikas atzinību, nav paredzēta tirdzniecībai, bet nonāks tikai lielākajās bibliotēkās un kolekcionāru rīcībā. Vēstules beigās ir piedāvāts aizpildīt veidlapu, lai iegādātos vienu vai visus sējumus (Hussarek 1936). Nav saglabājusies informācija, cik šis izdevums maksāja un cik lielā tirāžā iznāca, bet acīmredzot uzreiz pēc iznākšanas Aspazijai nebija iespējas to iegādāties. Vācu okupācijas laikā šim jautājumam pievērsās Annas Stundas māsa Alise Ose-Stunda. Žurnāla "Treji Vārti" 1970. gada septembra numurā lasāmajā publikācijā viņa norāda:

Skaisti būtu bijis iegādāties šīs izcilās grāmatas, par kurām pasaules prese ir izteikusēs ļoti atzinīgi, bet tās iegūstamas tikai privāti un maksāja diezgan dārgi, un Aspazija to nekad nevarēja atļauties financiēli. Bet, tā kā tas ir ne tikai Aspazijas gods būt tik izcilā vietā pasaules presē, bet arī visas Latvijas gods, tad tas būtu bijis tik ļoti vēlami iegūt šīs grāmatas latviešu tautai. Gāju uz Iekšlietu ministriju un runāju ar Mākslas daļas vadītāju Ž[ani] Unāmu. Beidzot tomēr pēc visām pārrunām mēs nācām pie slēdziena, ka velti mums lauzties aizslēgtās durvīs; vācieši nekad mums neatvēlēs rakstīt uz Prāgu, jo ar likumu bij noliegta privātas sarakstes ar ārzemēm. Skumji to bij ziņot Aspazijai, jo zinājām visi, cik augsti arī viņa pati vērtēja šo lielo, izcilo pagodinājumu, un žēl bij arī, ka viņa pati to nedabūs nekad redzēt. (Osis-Stunda 1970: 10–20)

Aspazijas darbu tulkotāja Astrīda Stānke Stundas piemiņas rakstā izteikusi minējumu par enciklopēdijas atrašanās vietu:

Tieši šī [Husareka. – S. L.] vēstule deva man vajadzīgo drosmi tulkot tālāk Aspazijas drāmas un izcelt viņas vietu Eiropas literārās drāmas pasaulē. (Vēstule ir iespiesta manā grāmatā, šie biogrāfiskie sējumi it kā esot Prāgā, man sacīja kāda bibliotekāre Rietumberlīnē). (Stahnke 1987: 4)

Biogrāfiskā enciklopēdija "Mūsu laika ievērojamās sievietes"

Spriežot pēc visai skopās atrodamās informācijas, redaktors Pauls Husareks bija neparasta personība. Studējis filozofiju Prāgas un Parīzes Universitātē, bija rakstnieks un tulkotājs, līdz pat 1938. gadam vadīja raidījumu Prāgas radio. 1940. gadā Husareku arestēja Gestapo,

kam iemesls bija ne tikai viņa darbība radio, bet arī darbs pie minētās enciklopēdijas. 1941. gadā Husareks nonāca Dahavas koncentrācijas nometnē, no kuras tika atbrīvots 1945. gada aprīlī. Pēc kara izdeva vairākas grāmatas un iesaistījās dažādu sabiedrisku organizāciju darbībā.²

Zināms, ka apjomīgā izdevuma sējumi atrodas vairākās Eiropas bibliotēkās un arhīvos – Vācijas sieviešu kustības arhīvā Kaselē (*Archiv der deutschen Frauenbewegung*), Bratislavas un Heidelbergas Universitātes bibliotēkās, kā arī Čehijas Nacionālajā bibliotēkā. Diemžēl ne Keseles arhīva, ne Bratislavas Universitātes darbinieces, kas skenēja un sūtīja atsevišķus materiālus, nevarēja sniegt nekādu papildu informāciju par enciklopēdiju, visi ar grāmatas izdošanu saistītie dati, visticamāk, iznīcināti nacisma laikā.

Bratislavas Universitātes bibliotēkā glabājas grāmata sarkanos vākos ar nosaukumu čehu valodā, bet Vācijas arhīvā tā iesieta melnos vākos ar nosaukumu franču valodā. Abas enciklopēdijas saturiski ir identiskas, jo ir trīsvalodu izdevums čehu, vācu un franču valodā "*Vynikající ženy dnešní doby = Bedeutende Frauen unserer Zeit = Femmes Remarquables d'Aujourd'hui*". Sešos sējumos, kas iznākuši 1936. un 1937. gadā, apkopotas ziņas par sievietēm no visas pasaules, tostarp Brazīlijas un Japānas. Grāmatas ievadā redaktors Husareks raksta:

Gandrīz pirms 100 gadiem Anglijā iznāca pirmais biogrāfiskais uzziņu izdevums, kam sekoja daudzas biogrāfiskās enciklopēdijas. Tomēr nevienā no tām nav vispusīgi aprakstīts un fiksēts sieviešu ieguldījums pasaules intelektuālajā un kultūras dzīvē. Mūsu darbam ir globāls mērķis. Ja mēs vēlamies izsekot saiknēm, kas savieno valstis un tautas, padarot tās par lielu kopieni ar vienādiem kultūras centieniem, kā arī parādīt šīs saiknes, mēs to vislabāk varam izdarīt, attēlojot cilvēkus. Atsevišķi notikumi, ko mēs fiksējam enciklopēdijas šķirkljos, veido vienotu ainu. Šajā darbā mūs vada vēlme skaidri un objektīvi parādīt katras atsevišķas sievietes ieguldījumu savas valsts kultūras dzīvē un tādējādi arī pasaulē kopumā. (Hussarek, Joffé 1936)

Grāmatas ievadā ir arī aprakstīti galvenie principi, ko redakcija ņēmusi vērā, veidojot enciklopēdiju: 1) visus datus par sevi sniegušas sievietes pašas; 2) piederība politiskajām partijām ir minēta tikai tām personām, kas aktīvi iesaistījušās politikā dzīvē; 3) biogrāfijas katrā sējumā sakārtotas alfabētiskā secībā.

Ievadā nav paskaidrots, kā redakcija ieguvusi ziņas par katras atsevišķas valsts nozīmīgākajām personām un pēc kāda principa tās izvēlētas. Līdz šim iegūto materiālu un enciklopēdijas šķirklju rādītāju izpēte ļauj secināt, ka katrā no sešiem sējumiem tikuši iekļauti šķirklji par 64 sievietēm no dažādām pasaules valstīm; visiem sējumiem ir vienota lappušu numerācija (1. sēj. 1.–128., 2. sēj. 129.–260. lpp. u. tml.); šķirklju rādītājs katrā sējumā tiek papildināts, ietverot arī iepriekšējo sējumu datus.

2 Sk.: <https://www.kohoutikriz.org/autor.html?id=hussa&t=p>.

Šķirklis par Aspaziju, kā vēstulē norādījis Husareks, atrodas enciklopēdijas 1. sējuma 93. lappusē. Informācija sakārtota anketas veidā un ir ļoti lakoniska.

Paturot prātā, ka visus datus sniegušas sievietes pašas, par Aspaziju izlasāms: Elza Pliekšāne – rakstniece; pseidonīms Aspazija; valstspiederība: Latvija; dzīvesvietas adrese: Gončarova iela 13, Jaundubultos; dzimusi 1868. gada 17. martā; precējusies ar Raini (Jānis Pliekšāns); pabeigusi vidusskolu (*die Mittelschule*), privāti apguvusi filoloģiju, mācījusies valodas un mākslas vēsturi (estētiku, literatūru, vēsturi, grieķu, itāļu, latīņu, franču, krievu valodu); studējusi Cīrihes Universitātē; bijusi laikraksta "Dienas Lapa" redaktore; dzīvojusi Tālajos Ziemeļos; kā emigrante uzturējusies Lugāno un Cīrihē. Pieder slavenu mākslinieku gleznas, plaša bibliotēka un antīkas mēbeles; daudz publikāciju, kas iznākušas lielās tirāžās; vairāku organizāciju goda biedre; apbalvota ar Triju Zvaigžņu ordeni; viņas vārdā nosaukts bulvāris Rīgā (Hussarek, Joffé 1936: 93).

Aspazijai, apcerot savas biogrāfijas datus, raksturīga neprecizitāte, dažreiz pat faktu sagrozīšana. Piemēram, Raiņa Slobodskas trimdas laikā Aspazija strādāja 1898. gadā atjaunotajā laikrakstā "Dienas Lapa", Aspazijas pārzinā bija avīzes kultūras sadaļa, "literāriskie sīkumi" un recenzijas par Vācu teātra izrādēm, bet viņa nebija laikraksta redaktore. Neprecīzi norādīts arī Aspazijas dzimšanas gads un datums – līdz pat 20. gadsimta 60. gadu beigām tika uzskatīts, ka Aspazija dzimusi 1868. gadā, bet, kad tika veidots ieraksts Kastaņolas iedzīvotāju reģistrā, Aspazija norādījusi, ka dzimusi 1870. gadā (Grīnuma 2017: 229). Lai arī ieraksts baznīcas grāmatā liecina, ka Johanna Emīlija Lizete Rozenberga ir dzimusi 1865. gada 16. martā (pēc vecā stila 4. martā) desmitos vakarā, Aspazijai patīcis apgalvot, ka viņa piedzima pusnaktī, tādējādi uzsverot, ka viņai esot divas dzimšanas dienas – gan 16., gan 17. marts –, tāpēc dažādos avotos mēdz būt atšķirīgas datuma norādes (Andžāne 2015: 6). Arī iegūto izglītību Aspazija ir nedaudz pārspīlējusi – ziņas par vidusskolas jeb Jelgavas sieviešu ģimnāzijas pabeigšanu ir pretrunīgas. Aspazija pati apgalvoja, ka ģimnāzijas gala eksāmenus nav nokārtojusi vectēva bērū dēļ, bet mācību kursu ir noklausījusies, taču nekāda apliecinājuma ne vienam, ne otram apgalvojumam nav (Grīnuma 2017: 421–422). 1895. gadā Aspazija devās uz Cīrihi, lai tur universitātē studētu medicīnu, bet, nemaz netikusi līdz iestājpārbaudījumiem, no šīs idejas atteicās, pati to pamatodama ar nespēju piedalīties dzīvnieku vivisekcijās. Tikpat labi īstais iemesls varēja būt rakstnieka un Raiņa un Aspazijas ģimenes drauga Augusta Deglava atmiņās minētais, ka sievietes studijām augstskolā vajadzēja vīra atļauju, bet Aspazijas tolaik vēl pielaulātais vīrs Maksis Vilhelms Valters skaitījās pazudis un šādu atļauju nevārēja dot (Grīnuma 2017: 425).

Kā redzams, Aspazijas darbība Satversmes sapulcē un viņas loma Latvijas sieviešu emancipācijas kustībā šķirkli nav minēta, kaut gan varētu domāt, ka tieši tas ir

iemesls, kādēļ dzejniece iekļauta enciklopēdijā. Šķirklī nav atzīmēti arī viņas literārie darbi – ne lugas, ne dzejoļu krājumi, ne tulkojumi.

Pirmajā izdevuma sējumā kopā ar Aspaziju iekļautas 64 sievietes no 23 valstīm. Vienpadsmit sievietes pārstāv Čehoslovākiju, deviņas – Lielbritāniju, sešas – Vāciju un Franciju, piecas – Itāliju un Austriju, trīs – Šveici un Poliju, divas – Nīderlandi, Somiju un ASV, pa vienam šķirklim ir par sievietēm no Bulgārijas, Austrālijas, Čīles, Kanādas, Dānijas, Igaunijas, Grieķijas, Latvijas, Norvēģijas, Rumānijas, Zviedrijas, Turcijas un Dienvidslāvijas. Ārste un pedagoģe Marija Montesori (*Maria Montessori*) ir minēta pie divām valstīm – gan pie Lielbritānijas, gan Itālijas. Spriežot pēc šķirkļu rādītāja, katrai aprakstītajai sievietei enciklopēdijā atvēlētas divas lappuses, bet Aspazijai – tikai viena, tomēr šķirkļu informācijas apjoms ir aptuveni vienāds, atšķiras vien lapas salikums.

Izdevuma nākamajos sējumos pārstāvēto valstu ģeogrāfija paplašinās, sniedzot iespēju uzzināt par izcilām sievietēm arī no Brazīlijas, Kanādas, Lietuvas, Ungārijas, Indijas, Irānas, Japānas un Padomju Savienības.

Kaut arī Aspazijai patika uzsvērt, ka ir vienīgā sieviete no Latvijas, kas minēta enciklopēdijā, izrādās, ka izdevuma otrajā sējumā izveidots šķirklis par Helēnu Birznieci-Tangijevu, ceturtajā – par Bertu Pīpiņu, bet piektajā – par Elizabeti Gerki.

Baletdejotāja, horeogrāfe un deju pedagoģe Helēna Birzniece-Tangijeva (1907–1965) piedzima Krievijā Pavlovskas dzelzceļa stacijas priekšnieka Aleksandra Tangijeva ģimenē. Kad nomira māte, viņu audzināja tēvamāsa Valentīna Drešare, kas meiteni bieži veda uz Pēterburgas Marijas teātri skatīties baleta izrādes. 1916. gadā viņa iestājās Petrogradas teātra skolā, bet pēc dažiem gadiem bija spiesta mācības pārtraukt. 1920. gadā Tangijeva sāka mācīties pie Agripinas Vaganovas. Ieguvusi labu izglītību, baletskolu viņa pabeidza 1924. gadā, un līdz 1927. gadam bija Valsts Akadēmiskā operas un baleta soliste Ļeņingradā (tagad Sanktpēterburga) un deju pasniedzēja baletskolā. 1927. gadā Helēna Tangijeva apprecējās ar Latvijas diplomātu Aleksandru Birznieku, pārcēlās uz Rīgu, saņēma Latvijas pilsonību un sāka strādāt Latvijas Nacionālajā operā, kļūdamā par spožu baleta solisti un vēlāk arī pedagoģi (Bāliņa 1924). Pēc Otrā pasaules kara viņa kļuva par LPSR Valsts operas un baleta teātra galveno baletmeistari, no 1945. līdz 1965. gadam iestudējot vairāk nekā 20 baletus (Beinaroviča 2012: 83).

Enciklopēdijas šķirklī par Tangijevu-Birznieci izlasāmi būtiskākie biogrāfiskie dati (gan teikts, ka uz Rīgu pārcēlusies 1928. gadā), kā arī minēta viņas dalība nozīmīgākajos iestudējumos, piemēram, 1936. gadā iestudētais Ādolfā Šarla Adāna (*Adolphe-Charles Adam*) balets "Korsārs". Tāpat uzskaitītas valstis – Krievija, Latvija, Lietuva, Vācija, Zviedrija, Beļģija, kurās viņa uztājusies. Šķirklī minēts arī, ka Birzniecei-Tangijevai pieder Briseles mežģīņu, kā arī vēdekļu kolekcija. 1935. gadā viņa

saņēmusi Zviedrijas zelta medaļu *Litteris et Artibus* (Hussarek, Joffé 1936: 154). Šo apbalvojumu 1853. gadā iedibināja Zviedrijas karaļnams, un tas tiek pasniegts par īpašiem nopelniem kultūrā ne tikai Zviedrijas pilsoņiem, bet arī ārzemniekiem.³

Berta Pīpiņa (1883–1942), kuras šķirklis ievietots enciklopēdijas 4. sējumā, ir viena no aktīvākajām un nozīmīgākajām Latvijas brīvvalsts sabiedriski politiskajām darbiniecēm, sieviešu tiesību aizstāve, pirmā sieviete, kas ievēlēta Latvijas Republikas Saeimā, bija arī Rīgas domes deputāte (Kušnere 2018: 38–45). Pīpiņas šķirklis ir bez fotoattēla, bet pievienotā informācija sniedz ieskatu viņas sabiedriskajā un literārajā darbībā. Ir minēts, ka viņa ir sieviešu tiesību aizstāve, rakstniece, uzņēmēja, politiķe, kā arī Latvju sieviešu līgas prezidente un Latvijas Sieviešu organizāciju padomes priekšsēdētāja. Par politisko darbību (Saeimā vai Rīgas domē) konkrēta informācija netiek sniegta. Šķirkļī minēts arī, ka Pīpiņa publicējusies vairākos preses izdevumos ("Zeltene", "Jaunākās Ziņas"). Pie nozīmīgākajiem darbiem atzīmēts gan romāns "Lejaskrodzinieces meitas" (1935), gan 1927. gadā iznākušais darbs "Kā es runāju ar saviem bērniem par dzimumu dzīvi".

Par būtisku savas dzīves daļu Pīpiņa atzinusi ģimeni – vīru Ērmani Pīpiņu un trīs bērnus, piebilstot, ka ir ne vien politiķe un žurnāliste, bet arī laimīga māte (Hussarek, Joffé 1937, 459). Tas sasaucas ar Pīpiņas Latvijas presē paustajiem uzskatiem par sievietes lomu:

Manam sabiedriskam darbam kā sarkans pavediens cauri stiepjas "sieviešu jautājums". To rosīgi šķetināt var tikai sieviešu organizācijās. Tām dažai labai esmu kūmās stāvējusi un skaitos par priekšnieci Latvju sieviešu nacionālā līgā. Mans lozungs tur: sievietei ir atkal jāatgūst sabiedrības atziņā dievišķās Madonnas augstumi. Bet, ja sieviete tagad izdzīta pelēkās darbības maizes peļņā ārpus savas ģimenes, tur viņa aizstāvēt un atbalstīt varēsīm tikai pašas saviem kopīgiem spēkiem. Skaitos par ģimenes dzīves mūžīgo vērtību atzinēju un atbalstītāju. Esmu māte trim bērniem un nosodu vienbērnu vai bezbērnu sistēmu. Mēs, mātes, nesam sevī mūžības misiju: turpināt cilvēces mūžus, kas klājas zem mums un pacelsies bezgalībā pār mums. (Pīpiņa 1926: 3)

Šķirkļī atzīmēts, ka Pīpiņa apbalvota ar Triju Zvaigžņu ordeni un Zviedrijas zelta medaļu (Hussarek, Joffé 1937: 459).

Zviedrijas karaļnamam ir vairāki apbalvojumi, tāpēc grūti identificēt, kādu saņēmusi Berta Pīpiņa, taču 1939. gadā žurnālā "Zeltene" lasāms, ka "par saviem izcilajiem nopelniem Berta Pīpiņa kundze apbalvota ar Triju Zvaigžņu ordeni, karaļa Gustava V pasniegtu zelta medaļu (augstākā balva, ko Zviedrija piešķir sievietei), Somijas un citām goda zīmēm" (Mednieks 1939: 12).

Mūsdienās mazāk zināma ir enciklopēdijas 5. sējumā minētā ceturrtā sieviete no Latvijas Elizabete Gerke (*Elisabeth Braunz-Goercke*, 1888–1966), vācbaltiešu

3 Sk.: <https://kungligmajestatsorden.se/english/medals/the-medal-litteris-et-artibus>.

rakstniece un tulkotāja. Enciklopēdijas šķirkļi norādīts, ka viņa ir dzejniece un klavier-skolotāja. Dzimusi Talsos aptiekāra ģimenē, izglītojās mājās un pie privātskolotājiem, pēc tam apguva mākslu un mūziku Minhenē un Berlīnē. Enciklopēdijā ir plaša informācija par viņas literārajiem darbiem, bet nekas nav minēts ne par vaļaspriekiem vai kolekcijām, ne apbalvojumiem (Hussarek, Joffé 1937, 569–570).

Ar latviešu literatūru Gerke ciešāk saistīta, pateicoties literātam un žurnālistam Haraldam Eldgastam, kas bija arī laikraksta "Kurzemes Vārds" redaktors. 1923. gadā laikrakstā publicēts īss Gerkes dzīves un daiļrades apraksts, kā arī stāsta "Melnā dālija" tulkojums latviešu valodā. Gerke meistarīgi un talantīgi atdzejoja Haralda Eldgasta darbus vācu valodā. Eldgasta nāve 1926. gadā kļuva par lielu triecienu Gerkei, un viņa vairs neatgriezās pie viņa daiļrades tulkošanas (Grudule 2023: 203). 1939. gadā Gerke aizbrauca no Latvijas, tomēr zināmu saistību latviešu kultūru saglabāja. Māra Grudule šajā sakarā raksta:

Nesen atklātajā latviešu esejistes Zentas Mauriņas (1897–1978) sarakstē bija arī pāris Gerkes Otrā pasaules kara laikā rakstītu vēstulju. Iespējams, viņas abas kā Eldgasta talanta cienītājas pazina viena otru jau pirms kara. Sarakste atklāj, ka Gerke bija saņēmusi piedāvājumu tulkot Mauriņas autobiogrāfisko romānu "Dzīves vilcienā". Diemžēl romāna "Dzīves vilcienā" vācu tulkojumā tulkotāja vārds nav minēts ne pirmajā, ne otrajā izdevumā. Elizabete Gerke savas dzīves pēdējos gadus pavadīja Vācijā, kur mira 1966. gadā. (Grudule 2023: 206)

Iepazīstoties ar enciklopēdijas šķirkļiem, šķiet interesanti, ko katra sieviete atzinusi par pietiekami būtisku un minēšanas vērtu – vai tā ir radošā darbība, apbalvojumi, kolekcijas vai ģimenes stāvoklis. Par pārējo Latvijas sieviešu radošo un sabiedrisko darbību iespējams gūt salīdzinoši objektīvu informāciju, bet Aspazijas šķirklis, kaut nedaudz pārspīlēts, par Aspazijas nozīmīgo lomu Latvijas sabiedriskajā un kultūras dzīvē pastāsta visai maz.

Kopumā enciklopēdijas veidotāji par izcilām atzinuši ļoti dažādu profesiju un jomu sievietes – viņas ir gan politiķes un sieviešu kustības aktivistes, filantropes un mecenātes, gan zinātnieces un rakstnieces, arī aktrises, dziedātājas, pilotēs, alpīnistes un motobraucējas.

Lai būtu labāk saprotams, kāda bija tā sabiedrība, kam 1936. gadā piederīga bija Aspazija, minēšu vien dažus vārdus no izdevuma 1. sējuma personu rādītāja: itāļu rakstniece un Nobela prēmijas ieguvēja Gracija Deleda (*Grazia Deledda*, 1871–1936), igauņu dzejniece, rakstniece un tulkotāja Anna Hāva (*Anna Haava*, 1864–1957), čehu žurnāliste Olga Fastrova (*Olga Fastrová*, 1876–1965), Somijas politiķe un sieviešu tiesību aizstāve Mīna Sillanpē (*Miina Sillanpää*, 1866–1952), čehu skolotāja un sieviešu kustības dalībniece Františka Plaminkova (*Františka Plamínková*, 1875–1942), itāļu ārste un pedagoģe Marija Montesori (1870–1952) u. c.

Lai arī Aspazijai šis biogrāfiskais izdevums, domājams, bija nozīmīgs, tā nebūt nav vienīgā ārvalstīs izdotā enciklopēdija, kurā rodama informācija par dzejnieci. Izdevumā "Raiņa un Aspazijas gadagrāmatā 1979. gadam" Florence M. Balode-Soikane publicējusi pārskatu par vairākiem ārvalstu izdevumiem. Minēšu tikai tos, kas attiecas uz Aspazijas dzīves laiku.

1929. gadā iznākušajā "*Enciclopedia Italiana*" publicēts visai apjomīgs dzejniecei veltīts šķirklis; Aspazija raksturota kā dižā dzejnieka un dramaturga Raiņa sieva, sociālistiski ievirzīta autore, Jaunās strāvas pārstāve; dzejai raksturīgs romantisms un individuālisms, bet lugās aktuāla tēma ir sieviešu emancipācijas jautājums. Minēta arī Aspazijas publicistika un aktīvā sabiedriskā darbība. Enciklopēdijā ir ļoti skopi biogrāfiskie dati (norādīts tikai dzimšanas gads), netiek minēts trimdā Kastaņolā pavadītais laiks.

1932. gadā Tartu izdotajā igauņu enciklopēdijas "*Eesti Entsüklopeedia*" 1. sējumā Aspazijas dzīves un daiļrades raksturojumā ir vairākas faktu kļūdas, piemēram, kā Raiņa un Aspazijas laulību gads minēts 1907., nevis 1897. gads, arī daiļrades interpretācija – melanholija, ilgas, vientulība, gremdēšanās bērnības atmiņās – vairāk, šķiet, attiecināma nevis uz dzejnieces agrīno, bet daiļrades noslēdzošo posmu (pēc: Balode-Soikane 1978: 40–59).

Balode-Soikane minētajā publikācijā nezināmu iemeslu dēļ ziņas par šajā rakstā aplūkoto izdevumu "Mūsu laika ievērojamās sievietes" nav iekļāvuši.

1929. gada žurnālā "Latvju Grāmata" lasāms, ka ziņas par Latviju tiks publicētas enciklopēdijā Čehijā: "Masarika zinātniskā vārdnīca ir vismodernākā čehoslovāku enciklopēdija. Viņa nes Čehoslovākijas dibinātāja un pirmā prezidenta prof. T. G. Masarika vārdu un tiek vadīta viņa garā. Masariks kā vēstures filozofs un kā politiķis bij mazo tautu pašnoteikšanās sludinātājs, kas visu savu mūžu sekojis viņu garīgās dzīves attīstībai. Tādēļ arī Masarika enciklopēdija, sekojot viņa tendencei, piegriež sevišķu vērību mazām tautām, darot to nesalīdzināmi lielākā mērā nekā kura katra cita enciklopēdija. Pierādījums tam ir pēdējā daļa, kurā plašs pārskats par Latviju un latvju kultūru, redīgēts un pa lielākai daļai arī izstrādāts no red[aktora] Jar. Vozka. Masarika zinātniskā vārdnīcā Latvijai ierādīts gandrīz tikpat daudz vietas kā Anglijai vai Beļģijai un Holandai. [...] Visu aptverošā pārskatā "Latvji", no vienas puses, tiek apskatīts latvju antropoloģiski etnogrāfiskais stāvoklis indoeiropiešu tautu saimē, no otras – viņu valoda, un tālāk, saspīestā rakstā, nāk apskats par latvju literatūru, mākslu, mūziku un zinātni, kā arī 80 latvju rakstnieku, 20 mūziķu, 50 gleznotāju un 20 zinātnieku saraksts. [...] Pārskatā par Latviju ir saistoši norādījumi uz daudzām latvju personībām, kas noteikti būs ievietotas tālākās daļās (Stenders, Pumpurs, Rainis un Aspazija, Poruks, Niedra, Skalbe, Plūdons, Upīts, Virza, Vītols, Zālīts u. c.). ([Bez aut.] 1929: 365)

Mūsdienās, kā atzīst Eva Eglāja-Kristsone un Zita Kārkla, interese par biogrāfisko pieeju pētniecībā (Eglāja-Kristsone, Kārkla 2023: 5) ir atgriezusies. Enciklopēdijas un biogrāfiskās vārdnīcas ir nozīmīgs kultūrvēstures izpētes avots, kas vēstī par laiku, aktualitātēm, notikumiem un ievērojamākajām personībām. No vienas puses, tās runā par diženumu un izcilību, no otras – nereti kļūst par vienīgo avotu, kur meklējamas ziņas par agrāk pazīstamām, bet laika gaitā aizmirstām personībām.

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