



The fruits which ripened in the garden of exile

A Literary Round Table

Excerpts from the discussion held by the "Metai" editorial staff about the book "Lietuvių egzodo literatūra 1945-1990" (Literature of the Lithuanian Exodus) (edited by Kazys Bradūnas and Rimvydas Šilbajoris, Chicago, 1992, 863 p.) in which Juozas Aputis, Kazys Bradūnas, Sigita Geda, Liudvikas Jakimavičius, Vytautas Kubilius, Kęstutis Nastopka, Albertas Zalatorius took part.

Kazys Bradūnas. Dear colleagues, here I am sitting in front of you, and it seems strange to me that I don't feel afraid. I should feel as if I were sitting in front of a jury; yet judges of literature, though stern, never do much harm and don't put anyone in jail. You may be interested as to why we decided to start this work in exile without delay. When did the thought of discussing literature of the Lithuanian exodus occur to us? Principles of scholarly methodology shouldn't be applied here. It's a kind of portrait. When we decided to do this work, there wasn't much freedom in Lithuania. In about 1983 "A History of Lithuanian Literature" written by a collective of authors was published in your country and in it not a single word was said about émigré literature. We did not take offense, since we realized perfectly well what you could do and what you could not do with literature of the Lithuanian exodus. Then we decided to write it ourselves. If we had prophesied that in 1990 Lithuania would be free and independent, perhaps we would have waited in order to do this work together. But who could have known that this would happen?

We had decided to publish the book on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of literature of the Lithuanian exodus. Originally it had to embrace the period of 1945-1985. Yet every cloud has a silver lining. We fell behind schedule with our work. Our authors were busy with their own work done to put food on the table and wrote only when they had time. One couldn't get angry with them. Yet as a result of this delay, the period of émigré literature came to an end. In 1990, when Lithuania declared its independence, literature of the Lithuanian exodus, to my mind, was finished. Normal life returned. I may live in America and publish my book in Lithuania, or vice versa. Thus this delay came out well for us, since the book covers the whole period of émigré literature from 1945 to 1990.

Vytautas Kubilius. It is cause for rejoicing that this volume has appeared. Its photographs present a chronicle of literary life and its articles yield an analysis and give a panoramic view. It is a significant memorial to the deported Lithuanian word which is now returning to Lithuania. How such respect and holy faith in Lithuanian culture our emigrants had and do have, managing to collect the means for publishing such a luxurious volume! We look at this volume with envy and are not sure when we shall be able to publish a book of such excellent quality in Lithuania.

At the end of the 20th century fewer general histories of national literature are written than were in the middle of the century. This is related to the crisis in chronological order created by Russian formalism and aggravated by structuralism which started to look for intrinsic structures in art, not subject to historical time. The histories of literature written today no longer have the methodological coherence observed by the historical-cultural school which formed the model of all our histories of literature to date. Literature used to be aligned with the course of historical time and measured by its spans, subordinated to its changes. "If we wish to write a history of literature itself, it should contain the interpretation of texts, not of events", said the American literary critic Paul de Man. "Literature of the Lithuanian Exodus" quite vigorously rejects the principles of typologization of the cultural-historical school. Thus the general historical situation is not described, there is no sociological characterization of the émigré community. The writers' ideological groupings and political quarrels do not generate much interest. In this book the Lithuanian artistic word cleared more or less of its historical layers and existing in a closed space is revealed. The most beautiful example of this kind of literary understanding is V. Skrupskelytė's sketch of A. Nyka-Niliūnas, nearly devoid of biographical data and quotations, based on a piercing penetration of abstract thought into the being of spiritualized literariness, independent of exterior determining links. Such a-historical writing in a history of literature is quite convincing and justifiable according to Nietzsche's formula: history of literature is acceptable as an aesthetic phenomenon but not as a precise description of some phenomenon. I'm not sure if it is possible to construct an

entire history of literature of such sketches. Can a history of literature consist merely of interpretations of selected texts and a series of such interpretations not subject to the laws of historical change? Perhaps these laws do not pertain to literature where each work creating an aesthetic impression functions in the present and is not an archaeological excavation from the past?

In "Literature of the Lithuanian Exodus" the great writers seem to stand apart from any definite classificational schemes. In the book the aspect of creative individuality prevails instead of the common traits of the literary process which we used to keep in the foreground by every means possible, turning individuality into a mere illustration of these general traits. And even so the literature of any period, though polyphonic, does contain some common denominator which should be revealed and formulated by the historical work, although it is not necessarily to be forced into the schemes of separate periods, genres or dominating topics.

Despite its sketchy character, the book under discussion is conceived and constructed as a history of literature.

Sigitas Geda. I would like to speak about one problematic aspect: how is it possible to write a history of literature, and of Lithuanian literature in particular? Yet it will have to be written some day. What kind of thoughts come to mind against the background of this book?

I'll begin with K. Bradūnas' remark on page 12: "During the first post-war decades a literary void, a fearful stagnation prevailed in Lithuania". It's certainly true, but one question remains to be answered: what place in these decades is assigned to K. Boruta, V. Mykolaitis-Putinas, B. Sruoga, the Siberian deportees A. Miškinis, V. Katilius, K. Jankauskas, K. Inčiūra? "Literature of the Lithuanian Exodus" does not claim to answer these questions, save perhaps one or two introductory remarks, and thus it crumbles into a mosaic of personalities, names and works. To tell the truth, even in the best case literature could not be created in this country after the war: two thirds of the literary talent found themselves in exile, others — in deportation. Therefore, the output of the so-called Soviet Lithuanian writers was a pretentious adventure, an amoral adventure, a cynical adventure to misappropriate the tradition. There hasn't been any similar act throughout the entire history of Lithuania. The best names in literature were crossed out. Who climbed Parnassus? Looking through the text-books of our school days, we'll find all the idols: Janonis, Montvila, A. Venclova; a huge number of those who made our life bitter: Tilvytis, Valsiūnienė, Grybas... But it isn't pleasant to talk about it. R. Šilbajoris' remark on page 53 is right: "In post-war Lithuania the Parnassus of poetry rather reminded one of a slave camp and an alms house..."

This was the world we were born in, grew up and started writing. There are very few in Lithuania who are willing to hear this painful truth uttered from outside from where one can see better; all the more to realize and comprehend it. Lithuania is still disabled; so are its schools, universities, a large number of its writers, scholars and literary critics. The majority is silent, as if their mouths were full of water, because they have already burnt their fingers badly. Spiritual de-Sovietization has not yet touched Lithuania.

In K. Bradūnas' article "Poets — Contemporaries of Independence" (p.115) there is the following statement: "Full speed was attained in the direction of the growing cultural potential in all fields".

If we developed this thought further, we could state that beginning with 1940 this potential was forcefully dispersed. While thinking about the way a history of Lithuanian literature could be written, the following classification comes to mind:

- 1) the destinies of writers of the independent period in the emigration and in Lithuania;
- 2) the talents which had been nurtured by independence but failed to blossom in Lithuania, both in their homeland and in deportation,
- 3) literature of Socialism;
- 4) literature of dissent.

In this respect "the Žemininkai" poets are the most remarkable. They constitute the core and the heart of perhaps half a century.

"Thanks to "the Žemininkai" influence our literature acquired much more profound understanding of Lithuanianism, as it penetrated through the layer of established literary standards and habits coming from the period of Romanticism deeper into the mythological roots of the nation's existence; and Lithuanianness brought from there permeated the whole present of the nation's culture" (R. Šilbajoris, page 344).

Consciously or not, modern literature in Lithuania was developing in the light of "the Žemininkai" group.

In R. Šilbajoris' words, many talented writers of the second half of the century in Lithuania could agree with "the Žemininkai-Lankininkai" thesis implied in their criticism: "...it is not great ideas and the urgent character of the problems raised which make up the value of a work of art, but those qualities which respond to the specific requirements of fiction" (page 341).

V. Skrupskelytė's thoughts about the idiom of K. Bradūnas' early works could well be applied to us: "The word is understood as a mediator between life and death, full of a sacred meaning that Bradūnas finds in the primeval mystery, uncovered by means of legend and poetry",

The fate of poetry in Lithuania has been developing along these lines for about three decades. The best works were written either by maintaining this thesis or by denying any sacredness.

Today Lithuanian literature also falls into two types: the one seeking to renew tradition and the one searching for new models. Lithuanianness is often seen as "obstructing" this type of writing. Even the model itself is sought elsewhere.

The personality principle in "Literature of the Lithuanian Exodus" takes the easy way out. The principles of evaluation can only be guessed at. But what is in the background of this literature? Perhaps it cannot be otherwise. The present day offers no answer to how a history of contemporary literature should be written. When elementary juxtapositions are lacking, it is not clear what relations exist between the personalities and their works. There is no general analysis of literary developments. Then it is natural to ask: does a demonstration and discussion of personalities also yield a history?

To my mind, V. Kavolis' thoughts about the aim of writing is appropriate here: "to conserve, preserve and register a lost existence" (page 483).

In truth, this is what has been done.

Albertas Zalatorius. It is extremely difficult for me to speak about the totality of the work, since I've read only 5 or 10 percent of the works discussed in it. I don't believe anyone of those gathered here today has read more. True, we do have our own opinions about one author or another, poets in particular, maybe we have less to say about prose writers, since we haven't read many of their work. It follows then that to speak about evaluating all the works is pretentious, let alone evaluating the book as a whole.

We seem to have read more books of émigré authors when they were banned. After they started to reach Lithuania in large numbers, we read fewer of them; maybe many of them will remain unread, just as all the literature produced in this country won't ever be read in exile.

There is another reason why it is difficult to speak about this book. Kazys Bradūnas already mentioned why it was easier for them to write. They were in close contact with the literary process itself, meanwhile we are not really acquainted with that process. We read very few of the journals, we didn't live there and take part in the activity, thus it would be bold of us to raise any pretensions. I could more qualifiedly discuss separate articles on the authors I know better: Vaičiulaitis, Katiliškis, Škėma, partly Ramonas, but it isn't appropriate to go into details here. It's more important to look at the work as a whole, its urgency, purpose, necessity, certain methodological merits and flaws which have been mentioned by Kazys Bradūnas and Vytautas Kubilius.

The book was very necessary. Not for the exodus, but primarily for Lithuania. I even think the book is Lithuania-oriented. Until now Naujokaitis' "History of Lithuanian Literature" "Lithuanian Literature Abroad", partially "The Lithuanian Encyclopedia" substituted for it. Yet the facts printed in these books end in the early 1980s. Therefore, the demand for this book is really great, especially among university students and scholars of literature. On the one hand, it will make our work much easier; on the other, it will complicate it. We'll no longer be allowed to operate in platitudes about émigré literature. Our scholars of literature will also have to speak in a new and different way.

Vytautas Kubilius tried to characterize the type of this work. It is not a traditional history of literature where everything is more or less systematical and balanced, where the methodological core is distinct. Neither is it a loose collection of articles. It is something in-between. We may say that the methodology is rather eclectic, but this type is also justifiable; it may have evolved from the possibilities available, from the very situation in which the book was written.

The editors' tolerance and the freedom given to the authors produced both positive and doubtful results. First, it gave the book a bit of unexpectedness. While opening a new chapter, you don't know what its structure will be, what items will receive most attention. Besides, it allowed each author to choose his own aspect. Unlimited by any scheme, they could more freely show their competence. They could express their likes and dislikes. One can feel the author's relation to his object everywhere. It adds a new meaning. But then it also gets difficult to avoid subjectivity and other dangers arising not only from one's personal taste but also from one's professional ability. Sometimes you get an impression that, say, if Skrupskelytė had written about Faustas Kirša instead of Nyka-Niliūnas, she would have tried to discern various meanings in Kirša's works, and if Nyka-Niliūnas had spoken about Juzė Augustaitytė, Stasys Laucius, Juozas Tysliava, Petras Babickas and Petronėlė Orintaitė instead of Kazys Bradūnas, most probably he would have left no stone unturned.

Differing standards sometimes turn things upside down. If a foreigner not familiar with our literature read this history of literature, he would draw the conclusion that Ale Rūta is a more serious writer than Vincas Krėvė.

Certainly, it may have been difficult to maintain a balance everywhere, one couldn't order the authors how to treat their topics. But the inconsistencies should have been ironed out.

It couldn't have been difficult to balance the proportions: to fix certain number of pages for each writer so that obvious inconsistencies could be avoided. For example, I cannot understand why five times more space is devoted to Algirdas Landsbergis than to Kostas Ostrauskas, and A. Julius Greimas received five times less space than Vytautas Jonynas.

Even less do I understand why one writer is portrayed in several dozen photos, whereas another is only seen in one group picture.

The photos in the book are very valuable and extremely interesting; but the a balance should also have been sought so that the editors could not be accused of subjectivity and immodesty.

I don't know what others think, but in my opinion, in a history of literature there's no need to prove that this or that writer is talented. This is the critic's task. Thus a detailed analysis of style and structure in a work of history of literature seems to be a mere waste of time, a desire to show off one's interpretational abilities, or just a fear of speaking about more traditional things: the writer's conceptions, his relation to the world and his addressee, his scale of values, and finally, his unique model of man's behavior and his vision of the future — the things which interest society most and which the latter looks for in each author's works being dissatisfied with the assertion that he is talented. A text written with talent is the first condition, but the depth of a work of art does not end with this. Textbooks on world literature don't need to prove that Byron, Shakespeare, Chekhov or Faulkner had talent; they speak of quite different things.

In this respect Ilona Gražytė-Maziliauskienė's article on Mackus, Tomas Venclova's article on Brazdžionis, Antanas Vaičiulaitis' article on Pulgis Andriušis, partly K. Keblys' article on Ramonas and Violeta Kelertienė's on Katiliškis approach world standards. Other authors fail to attain them: some are given to a meticulous analysis of motifs or styles, to a unifying structural standard (let's say, in each case one necessarily speaks about space and time, the narrator's attitude, mode of narration, semantic oppositions, his relationship to the homeland's nature, childhood impressions, and so on; in other words, a *priori* schemes seem to be devised and applied to everyone). Others string works and authors on a thin thread like beads (sometimes even without the thread); it looks as if some scattered notes are collected and published. Thus a uniform conception disappears, which is so necessary for survey chapters which shouldn't repeat information from fragmentary encyclopedic articles or bibliographical dictionaries.

In this country we have been greatly impoverished by the sociological attitude to the literary process, restricted by censorship and enclosed in a circle of parochial scale. Thus our histories of literature turned out to be distorted and too parochial. I hope that a work written in emigration would offer a view conforming to world literary standards, as the authors living there are well-versed in world literature. Yet there are only individual juxtapositions and parallels, while the general context where one could feel the grounding in world philosophy and artistic tendencies is absent. It may be that Nyka-Niliūnas is the only one to demonstrate these features.

There was something in this book that gave me a pleasant surprise. I knew the capacity and principles of analysis of many authors and they came up to my expectations, save perhaps some rashness, unconsidered word tirades impressive at first sight but basically having little meaning. Aušra Liulevičienė's and Liūtas Mockūnas' texts were a real discovery to me. I imagined the former a popularizer of literature, but she turned out to be incisive, logical and resourceful. L. Mockūnas whom we knew more as a publicist, surprised me by his apt and succinct idiom, rational thinking, though he could have been more cautious with his epithets of "the world's poets".

And one last thought.

I cannot quite agree with Kubilius' thought that the context or description of literary life may not be necessary. Maybe we are accustomed to it, and I wished that the dynamics of literary life at the end of the book would be presented at the beginning so that we could feel the atmosphere of this life at first and then perceive the separate authors. But these are my subjective remarks. On behalf of everyone here, I'd like to express my sincere thanks to the émigré scholars of literature.

Vytautas Kubilius. I would also like to talk about the element of criticism in "Literature of the Lithuanian exodus". Our histories of Lithuanian literature have always been apologetic. We thought we had reached the highest summit and the final point of perfection of the artistic word. We measured everything exclusively according to the units of Lithuanian evolution: it didn't seem appropriate to apply the long-standing criteria of European literatures to the newly-fledged Lithuanian literature surrounded by foreign languages, to put, let's say, A. Strazdas beside his contemporary J.W. Goethe. The first chapter of the work under discussion, "The Tribute of the Older Generation" written by A. Nyka-Niliūnas surprised by the acuteness of critical thinking totally foreign to the Lithuanian tradition of historiography of literature. These are the free, perhaps objectionable judgments of a mentality shaped by contemporary Western artistic culture and envisioning new possibilities. How interesting our history of literature written by this ever-doubting and critical intellect could be! Unfortunately, the criticism of the authors of "Literature of the Lithuanian exodus" vanishes when they begin to speak about their own generation, the "Žemininkai". They are put on a pedestal, and the value of their works is final, without any projects of continuity which the writing critic carries in his mind like a Utopian "beacon of happiness".

Sigitas Geda. How nice your observations about Nyka-Niliūnas and Krėvė. If only we had a history of Lithuanian literature written by Nyka-Niliūnas! It would offer a Eurocentric view of Lithuanian literature. Yet a lot of questions remain unanswered. Nyka-Niliūnas reproves Krėvė for his anachronism. Where shall we put Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian,

Finnish, Scandinavian literature then? These literatures may seem backward. G. Gatchev's theory, popular in our youth, about the belated development of literary consciousness — smaller nations are catching up with larger ones — is also false... Eurocentrism is in decline in the presence of other cultures; earlier points of reference have lost their meaning.

One needs only to look through C. Levy-Strauss' books to find out that there is no point in comparing V. Krėvė with some Russian, Polish or German writers. The method itself is ineffective. It's even immoral in a certain respect: to weigh one nation's talent with borrowed scales. The idea coming perhaps from Goethe's times that the general history of world literature should be written has totally compromised itself. I am not sure how many volumes of the "World Literature" series were published by the Academy of Sciences of the former USSR. The principle there was similar — a writer of a great nation is naturally better, that of a smaller one is naturally an anachronism and derivative... Pan historicism, and nothing more.

Albertas Zalatorius. I think, Sigitas, Nyka-Niliūnas went a bit too far with his criticism. Maybe the point mentioned by Kubilius was also significant in that he expressed the Žemininkai look back to earlier writers and therefore he exaggerates somewhat, particularly in speaking about Krėvė's "Sons of Heaven and Earth". This work is significant, but in quite a different respect. As to its controversial ideas. I cannot think of another work of Lithuanian literature which would convey so thoroughly the characters of Judas Iscariot or Herod. If the book had been published earlier, it probably would have been translated. Perhaps eventually we'll discover it, as we discovered Donelaitis' "The Seasons".

Kęstutis Nastopka. Nyka-Niliūnas' chapter is indeed extraordinary. It is interesting and relevant to all of us, that is why we are speaking about it at such length. Nyka-Niliūnas' attitude is primarily that of the Žemininkai, the attitude of the free man interested neither in a classic's nor in a patriot's glory. Niliūnas raises questions which are left for us to answer. With regard to Krėvė's "Sons of Heaven and Earth", Albertas sees it in one light, Nyka-Niliūnas — in another. We could argue as to whether the word really became flesh. My relation to this work of art is not quite clear. On the one hand, I respect it greatly, on the other — I doubt if it really is alive. Nyka-Niliūnas raises these questions for the future.

Albertas Zalatorius. Kęstutis, I want to say something right away about "Sons of Heaven and Earth". The secret is that it has to be read three times. Then everything becomes clear on its own.

Kęstutis Nastopka. But that's an unnatural kind of reading already. Nyka-Niliūnas' chapter also has a very nice postscript saying that he wanted to correct omissions in the history of literature. When you are expecting a compliment, he — on the contrary — says what we weren't able to say under the circumstances of the time. For example, about Kirša. When I wrote about Kirša, I searched for compliments in the first place. When Kubilius wrote an introduction to Kirša's selected works, he shook ideological prohibitions. It couldn't have been otherwise. But for Nyka-Niliūnas this doesn't exist any longer. Speaking about that generation, R. Šilbajoris put it nicely:

"having abandoned the occupied country, a handful of refugees decided to act as a nation with its own culture and an inner freedom like other nations, and not as mobilized soldiers who had put their freedom into some hope chest of the future for the sake of their homeland's freedom" (page 332). Niliūnas could say that Kirša was only "playing at poetry"; everybody respected him without quite knowing why. There is a lot of truth in this.

Or let's discuss the relation with the exodus experience. In his introductory word K. Bradūnas posed a question: what have we lost being in exile and what have we discovered? Nyka-Niliūnas also ponders this question. In his opinion, though Savickis' appearance in Lithuania was untimely, later the alien environment helped him go further, whereas for Šeinius this alien environment was demoralizing; after "Kuprelis" he didn't rise again. To me Liulevičienė's article on Vaičiulaitis is interesting; her evaluation of "Valentina" is problematic. Apart from all compliments, she raises a question: what is basically new in this work? The question remains unanswered. In our histories of literature we did not dare to put these questions directly. Or, say, the attitude to other poets, Aistis in particular. Skrupskelytė's article is excellent; I would place it among her most significant works. In it two stages are distinguished: Aistis in independent Lithuania and in emigration. Though the book is focused on the exodus, but here the emphasis falls on Aistis' work in independent Lithuania. This view is quite valid. When irony disappears, it is replaced by rhetoric. In the second stage his work follows the curve of a descending curve. A critical attitude to one's literature (which, by the way, is not maintained everywhere) is one of the features showing the vitality of this book.

Kazys Bradūnas. You've discussed Niliūnas' article. For me it was sheer joy, almost a return to my youth when we published "Literatūros lankai". Niliūnas showed the bravery and preciseness of his youth again. It's rather a pity that in Lithuania little was known about "Literatūros lankai". The Iron Curtain did its job.

Albertas Zalatorius. We didn't have them here.

Vytautas Kubilius. They appeared in the Republic Library three or four years ago. Individual issues used to reach us earlier, but there wasn't a complete set.

Kazys Bradūnas. Somebody may think that there are too many photos in the book. We had decided beforehand to put not only photographic portraits but also photos pertaining to literary, ordinary, family life, to see how a writer appears in his garden and elsewhere. It is a certain document which is bound to survive.

Kęstutis Nastopka. That is why these photos are so different from the photos in our histories of literature where everybody had to look smart, as if inserted into an iron frame.

Albertas Zalatorius. I wanted to say that one person, for instance, Landsbergis, is seen in maybe ten photos, while, Kavolis, say, is seen only on one group photo.

Kazys Bradūnas. When I announced the collection of photos for this work, a great number of people sent them in. It's very difficult to select four hundred photos from a thousand and two hundred. You choose from what you have.

You mentioned that the book lacks the perception of the context of Western literary trends of that time. Since we lived in that context of Western literature, it didn't seem necessary for us. We were familiar with it but we didn't want to be swamped by it. We could use some of its methods, some trends, but we consciously avoided its reflection in Lithuanian literature, to show that we could exist without it.

Kęstutis Nastopka. Like everybody, I was surprised at the scope of this work. How much was done by the people whose main occupation was something other than Lithuanian studies! This book is really a monument to this generation. I agree with Albertas that we cannot be competent critics, since we are hearing and seeing a lot of information and many names for the first time.

Albertas suggested that this writing is perhaps rather eclectic. I should say eclecticism is one of the charms of this work in view of what Skrupskelytė writes about Nyka-Niliūnas' eclectic criticism:

"Nyka-Niliūnas' view of literature was rather eclectic: he could employ either the historical or the formal method, either detailed analysis or a didactic idiom, the idiom which distinguishes the particulars of content and form, in this way revealing the specific character of the work" (page 394). In this book various directions are pursued. It doesn't claim to be a history of literature, it merely is an attempt to accumulate as much of this heritage as possible.

There is much freedom and liberality in the book: R. Šilbajoris speaks about the liberalism and ideological tolerance of the Lankininkai generation. Various ideological wings are treated equally, though sometimes certain ideological accents may be lacking, for example, in the descriptions of the generation's portrait. The whole generation seems to be uniform. Yet it was not free of inner tension, inner polemics.

We may notice a benevolence characteristic of Vaižgantas in both editors' texts. K. Bradūnas recalls Putinas' remark: if a hundred page poetry book contains at least six or seven good poems, the book is good. Banal motifs are often excused as long as "the writing is attractive, nice and good" (page 140). The idea that literature was created not only by the outstanding figures but also by the rank-and-file seems quite acceptable.

R. Šilbajoris' view is somewhat more critical. Sometimes he obviously doubts the aesthetic value of the novels in which a writer of the older generation "teaches"; yet he consoles himself with the fact that their authors are sincere people, devoted to their muses, mostly with clear consciences, loving Lithuania and carrying in their hearts a distant and true echo of the Lord's calling.

Certainly, this view encourages one to register, in Jonynas' words, "every movement of the literary bread crust."

The bibliography presented is very valuable. Readers will be able to find much of the material in our libraries. The scope is amazing, as well as the fact that each author had such a team of followers;

finally, the work of those scholars of literature who, as you said, worked in their spare time, is also amazing.

On the other hand, the book perhaps lacks the criticism which is typical of the attitude reserved for the older generations. The difference between events important to all literature and ambitions spurred by yearly novel competitions and awards is vague, particularly in the survey chapters (V.A. Jonynas). This also concerns things like the pensioners' genre, as R. Šilbajoris put it: novels, short stories and memoirs lisped out by a graying muse to public figures having nothing else to do.

The issue of the imperative of aesthetic value is important. From the times of "Literatures lankai" our intention was to return aesthetic independence to Lithuanian literature and a normal gradation of values, which had been almost totally lost. In many articles the limit between writing and patriotic rhetoric, talent and literariness or dilettantism is drawn quite markedly. Of course, this principle of aesthetic exactingness is not omnipresent, but it obviously stands out in the portraits of the remarkable émigré poets: Aistis, Radauskas, Bradūnas, Nyka-Niliūnas. I consider these portraits very informative.

Albertas doubts whether the attempts to prove the aesthetic value are not vain. To me this search for aesthetic value seems vital and charming, particularly in Jonynas' articles. I like his rather ironic manner of writing: it is as if he were peeling various coatings off this aesthetic value.

I shall end with what I began — the charming eclecticism. Every eclecticism, charming as it may be, is very vulnerable to those weary of methodological training, since success here depends on the critic's mastery. What a skilled hand turns into aesthetic arguments sometimes may seem rather like idle talk. I'd agree that in this book there is no uniform method; it is

an attempt to view literature from various angles. Some writers are analyzed very nicely, e.g. Maziliauskienė's article on Mackus, Sutema's portrait. I wouldn't agree with Vytautas Kubilius in that Nyka-Niliūnas' biography is not given. The outer events may be scarce, but his spiritual biography is presented. His biography is structuralized; it is not a formal supplement. Despite all my fondness for the new literary criticism, a detailed analysis of the text does not always appear effective, even when it is employed by such a master as Šilbajoris. In his article on Radauskas text structures are touched upon, but in my view, the secret of his talent is not revealed. Sometimes he tries to retell a poem, but there's little point in it.

The chapter on criticism is a certain gap. It is a description of individual approaches. The task to retell a review in a sentence is very complicated. What was happening in this criticism, what its principles, searchings, solutions, approaches to literature were — all this remains beyond the range of our vision.

In answer to a 1959 questionnaire of "Literatures Iankai" A.J. Greimas referred to the fact that Lithuanian theory of literary criticism is backward and there is no history of Lithuanian literature as a negative quality of Lithuanian literary life. He wrote: "Literary criticism of relevant problems, even in its best examples, follows the traditional pattern worked out by the 20th century: separation of content and form (1850). ... We lived in the age of consciousness in which literature even shows tendencies of turning into speculations on literature. Lithuanian literature ingeniously has no idea what it is."

Liudvikas Jakimavičius. I'd like to touch on the aspect which, to my mind, is characteristic of this book — the issue of subjectivity, or the *ad hominem* approach. I don't mean the compilers, but separate chapters and authors who in their writing sometimes seem to be solving the problem of their own place in the history of literature and emigration.

I found Nyka-Niliūnas' review article on the writers of independent Lithuania most controversial. I've been thinking why is this so? In the first place, perhaps due to the fact that one foot of theirs still belongs to the Lithuanian soil, their stronger foot; and we feel that we do have some understanding of their work written in this country. Nyka-Niliūnas mainly speaks about their pre-emigration works, often writing them off as classics. The works written in emigration are discussed in a far more fragmentary manner, without avoiding personal characteristics so unusual to us and having little in common with literature. I think Nyka-Niliūnas does it for the purpose of describing his personal relation to the stylistics of another literary generation. This subjective view does not always correspond with the genre of a survey article. I found it strange that Šeinius' "The Red Deluge" is not mentioned.

Tomas Venclova's view of the literary process is totally different from that of Nyka-Niliūnas. His article on Bernardas Brazdžionis' takes us by surprise, as in it the subjectivity or collision between the generations is successfully avoided. This article seems to be Venclova's literary reconciliation with Brazdžionis. On the other hand, knowing Venclova's modern view of literature, we would appreciate it here as well.

There is quite a lot of restraint and blandness, maybe even artificial smoothness in the book. I even felt a lack of widely known literary collisions, let alone those known only by the émigrés. They could generate much interest, since the sparks of literary arguments in emigration set off or may set off very fruitful disputes or skirmishes in this country, our literature being in a state of slumber.

Vytautas Kubilius. Émigré literature is a specific literature. But is this specific character revealed well enough in the work?

Aistis and Vaičiulaitis go to picket Višinskis who has arrived in New York to say demagogic speeches. Krėvė testifies for the Kersten commission of the USA Congress about the occupation of the Baltic countries. In Paris Greimas meets Deksnys coming from Lithuania. It was necessary for all émigré writers to make up their minds about the guerrilla struggle in Lithuania. A teacher of the Lithuanian language and literature from Panevėžys, Būtėnas, flies to Lithuania to meet with the partisans and is killed there. The feeling of guilt that we left, we did not stay with those who struggled — is an ever recurring motif in this literature. The problem of the addressee of this literature is decisive. What kind of readers does it have? The loudness of its voice, the stylistics of its gestures, its resolution and the tragedy of its helpless solitude depends on them. In 1945-1946 in German DP camps a hopeful mood prevailed: we'll celebrate next Easter at home. Yet already in 1947, when delegates of the Baltic countries were not admitted to the Paris peace talks, J. Brazaitis, the VLIK's speaker, announced that presently we shall not return to Lithuania and may not return at all. In the first years of exile, the addressee definitely was the whole nation (B. Brazdžionis, J. Aistis). 30,000 Lithuanians in refugee camps constituted something like the whole of Lithuanian society which stood so close to the writer as it never had before. But upon the beginning of the Lithuanian war refugees' emigration to the USA, England, Canada and Australia, this universality started to fade. Who was to speak: those who remained behind the Iron Curtain, or those who gathered each Sunday at Lithuanian Mass or Lithuanian parties, i.e. the émigrés? How did it happen? How did it change the problematics, characters and mode of speaking of literature? I couldn't say that in this book it is brought out well enough.

In this respect the plot of K. Barėnas' short story "The Butterflies" is very eloquent. One character says that he is more willing to forget than to remember. It is a very characteristic trait. When man grows accustomed to a new environment, he begins to forget his former life.

In the work under discussion émigré literature is shown to be a literature of the modern artistic idiom, according to the system of values of its authors. Certainly, H. Radauskas', A. Nyka-Niliūnas', A. Škėma's, A. Landsbergis', A. Mackus' works are the most powerful and authentic samples of Lithuanian post-war modernism standing out against the

background of politicized primitivism peculiar to this country. This modernism was in full play in the first post-war decade, nurtured by the revival of German expressionism (Borchert), French existentialism (Sartre), Polish and English avantgardism (Milosz, Thomas). Yet in my view, the core of émigré literature, particularly the prose, remained traditional. The type of descriptive, mimetic, representational literature brought from Lithuania and nourished by sentimental childhood memories and village characters was preserved as a constant, as loyalty to the homeland. The vitality of epic prose, panoramic photos of entire decades, galleries of social types, the richness of folk dialogue is amazing.

It is interesting to note that in Lithuania there was a reaction to the hippie and punk movements, their psychology of self-destruction, their negation of obligatory social norms, their shocking aesthetics of ugliness (Gavelis' "The Vilnius Poker"), while émigré literature doesn't seem to have felt it, continuing to convey the continuity of unshaken values and historical time. It did not accept the youth subculture which in this country is ambitiously edging its way into literature.

Juozas Aputis. I want to say a couple of words about what I missed and what I enjoyed in this book. It's an informative book in the first place. Maybe our view was too elevated. It could contain more information about all authors: where they were born and studied; if they are already dead, it would be useful to indicate the place of their burial. Nowadays people go to America quite often, and if they end up in some place, they will already know that this or that author is buried there.

The bibliography mentioned by Nastopka is really very good and valuable. It shows the scope of the work carried out.

Kazys Bradūnas. This bibliography is not complete. I compiled it myself.

Juozas Aputis. I would have devoted more space to E. Cinzas. He is worth it. And the chapter on the press is very good.

Kazys Bradūnas. I felt that we had missed a purely social view on the literary life instead of a literary one. Maybe it became customary for you during these long decades to pay a certain tribute to some socialist realism *nolens volens*. We did not have such a problem. We didn't need to pay tribute to any social capitalism. Thus I think that one doesn't need to search for things which we neglected. Everybody was free to write patriotic poetry, everybody could occupy himself with the troubles of Lithuania or exile. Everybody's hands were free.

Now a few words about the disproportion. You say that a lot is written about Landsbergis, whereas about, say, Ostrauskas — incomparably less. But it wasn't the editors' fault. One author increases the number of pages assigned to him, while another reduces it. What can you do? So a disproportion appears in the book.

Vytautas Kubilius. You were right to mention what shouldn't be expected from the book. But it so happened that you were the first to write a history of émigré literature. There aren't any histories of music, theater, art, social thought etc. Thus while reading this book one looks for the things those other histories should contain. This book encourages us to write a general history of Lithuanian émigré culture of the whole fifty years.

Sigitas Geda. You mentioned that the hippie and punk movements did not receive any reaction. This isn't the whole truth. To my mind, this page suffered because too little was written, from the viewpoint of our parish, about Jonas Mekas, Škėma, Mackus, Jurgis Maciūnas. The picture would have been much more modern. It's a pity about Mekas in particular. Much could have been said about him. Yet it was Chicago which pulled the strings, and Mekas lived further away. This is why he was neglected, so it wasn't with Gavelis' generation that the literature of self-destruction began.

To my mind, Albertas, it's not fair that, you say, I've read only 5 or 10 percent of all the works. If you had read 20 percent, that wouldn't have changed anything. The scale of values is approximately retained. I feel sorry for Vladas Šlaitas and Eduardas Cinzas. They could have received the excess of eulogies belonging to others.

Translated by Aušra Čižikienė