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Ryszard Radzik

Die ideologischen Grundlagen des weißrussischen Staatswesens

Im Frühjahr 2004 erschien in Minsk ein akademisches Lehrbuch unter dem Titel „Die Grundlagen der Ideologie des weißrussischen Staates“.[1] Der ziemlich großformatige Band enthält knapp 500 Seiten Text in russischer Sprache. Er erschien im Verlag der Verwaltungsakademie am Präsidenten der Republik Weißrussland. Im „Vorwort“ ist zu lesen: „Die Ideologie soll zunächst den weltanschaulichen Kern enthalten.“ Nach der Auffassung der Autoren wird dieser Kern durch den Begriff der weißrussischen Staatsbürgerschaft, das nationale Bewusstsein und den Patriotismus gebildet (S. 4). Noch bevor man die Seiten dieses Buches aufschlägt, kann man sich die folgende Frage stellen: Ist es in einer demokratischen und pluralistischen Gesellschaft zulässig, dass man der akademischen Jugend, also der künftigen Elite des Landes, die Pflicht auferlegt, nur eine, ideologisch durchdrungene

[1] Основы идеологии белорусского государства. Учебное пособие для вузов, Минск 2004, 491 S.

Vision, welche die Gesamtheit des gesellschaftlichen Lebens des Landes erfasst, zu internalisieren? Im Kontext dieser Frage wird davon ausgegangen, dass diese Vision im Lehrbuch ein kohärentes Ganzes bildet und keine Auseinandersetzung zwischen Anhängern verschiedener ideologischer Optionen darstellt. Wenn ein solches Lehrbuch ein Instrument politischer und ideologischer Indoktrinierung der Gesellschaft ist, muss die Antwort auf die hier gestellte Frage negativ ausfallen.

Die Besonderheit der weißrussischen Gesellschaft (sie bildet einen zwingenden Kontext bei der Besprechung des Lehrbuches) erfordert jedoch – wie ich meine – eine gewisse Vertiefung in die weißrussische Wirklichkeit. Die klar überragende Mehrheit der Gesellschaften in Europa bildete sich in den letzten zwei Jahrhunderten als moderne Gemeinschaften in Anlehnung an die Idee der Nation heraus. Die nationalen Werte sicherten den Zusammenhalt dieser Gesellschaften, hierarchisierten (zumindest partiell) die Ziele der individuellen und kollektiven Aktivitäten, statteten die Gesellschaften mit einem Raum der Emotionen aus, bewogen sie zu einem Wettbewerb mit anderen Nationen und – was damit zusammenhängt – zur Bereitschaft für Aufopferungen im Zuge der Verwirklichung nationaler Interessen. Kulturnationen (wie etwa die Slowaken, Esten, Letten) formten sich rund um die eigene ethnische Kultur herum, insbesondere um die Sprache. Die politischen Nationen taten dies rund um die seit Jahrhunderten bestehenden staatlichen Strukturen und um die Tradition einer Loyalität gegenüber dem Staat herum, der ihnen im Laufe der Entwicklung in der Regel demokratische und wirtschaftliche Freiheiten gewährte. Den Weißrussen erlaubte man nicht, dass sie zu einer Nation werden. Es standen dahinter zunächst in der Zeit des Zarenimperiums und später der Sowjetunion die Russen und in der Zeit der zweiten polnischen Republik, zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen, die Polen. Die Weißrussen verfügen ebenfalls über keine starke Tradition eines ganz souveränen eigenen Staates. Die Weißrussen und die Ukrainer (aus der östlichen Ukraine und in hohem Grade auch aus dem mittleren Teil dieses Landes) bildeten sich im 20. Jahrhundert zu modernen Gesellschaften heraus, indem sie sich um Werte sowjetischen Typus gruppierten. Das Weißrussentum errichtete man auf einer bäuerlichen Grundlage, die von konservativen Werten und Verhaltensweisen durchdrungen war, mit der Neigung zum Sicheinschließen im Bereich des Hergebrachten. Es verbergen sich hinter ihm Millionen von Menschen des Typs *homo sovieticus*. Das weißrussische Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl ist schwach und es kann ansonsten im Fall der Weißrussen fast kaum eine Rede von einer modernen nationalen Gemeinschaft europäischen Typus sein. Die Eigenstaatlichkeit erlangten sie sozusagen durch Zufall, ohne dass sie davon geträumt oder aber – sei es auch nur unblutig – gekämpft hätten. Alles kam über sie quasi

in der Folge historischer Turbulenzen, deren Zeuge Europa zu Beginn der 1990er Jahre war. Die Weißrussen waren damals nicht so wie etwa die Polen bereit, sich im Namen übergeordneter nationaler Interessen massenhaft aufzuopfern bzw. sich zu Massenprotesten aufzuschwingen.

Nichtsdestoweniger entstanden in Weißrussland nach 13 Jahren formaler Unabhängigkeit politische, wirtschaftliche und zuweilen auch nationale Gruppierungen, die am Fortbestand des weißrussischen Staatswesens interessiert sind. Die Machtausübung im eigenen Staat ist ja etwas Anderes als die Verwaltung eines russischen Gouvernements. Denkbar ist also eine Situation, in der die Behörden des Landes zum Schluss kommen, dass die Gesellschaft ein ideologisches Bindemittel nötig habe, das starke Bindungen aufbauen und die Gesellschaft in ein Subjekt sich und den Nachbarn gegenüber verwandeln würde. Dies würde zur Stärkung des Staatswesens beitragen und den Staat mit dem Kontext der Autotelie versehen. Die staatliche Ideologie könnte dann nicht – wie es dem sowjetischen Modell entspräche – als ein Mittel der Herrschaft über die Gesellschaft dienen. Sie könnte auch nicht die sowjetischen Muster nachahmen – weder inhaltlich noch in der Art der Verbreitung – denn eben das sowjetische Erbe bildet den Hintergrund der Schwäche der weißrussischen gemeinschaftlichen Bezüge. Obwohl man also vermuten kann, dass die Idee des Lehrbuches sowjetischer Provenienz ist, kann man sich andererseits vorstellen, dass sein Inhalt zur authentischen Errichtung einer modernen, starken Gemeinschaft der Weißrussen beitragen könnte. Es handelte sich hier vielleicht um die Schaffung einer Nation politischen Typs, was sicherlich kein leichtes Unterfangen wäre. Bereits im letzten Satz des „Vorwortes“ können wir jedoch über einen Dialog „der Behörden mit der Bevölkerung“ lesen (S. 5). Inwieweit soll diese „Bevölkerung“ ein Subjekt sein, das die Machtausübung kreiert, und inwieweit ein Instrument eines Spiels um die Macht? Inwieweit soll sie eine Nation nach dem europäischen Verständnis sein und inwieweit nur eine „Bevölkerung“, die man (entsprechend der russischen Tradition) sowjetisch behandelt und über die die *vlast* herrscht?

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Eine Regel ist die Unterstreichung der Tatsache, dass Weißrussland ein Teil der ostslawischen Gemeinschaft ist. Man unterscheidet natürlich zwischen den Weißrussen und Russen, doch man exponiert die Einigungstendenzen innerhalb des Ost-Slawentums (oder manchmal des Slawentums überhaupt). Das slawische Gebiet wird von Westeuropa deutlich abgehoben. Man macht auf die Neigung des Westens zur Dominanz aufmerksam und kritisiert diese Tendenz. Hervorgehoben werden gemeinsame Elemente der Geschichte der Weißrussen, Russen und Ukrainer. Selten akzentuiert man den westlichen (polnischen) Einfluss, etwa auf die Mentalität der Weißrussen im westlichen Teil des Landes (S. 364). Ihr Slawentum ist für die Weißrussen merkbar wichtiger als für die Polen.

Weißrussland assoziiert man als ein Land, das kulturell und historisch eng mit Russland verbunden ist. Gleichzeitig wird allerdings – so tut es etwa J. S. Jaskevitsch – seine Lage zwischen dem Ost und dem West unterstrichen, an der Berührungslinie zweier Kulturen, zweier Zivilisationen: der orthodox-byzanthinischen und römisch-katholischen. Die Autorin behauptet also, dass die weißrussische Kultur den Charakter einer Grenzkultur hat und als eine solche eine bedeutende einigende Rolle spielen kann (S. 358, 369). Man betont die mentalen Unterschiede zwischen den Weißrussen und den Russen (man erkennt in diesem Zusammenhang insbesondere den westlichen Einfluss auf die Weißrussen an). Den Gemeinschaftsgeist unter den Letzteren betrachtet man als Folge einer Verbindung der altslawischen, orthodox-byzanthinischen und tataromongolischen Eigenschaften (S. 363). In die Mentalität der Weißrussen wurde nach J. S. Jaskevitsch die den Unierten eigene Neigung zu Kompromissen, der katholische Heroismus, die deutliche Zurückhaltung und der protestantische Individualismus aufgenommen. Die Weißrussen sind ein friedliches Volk, das sich über andere Völker nicht erhebt, sie sind tolerant, kompromissbereit und nachsichtig. Gleichzeitig unterstreicht man den starken Kollektivismus und das Streben nach Gerechtigkeit, was die Weißrussen mit den Russen und Ukrainern verbindet. „Charakteristische Eigenschaften der Weißrussen sind insbesondere die starke Anhänglichkeit an den vaterländischen Boden und an die Heimat, Wirtchaftlichkeit, Sparsamkeit, Arbeitsamkeit, Hingabe an die Familie und Solidarität gegenüber ihrem Stamm und ihrer Familie“ (364). Im Rahmen von Weißrussland bemerkt man regionale Unterschiede und akzentuiert, dass „dem Grodno-Gebiet und anderen Landschaften im westlichen Weißrussland die Individualisierung des Lebens eigen ist, was dem Einfluss des katholischen Polen, des Litauen und der protestantischen Ethik aus Westeuropa zu verdanken ist. In Polesie überwiegt der Kult des ländlichen Gemeinschaftsgeistes (*община*), auf dem weißrussischen Seenplatten-Gebiet nahe der russischen Grenze dominiert die

orthodoxe *соборность*“ (S. 364). Diese Betrachtungen sind nicht unbegründet, sie enthalten deutliche Elemente einer Autostereotypisierung. Sie weichen nicht stark von dem allgemein akzeptierten Autostereotyp des Weißrussen, der gleichzeitig diese Eigenschaften betont, die ihn mit dem Russen verbinden, als auch solche, die ihn von ihm trennen. (Dieser ist offenbar weniger arbeitsam, weniger friedlich und weniger tolerant, er neigt hingegen mehr zu extremen Verhaltensweisen.)

Zwei Problemfelder werden im Lehrbuch keiner Kritik unerworfen. Man behandelt sie als endgültige Wahrheiten, die sich für keinerlei sinnvolle Analyse eignen. Zunächst ist es die Beurteilung des Präsidenten Lukaschenka und seiner Politik in den letzten zehn Jahren. Zweites Problemfeld ist die Verbindung mit Russland. Lukaschenka wird als eine Person präsentiert, die voraussah, dass der Zerfall der Sowjetunion (den die Weißrussen sich nicht wünschten und worauf sie nicht vorbereitet waren) mit sich negative Folgen und Chaos ziehen wird. Es sei also plausibel, dass Lukaschenka nach einer erneuten Verbindung Weißrusslands mit Russland strebe. Der Charakter der künftigen Verbindung dieser Staaten wird in dem Lehrbuch nicht klar umrissen. Im Kontext dieser Vereinigung schreibt man einerseits immer wieder über die Einheit und andererseits über die Souveränität Weißrusslands. Es fehlt total eine vertiefte intellektuelle Reflexion über diesen – vielleicht nur scheinbaren – Widerspruch. Das verkündigte Gebot einer Vereinigung mit Russland resultiert aus keinerlei im Buch solide durchgeführten Analyse von Vorteilen für Weißrussland, die auf dem nationalen Interesse fußten. Nur im Hintergrund klingen verdeckte Prämissen emotionalen Charakters oder direkt ausgesprochene Prämissen kultureller Art an. Unter Berufung auf Lukaschenka schreibt einer der Autoren wie folgt: „Russland war, ist und wird auch in Zukunft ein großer Staat sein. Über kurz oder lang wird die Wirtschaftskrise überwunden und Russland wird erneut ein starkes, blühendes Land“ (S. 57). Es ist im Buch kein vereinzeltes Beispiel dafür, dass man das weißrussische nationale Interesse auf das Wunschdenken stützt. Andererseits kann man nicht aus dem Auge lassen, dass die Ansprüche der Weißrussen niemals besonders groß waren. Man war eher realistisch und zog es vor, sich auf (das für die Europäer vielleicht nicht sehr wohlhabende) Moskau zu stützen, als auf Paris oder London. Einer der Autoren behauptet, dass das sowjetische Weißrussland binnen kurzer Zeit einen gewaltigen Sprung getan habe und zu einem der am meisten entwickelten Länder in der Welt aufstieg (S. 78). Im heutigen, in Armut geratenen Weißrussland erwachen immer wieder die Sehnsüchte nach dem ehemaligen „Wohlstand“. Das zunehmende (nicht nur wirtschaftliche) Gefälle zwischen Weißrussland und Mitteleuropa (geschweige denn Westeuropa) wird im ganzen Lehrbuch nicht im Mindesten reflektiert.

Im Buch ist ein Unwille gegenüber dem Westen, insbesondere gegenüber den USA wahrnehmbar, die – so die Meinung – sich in die inneren Angelegenheiten des Landes einmischen. Nach dem Fall des Sozialismus nahm Weißrussland dank Lukaschenka einen Kurs „auf möglichst enge" Verbindung mit Russland. Nicht ohne Boshaftigkeit (vielleicht auch mit Neid) äußert sich L. P. Kosik zur Haltung anderer Länder: „Die Leiter neuer Staaten stürzten sich nach dem Westen in der Hoffnung darauf, dass sie Kredite und politische Unterstützung bekommen" (S. 56). Verborgen präsent im Text ist hier die russische, postsowjetische Sicht der Geschichte des postsozialistischen Mitteleuropa, dessen Mitglieder – ehemalige „Verbündete" der UdSSR – Russland (einst UdSSR) verrieten, indem sie sich dem Westen zuwandten und sich ihm (wie einst der Moskauer Zentrale) unterordneten. Man solle sich darüber im Klaren sein, dass ein beträchtlicher Teil der weißrussischen Gesellschaft diese Sichtweise teilt. Dieses betrifft übrigens viele grundlegende Fragen, die im Buch angesprochen werden.

Man könnte meinen, dass die Verfasser des Lehrbuches viel Raum den folgenden Fragen widmen müssten: Inwieweit gefestigt ist der Gemeinschaftsgeist unter den Weißrussen (und wie gestaltet wurde dieses Problem in der UdSSR)? Kommt es zur Steigerung des Wohlstandes der Gesellschaft (verglichen mit dem Jahr 1991 und im Verhältnis zu anderen postsozialistischen Ländern)? Stärkt sich die politische Unabhängigkeit des Landes und seine internationale Stellung? Diese Fragen werden leider nicht beantwortet oder man gibt unergiebige bzw. lediglich partielle Antworten. Die im Buch enthaltenen Ideen tragen zum Aufbau des nationalen Weißrussland nicht bei. Ein solches Weißrussland würde sich nämlich von Russland distanzieren. Man hat hingegen den Eindruck, dass viele Autoren bei der Verfassung der Texte eher das russische als das weißrussische Interesse im Sinn hatten.

Als Zusammenfassung dieses Textes kann man feststellen, dass man im besprochenen Lehrbuch eine Ideologie zu bauen versuchte, die als Ersetzung der alten marxistisch-leninistischen Ideologie dienen könnte. Im Buch stellte man eine Vision dar, die das gesamte Leben der weißrussischen Gesellschaft interpretieren sollte. Die Idee mutet eindeutig sowjetisch an und bedeutet das Streben danach, der Gesellschaft eine Ideologie (ein System von Werten und Haltungen) aufzuzwingen. Dies bedeutet einen Aufbau einer gesellschaftlichen Ordnung „von oben" und nicht „von unten", eine Unterordnung der Menschen der Regierung, ihre Vergegenständlichung. Die im Buch präsentierte Ideologie ist kaum als kohärent zu nennen. Wir haben hier eher mit einer Reihe von Ideen und mit wertenden – nicht selten tendenziösen – Interpretationen einzelner Ausschnitte der gesellschaftlichen

Wirklichkeit zu tun. Es ist weniger ein Lehrbuch der Ideologie des weißrussischen Staates als ideell-eklektische Vision, die der Gesellschaft ein System von Haltungen aufzwingen will, die den Regierenden gegenüber konform sind. Trotzdem das Lehrbuch in gewissen Abschnitten eine gewisse Ladung theoretischen bzw. faktographischen Wissens enthält, präsentiert es als Ganzes eine anachronistische Vision einer Gesellschaft, die ihr Sowjetisch-Sein nicht eindeutig verlassen kann – sie kann sich nicht von einem Wertesystem trennen, das an eine Vision der Welt anknüpft, die sich nicht bewährte; der sich auf diese Vision stützende Staat ist zusammengebrochen, weil er den Wettbewerb nicht bestehen konnte. Sogar die Russen (zumindest zum Teil) versuchen daraus Schlüsse zu ziehen, indem sie ihren nationalen Gemeinschaftsgeist ausbauen (manchmal in extremen Formen allerdings).

Nicht ohne Bedeutung ist ebenfalls der Umstand, dass die im Buch dargestellte Vision eine zu schwache emotionale Ladung besitzt, als dass sie einen verbindenden Charakter haben und als Grundlage des weißrussischen Gemeinschaftsgeistes dienen könnte. In den Ländern Mittel- und Westeuropas stützt sich der Gemeinschaftsgeist auf die nationale Identität, die als Grundlage behandelt wird, die im demokratischen System einen Aufbau bürgerlicher Gesellschaft ermöglichen kann. Unter den Bedingungen eines ideellen Pluralismus gibt es weder den Bedarf noch die Möglichkeit, eine staatliche Ideologie zu bauen, die in ihrem Charakter homogen ist und der Gesellschaft von oben aufgezwungen wird. Diesen Typ der Ideologie ist allerdings für totalitär regierte Gesellschaften charakteristisch (möglich ist er auch in den autoritären Systemen). Eine andere Frage bleibt, inwieweit die auf die Staatsform und auf die Ideologie bezogenen Ideen, die man in Weißrussland seit Jahren verwirklicht, (zumindest partiell) in Russland nachgeahmt werden, dem Land ihres kulturellen Ursprungs.

Aus dem Polnischen von:
Wieńczysław A. Niemirowski

STRESZCZENIE

Na wiosnę 2004 roku ukazał się w Mińsku w języku rosyjskim podręcznik dla szkół wyższych zatytułowany „Podstawy ideologii państwa białoruskiego". Przedmiot o takim tytule został wprowadzony jako obowiązkowy na wszystkich białoruskich uczelniach. Dwadzieścia tekstów składających się na obszerne dzieło wielu autorów zostało poddane w powyższym artykule analizie przez Ryszarda Radzika. W podręczniku omówiono przejawy aktywności białoruskiego społeczeństwa w różnych jego aspektach: politycznym, gospodarczym, kulturalnym, socjalnym. Okazało się, iż książka posiada bardzo wyraźny wymiar indoktrynujący. Jest nie tyle nastawiona na wytłumaczenie młodzie-

ży białoruskiej czym jest białoruski interes narodowy (państwowy), ile na wpojenie jej wartości i postaw o wyraźnym rodowodzie sowieckim. Historia Białorusi traktowana jest wybiórczo i tendencyjnie. Silnie eksponowane są związki Białorusinów z Rosją, aprobowane działania zmierzające do łączenia się Białorusi ze swym wschodnim sąsiadem. Do BSRS autorzy tekstów odnoszą się na ogół z sympatią. O powszechnym zniewoleniu (totalitaryzmie), setkach tysięcy ofiar i powszechnej, przymusowej rusyfikacji nie ma ani słowa. Rosja w przeszłości, jak i obecnie, przedstawiana jest prawie wyłącznie w korzystnym świetle, natomiast z Zachodu – nie uwzględniającego specyfiki Białorusi, a także Rosji – płynie wiele zła.

Autorzy podręcznika ulegli presji realiów politycznych jakie ich otaczają. Polityka prezydenta Łukaszenki oceniana jest jednoznacznie aprobatywnie. Nie wydaje się, by wizja białoruskiej państwowości zaprezentowana w pracy – mimo obszernych opisów zasad funkcjonowania białoruskich instytucji państwowych – posiadała na tyle silny ładunek emocjonalny, by mieć realny charakter więziotwórczy i tworzyć białoruską wspólnotowość, dotychczas dość słabą ze względu na niski stopień unarodowienia Białorusinów. Podręcznik jest zmarnowaną okazją wzmocnienia procesów desowietyzacji społeczeństwa białoruskiego i budowy jego nowoczesnych struktur i obywatelskiej świadomości jednostek.

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Sakrat Yanovich
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BELARUS TOMORROW

That is a commonplace knowledge that even the most detailed prognoses tend to never come true. However, it does not mean that they are senseless. Anyway, instead of waiting for the miracle to come we need both to think hard and to come up with our prognoses. As for the future of Belarus, it can be easily predicted on the basis of similarity of today which arose from yesterday.

Future of Belarus is predetermined primarily by its colonial fate. The latter, having been placed like a nut into the pliers of the two competing empires, i.e. the Polish and the Russian one, could hardly be the sovereign one. The lingual status of the Belarusians speaks vividly in favor of this assumption, i.e. it happened to balance from one fence to another, from Polonization to Russification. Although the birth of the Belarusian national culture happened to occur in the same "nineteenth century of the nations", it still remained in its aquarium shape. The Belarusian ethnic waters were swarming with the wrong fishes.

Ethnicity of any nation is known to be initially based on peasantry and its conservative structures, the latter being too medieval sometimes. But the nation-forming process can hardly be possible without involvement of the urban population, its lower-middle class. The rural inhabitants are the individualists who have everything on their own, i.e. the farmhouse to live in, the field to plough, the cattle to breed, the well to get water from; in other words, they possess their own farms which serve as the atom of their ethnicity. The urban dwellers also have their economy but the only one for all of them, and they depend upon it in their own different ways. Fire that happens to be at a farm/homestead or in a village can hardly be compared with the one in a town. The instinct to get better organized as well as all various sorts of revolutions would come to the town citizens from the places like Paris, St. Petersburg, and not from the rural settlement like The-Middle-Of-Nowhere, the inhabitants of which hate discipline, plus their intellect and mental potential is different as well. Peasant wars happened to always be barbarian in their nature and all of them were lost. The nation, which failed to outgrow its rural mentality and way of thinking within the course of its national formation, can maximum achieve the destiny of the smaller peoples of the West (i.e. Frisians in the Netherlands, Provencals in France etc.).

Belarusians "seized" the towns not with their banners unfolded, but on the sly, hunched because they hated their fate; they showed up, full of self-destructive thinking as they realized that they were fleeing from their rural world. It is not true to say that within the post-war time peasants "occupied" the towns because runaways can never occupy anyone. To do it, they would need to possess the feeling of their values and equality. As for the real occupation, prior to formation of the Polish state, the Polish cities were occupied by the Lithuanians while the German ones – by the Latvians and the Estonians.

One can hardly speak about any kind of development of economy in the Belarusian towns of that time, knowing that not a single one of them (even Mensk) could compete with the dynamic industrial potential of the provincial Belastok, which wormed its way into the Polish industrial dynasties. Any town is known to stop its development, providing that it does not require labor force from the rural areas. Historically, towns in Belarus had become alien to the country, and that feeling of being an alien had been absorbed by the Belarusians. Belarus without Belarusian culture and the Belarusian language but with its post-colonial self-raised administration and its artificial coat of arms, artificial flag and artificial anthem (the national symbols that can hardly have a century, or at least one-century tradition) resembles the process of Africanization of the country. Belarus can not become the

flourishing state, being the outskirts of some other country, whatever it can be. And I presume that it will take too much time before it changes its status. The problem is that in the age of powerful technological revolutions it simply does not pay to possess colonial territories which could supply the center of the empire with raw materials and labor force. Colonies stopped being profitable; the British were the first ones (and the Portuguese were the last ones) to have realized that. Nowadays, to double the industrial output of the country they do not need to double their labor force or to keep bringing in ships and trains full of raw materials. The Soviet Union perished not because of the ambitions and tricks of Boris Yeltsin. It was destroyed by the heavy load of the existing at that time numerous inner colonies. Having gotten rid of them, Russia will rapidly go forward to the world leadership. As for Belarus, it was abandoned and destined to survive at its own expense. It won't be quirking anymore, staring at the Russian "chop". Out!

Belarus will have to go through a long lasting course of getting rid of its peripheral mentality. There are several reasons for that, and all of them seem to be the major ones. First of all, any colonial parent state happens to be in a better situation as compared to its former colony. Russia and Moscow, however, seem to be semi-colonies themselves as they exist at the expense of selling oil and natural gas, instead of trading ready-made goods. They traditionally import western technologies that are expensive and require highly qualified personnel instead of their Ivans-drunkards. Besides spending money for purchasing the most advanced technologies, they also require much time for mastering them and, later on, for getting experience on how to compete with other manufactures of similar type to win the world market. It will take generations to succeed. Therefore, Belarusian orientation to the Russian market resembles, in my eyes, the request of a grandson to get a piece of cake from his grandmother's table. One day the Russians will stop buying the Belarusian goods on analogy with the Belarusian potatoes, which the citizens of St. Petersburg found to be scabby and less tasty than the clean and smooth one from Brandenburg, Germany. And, what was most intriguing – the latter was less expensive. The difference between capitalism and communism lies mainly in the fact that capitalism fights by means of reduction of prices and finally kicks their competitors out the market. Under the times of communism no one bothered himself about struggling for mercy of a client. Everything was simple: get the hell out of here!

Peripheral original of Belarus will also cause lack of resources for modernization of creative potential, the latter unavoidably going down the tube of stagnation pastness. It can hardly be different under the conditions of complete isolation from

the leading economic centers of Europe. Orientation of Belarusian economy only to Russia is destined to lose as Russia itself is known to technologically represent only the Third World and its goods are so clumsy that they can not be used in the civilized world. However, Russia has at least natural gas and oil and it can pay for import of modern technologies, but it does not necessarily mean that it will share them with Belarus. There is no country in the world that would work for its neighbor, i.e. everything gets calculated and nothing can be gotten free of charge. As for the miserable assortment of Belarusian goods, it is characterized by being of "low quality and expensive". The trucks, for example, are not as reliable as the Japanese ones that are supplied with an eight-year warranty.

Taking into account the fact that Russia's involvement in the world commodity circulation comprises about two per cent and only three/third of one per cent in the Western one (that sounds like a real joke!), one can hardly seriously speak about the Belarusian trace in the world economy. The way out of this marginal abyss is the only one, i.e. attraction of foreign investments to the national economy; the western or the American ones would be the best ones in this case. However, we do not visualize too many "good guys" with sacks of dollars who would be willing to give their investments away to the criminal financial state bodies, the latter being able to swallow whatever capital you like, even the one equal to the USA budget. That was only President Putin, who honestly admitted that the miserable Russian budget equaled the one of the microscopic Netherlands or the London megapolis. And it is not worth even speculating on how much capital they keep in the Minsk shelters, i.e. what can the colony, having the inferiority and orphanhood complex but no guts and wish to become independent, possess? It sounds like a joke that political Minsk is developing its strategy towards the West. I wonder, whether the West is too naïve to trust the soviet word? There are no such fools who could rush to Belarus, which is waving the red-and-green Stalin flag, as if to obtain there the legendary Golden Fleece. Even the neighboring Poland keeps complaining that the rich Europe is afraid of it and its bumpy roads, indiscipline, bribe-taking from top to bottom, socialist working class that keeps worshiping its main principle "to contribute less but to get more". Belarus is not capable of becoming the jumping-off place that would lead to the giant Russian market; the Lukashenka guys and their taxation system will suffocate anyone, like that very Austrian businessman, who could hardly get back home safe and sound, and the only "profit" he got out of his long ordeal was the book, in which he described all his sufferings and made a fortune out of its sales.

I have a feeling that Belarus is really not willing to catch up with the civilized

world; “a glass of vodka and a piece of fried fat”, as a symbol of a happy collective farmer, is more than sufficient for it.

Another psychological barrier of Belarusians deals with their imaginary siege and spying mania, as if the spies would be interested in doing their job in such a bedraggled and slovenly Middle-of-Nowhere, not to mention about love of Belarusians to misery. In this respect I recollect the “Mosfilm” movies about Bolsheviks and the “whites”. I can hardly remember any of my schoolmates who would be willing to bear a resemblance to the commissar or Chapayev; we had aversion for their stupidity and rags. Each of us wanted to be the White Guards colonel who was neat, well-dressed, logically thinking and well-built. As far as I realized at that time how the soviet mentality would work, that tidiness was supposed to compromise the White Army. Here, in the area of the Belastochchyna, the reaction of viewers was absolutely adverse as they did not know too much about the red ragged ones and their immorality. We would hate the Soviets for their disrespect towards people, alcoholism, stealing and fraud. Shaliapin once wrote: “They keep lying all the time, no matter whether they need to or not”. This is the actual nature of their character, i.e. they can hardly survive through the day until they have not cheated someone. This is the Power of Grand Lout. It is real comic to feel pity towards the wolf because of it being a wolf.

The path of Belarus to normal life should be measured in generations and not in years, using the Bible measure and waiting for birth of the children whose mentality would not be damaged by the psychologically slavish atavisms of their parents. It had not been a long transitional period between the times of the panshchyna to the soviet reality, i.e. they had run away from the pan’s lash but where to? Belarusians are fond of serving somebody and they can hardly get rid of the feeling of miserable losers. Under such conditions Lukashenka, even not being aware of it, tends to play both the tragic and the comic role, i.e. whatever you say, it does not change the fact that he is the first modern private owner of Belarus, who at the same time is screaming and dreaming about getting some position in the Kremlin and serve there. But the irony of fate is that nobody needs him at all! And it is not a problem that he is a vassal; in his eyes he is still the owner of the country and not some kind of a governor of a province, appointed by the center or the former first secretary of the all-republican party Central Committee. With every coming day we hear more often about the “country” rather than the “republic”. Did anyone call Belarus the “country” at the times of the Soviet Union? Do you like it? Definitely! Symptoms resemble bacteria, i.e. at the initial stages they are almost invisible.

The Polish proletarian Lech Walesa said: "I do not want to become the president of the country but I have to…" But he did not dream about the Kremlin.

Thinking about the future of Belarus, let us take a closer look at the origin of the current state power of Belarus. Independence came to this country in a pretty comic way. The Soviet Union collapsed, everyone around Kremlin had become independent and the political Minsk began to cry as an orphan. Belarusian independence is an independence of an orphan, i.e. we do not want it but have to be independent and sovereign. We have kneeled down in front of Moscow and, my Lord, what did it do? It keeps kicking us between our eyes with its boot and cursing and swearing like a trooper… Nobody expected that kind of treatment here as we were accustomed to be underneath someone. That was our history and that was our fate.

There was not a single person who was destined to have died during the initial fight for its independence, or at least would have spent some time in prison and have gotten kicked into his teeth during interrogations at the KGB office. There was practically a small group of "whisperers" who could hardly be understood as they were speaking the "inhuman language", i.e. Belarusian. The KGB guys counted only seven of them in Belarus who were loyal to their ideas and who were even making love and speaking Belarusian. "Holy s…ugar! How disgusting!"

Nothing has changed until now. Probably psycho-social attitude towards everything Belarusian has changed a bit. For example, there is an impression that the Belarusian word has become sacralized and sounds liturgical, festive and resembles the Old Church Slavonic, edited by Moscow, but does not sound as the one created by Cyril and Mefodiy. There are two Belarusian languages in Belarus today, i.e. the "commonly-understood" and the "national" one, the latter being like a toy for a child. It took me some time to have finally realized why the sincere Belarusian patriots were not so eager to invite me to be their family guest, i.e. to be able to socialize/converse with their families. I though that they probably did not have anything to treat me with but they did not resemble the poor ones… Finally, it dawned upon me: in their families the "grand and powerful Russian" was flourishing. I have nothing against Russian but I am against of dumping the Belarusian language. I am totally against lies, against deceitfulness and hypocrisy. In their eyes I resemble a fool. They obviously think: "OK, moron, if you want Belarusian, we can create you such a pleasure; but at home, with our wives and children we will be "absolutely normal people"".

They have missed the last very chance to de-Russify Belarusians when Stanislau Shushkevich lost his power. At that time there still lived the generation that did not treat Belarusian like something childish or redundant. Belarusian schools

and the tradition of publishing books in Belarusian were returning back. They had personnel who could live in the Belarusian way. At that time I used to travel to Minsk very often. Many people hated me but at the same time they "understood" me. Now in Minsk they do not hate Belarusian as they simply can not understand it. Why don't I feel angry at a gipsy? For one simple reason – usually I do not understand his Russian which resembles the speech of a Chechen.

As for the Belarusian nationalism, it is a pure invention of the Moscow "gentlemen" and the Warsaw "pans". Is it possible to have nationalism for the nation which does not exist in reality? The same is about the Belarusian nation, i.e. it practically does not exist. It was in the process of formation (similar to the Negroes from Congo) and that process was terminated in the second half of 1990s. The presence of national elite is known to be only one of the preconditions for the rise of the nation. Besides national nationalism, science is aware of the existence of the economic one. Well, it does exist in Belarus, but it is so feeble that it would take only one battalion of commandos and a long summer night to get rid of it. As a joke, the same very Belarusian nationalists would be ready to surrender and cover the costs of commandos' activities, at the same time thanking the latter for having liberated them from the sorrows of independence…

Reasoning of the Minsk elite about the essence of the nature of the present day Belarusians does not contain even the slightest sincerity. They say that they are facing a *problem* associated with the current status of the Belarusian language in the country. And *the tragedy* of its disappearance they treat as a *regular problem*. Only Akudovich is not afraid to tell the truth. The Belarusian language has been buried by the working people and their native authorities; only a small archipelago has survived where they speak the natural national language. Yan Maksimiuk from Prague is sure that the Belarusian word will survive as an esthetic category and mainly in literature. Of course, one can always see better from the distance. The discovery, made by Maksimiuk, has been really proven by the development of the national literature, i.e. all the best works have been recently created in Belarusian, not in Russian. That is a real strange thing: the Russian-speaking nation creates artistic works in Belarusian. The reason for that should be clear even to the dumbbells, i.e. genius of Belarusian literature has developed within their *ethnic* environment. You can hardly find analogous cases in Ireland or Scotland as English has already become their native language.

For how long will the Belarusian-based literature of the Russian-speaking people survive? The literature of people who self-liquidate Belarusian secondary schools; there are higher or secondary Belarusian schools in the country anymore.

There is only one per cent of the rural schools that are in the process of dying out today. There is no Russification in the country as the process of self-Russification is in full swing. The enclave of the real Belarusians, residing in the Belastok area, will not resolve the problem. They will simply turn into the new Belarusian nation of Europe and the European Union. This is how the situation will develop. How black should your dreams be for you to be able to see in them that Poles are doing everything possible to avoid speaking Polish or Lithuanians – their native Lithuanian? As for Belarusians, they have successfully achieved that with a one hundred per cent success (well, OK, let it be 98 per cent, who cares?). Those forty per cent of the population, who specified Belarusian within the course of population census as their native language, had obviously meant their linguistic origin but not the fact that they spoke Belarusian on the daily basis. President Lukashenka can easily go ahead with his plans to build the Russian-speaking republic. He won't speak Belarusian because will there be anyone left to address in this language to? Go outdoors and listen to the crowd of people. You will hear that "grand and powerful language" in any corner of the country.

Why do we treat supporters of Lukashenka like fools? They are simply the soviet people for whom Belarus is a small fragment of their native country, stretching from Brest to the Sakhalin Island, and not a Holy Motherland. Only their grandchildren will feel what such a motherland means to them, not earlier. They try to protect Belarus not because of them being patriots, no. The reason for that is that the Russians issue no insurance arrangements. They became patriots because of fear to lose a piece of their daily bread. And no more. If they were the real patriots with the Belarusian culture in their souls, they would never ever even think about suppressing the Belarusian language and tearing apart the national flag.

We are cheating ourselves, thinking that after our national language dies we will still be able to rebuild the devastated structure. This can be explained only either by our stupidity or self-delusion. Any language, buried into the ground, can never resurrect again. History does not now such examples but for the Yiddish language. Numerous languages have been neglected for a long time (like, for example, the Czech one), but they have not been trampled as the Belarusian one today. Even the rural people stopped using it. That is a real joke to even think about their dialects: in some ten years they will disappear forever. Our grandchildren will be leafing through the Atlases to learn about the former dialects of the former language.

The authors of the Russian-based literature of the Russian-speaking Belarus have been growing up already. They will be using a non-Russian Russian both in writing and their oral speech. It will resemble something like the world Englishes,

i.e. American English, Australian English, Irish English etc. The emerged Russian-Belarusian language is now in the rudimentary state.

The issues of the language and development of the national literature, based on it, will be the decisive ones in prognosis of the future of Belarus. Russification can be compared to the peripheral status of the country; it will mean the loss of ethnic epicenter, promotion of everything what is strange, not native. Any invader aims to assimilate the occupied population. This enables him to strengthen his invasion, which, some time later, (again, thanks to the same kind of assimilation) gets adopted and "estranged".

A still Russified Belarus will remain forever a part of a bigger whole. An as any part it will remain without any inner energy, i.e. like an amputated arm. The essence of the national idea can be formulated as striving for better life or opposition to alien exploitation and unwillingness to work for an ethnic neighbor. Such response can not be expected from the classic colonies. Their inhabitants are always happy because the colonialist happens to improve their way of life by means of creating better conditions for his exploitation. Colonies, attached to civilization, do not become free; they simply get abandoned, and, in some cases, as the result of the struggle between the competitive empires. For example, we could hardly expect foundation of the USA without high motivation of anti-English France and its military assistance. Famous decolonization took place not because of the fact that the soviet money favored chaos and the semi-bandit partisan movement. Even a much stronger colony of Arabic Algeria had been destroyed by the French, who later on recognized and accepted independence of Algeria. So, what is the problem? If anything does not match, be sure that it goes about money i.e. that instead of bringing profit any colony becomes a burden. The world economy has changed; technological revolutions significantly decreased demand in raw materials and new labor force. It is significant that mainly England and France, i.e. the developed capitalist countries of the West, were the first ones to get rid of their colonies. The drawback Portugal and Spain kept struggling for preservation of their African colonies. Decay and death of the Soviet Union was also not caused by any enemies; that was the Russian colonialism that Russia failed to digest. Nowadays Russian politicians claim that the Russian Federation within the frame of the Soviet Union was like a "milker". Let it be so, but who asked Russia to expose its udder and, at the same time, to occupy the whole continent? Russia has never been developing; it survived only at the expense of its invasions, annexations and permanent wars (as if the humankind was willing to destroy the Russian Land). All those lies were only good for old children. In the soviet times Russia experienced the military

"boom" as well as various kinds of glorious "Magnitogorsk" projects and that was on its own initiative that numerous "black assholes" began to suck its breasts.

Belarus was abandoned the same way as the drunkards get rid of their intrusive slot. I keep green in my memory the 1990s, the Russia of Yeltsin and the Belarusian patriots, trembling day and night… Because of their miserable educational background, they were afraid of annexation on the part of the Kremlin. Their drawback minds were still functioning on the retarded level of the past. It is true that Russians do not treat us as a nation and the Belarusian language is nothing more for them than the western dialect (actually, "trasianka" resembles the latter a bit). The integration-related fuss was in full swing, although it was clear at that time already that incorporation of the Belarusian economy would cost Russia not less than 100 billion US dollars. Russia has never had such amount of money and won't have within the nearest time. Having loaded Belarus unto their shoulders, the Russian authorities would need to stop their war in the Caucasus, capitalization of the country and to start feeding its population with grass. As a reminder: the whole financial potential of the Russian Federation equals the one of the Netherlands; the district-size Singapore, in comparison with Russia, is the real empire that is on the list of the initial ten world powers of the world.

Doesn't Aliaksandr Ryhoravich know about it? He knows about as good as Vladimir Vladimirovich does. However, both of them count on illiteracy rate of their electorates. And it doesn't matter that one of them is the KGB colonel and a former spy in Europe, who is much more informed as compared to the former director of the soviet farm. The level of their offices is different as well as the intelligence rate. Once a Joe is always a Joe.

The nearest future of the English-speaking republics of Africa and the one of Belarus are quite different. The English-speaking nations look back at the global heroes like the USA while Belarus keeps staring at the Russian-speaking Third World. It keeps looking in the direction of Russia, the president of which in 2004 promised to start fighting against hunger and cold of his people while having the whole Mendeleyev's table in the interior of his territories. With whom is Lukashenka going to become rich? They won't have more bread as soon as they have arrested all the oligarchs in the country. It is a well-know postulate that people's masses can not develop the economy: they do not apply the notions of the state in their thinking; they prefer to think with their stomach, using the categories of a cozy bed and a rich table. In the glorious United States only ten per cent of the population dream about setting up their own business. Ninety per cent of them would prefer to have an eight-hour working day, peaceful family life and smart

kids as well as to spend their annual vacation on the Caribbean islands. Business is not a joke. It means permanent concern about what to do and how to better accomplish it; business means a troubled sleep, premature myocardial infarction and brain cancer. It seems to be much better for them to get employed and receive their good salary rather than to work their hands to the bones. Big money means big expenses. Western governments do not try to make their people happy, they do not get involved in economic activities of their states; they simply collect reasonable taxes, arrange effective work of the police, develop logical legislative system and form cabinets with the ministers who have nothing to do with the criminal activities. Over there, a primary school teacher makes more than a regular policeman. Lenin once wrote: "A police state is such a state in which a cop makes more money than a teacher." How in the world can we not agree with V. I. Lenin?

Any country, possessing no national culture, is destined to die. There is no nation without nationally-oriented teachers. In case we do not meet these two conditions, the rest of the discussion is in vain. The Republic of Belarus is called in Moscow a "fortuitous state". However, this spiteful statement contains the particle of truth. The labor of pushing Belarus up the Russian hill resembles the Sisyphean toil; these efforts will finally end up in Belarus' rolling down into the swamp. According to Yanka Bryl, the bottom-located fire burns down the Belarusian spirit in schools and in education in general; one day it will turn the Belarusian Land into a desert. What will we have left here? The shadow of a Russian neighbor? He won't come to live here because the site of the former fire stinks and it can get inhabited by various human crap. Also, why should the normal people visit the abnormal one? Not everyone can be interested in mutants.

They say it is nihilism. Of course it is. Nihilism is the idea of loafers. They always rely upon someone's benefits. If it is difficult for you in Belarus you are welcome to flee to Russia. What? Do they want to accept you? Nobody is interested in you when stop being their guest. What for do they need you? They have enough of their own losers. The absurd aspect of the so-called integration is that they want to get something that belongs already to other party. This is not absurd, it is a primitive trick.

The Republic of Belarus is not the national state; it is rather the social one. It is sufficient to just listen for some time to the president and his governors. They are still living in the former soviet past. They are like leftovers of the soviet people. Sometimes Lukashenka uses the word "nation" but it is not quite clear whether he understands its meaning or not. Nobody is concerned about the loss of the Belarusian language. He did not even hesitate for a second when he was terminating the

only Belarusian secondary school in Belarus where children were taught in Belarusian. Everything has been done to prevent creation of the university in which all courses of training would be conducted in Belarusian. There is no national aspect in any social state. There is no humane citizen and individual in it as the economic person dominates, i.e. a stomach-man who has a stomach instead of his heart; the latter is only in charge of pumping blood and nothing else.

History is aware of the existence of the social states. Headed by animal-like and, in most of the cases, illiterate tyrants, they used to decay and die, having left nothing for the following generations that would be worth paying their attention to. When they founded Italy as a united state in the 19th century, one of its fathers said: ”We have already created Italy; now we have to create Italians”. The Lukashenka supporters do not bother themselves about such analogous ideas. Belarus, being a sick unity of Europe, should evoke interest in the psychiatric science. They could write a good doctor paper, the unique one, which could discover a monumentally new disease, something like the Asiatic “poultry flu”.

The nearest future of Belarus will resemble the territorial formation with unclear state symbols. They keep intrusively using the term “peoples of Belarus”, rather that the “Belarusian people”. They draw attention to similar phenomena like “peoples of Siberia”. Are they saying that Belarus will become a multinational region of Russia, in which all of 123 nationalities have been covered with the cap of Russification? And what about the leading nation? The answer is that it will get self-destroyed on analogy with those 123 of them. It resembles a black old Greek tragedy.

Nowadays we also eyewitness *aquarization* of cultures. In our case we speak about the aquarium in which we can see Belarusian fishes; in the next one – the Polish, the Tatar and the Ukrainian ones etc. We are missing only one aquarium, i.e. the one with the Russian fish because it would be not interesting for the Russian-speaking visitors and even difficult to understand why a sheep man should have a museum of a sheep. But don’t forget that prior to the war there existed the BSSR with four state languages, i.e. Belarusian, Russian, Polish and Hebrew. On analogy with Switzerland where they have also spoken four languages for centuries.

Why are we trying to avoid the objective information? Because we have developed a soviet skill, i.e. to treat something desirable as the real one. This is the ideology of a liar. A liar is sitting on the top of a liar and another one is running in back of them. This is the unique enclave of Europe. It is worth bringing here tourists. The Germans would be the best ones because they pay more.

The most suspicious way to destroy the Belarusian spirit is to re-orientate it into

the field of folklore, i.e. to turn it into the museum. It would be not fair to accuse Moscow of it. In reality, the roots of hatred towards the national culture are right on the surface: i.e. for the Russian-speaking population, supporting the Asiatic Moscow spirit, the Belarusian national culture is simply alien, foreign because it is Europe-oriented. Let us recollect its elementary history: at least the names of Frantsishak Skaryna, a western European doctor of sciences, or Simiaon Polatski, who taught the Muscovites the essentials of culture, the taste of verse, literature, helped the Romanovs learn Latin and Polish; by the way, Peter the Great, a reformer of Russia, could speak fluent Polish while his sister wrote even poems in Polish.

So, why do they try to get rid of the language and not ethnography of Belarus? Because grammar of each national language is a specific philosophy of a human world. Liquidation of the Belarusian language would mean liquidation of the Belarusian mentality and perception of the world around them. The Russian-speaking Belarusian will serve as a link in the foundation of the Russian nation and the Russian attitudes towards the neighbors, Europe and the whole world. He resembles the Frenchified mother of Pushkin, who punished her son for his wish to speak Russian; and Sasha caught that infection from his babysitter, whom he adored very much and whom (not his mother) he devoted his poems to. Belarus had its national language but repudiated it, having left only the archipelagos of Belarusian spirit, exotics of the incidental Belarusian word in the avenues of Minsk. The Belarusian language today is the language of incident, it serves as a sensation for the salesgirl and taxi-drivers who treat you as if you have addressed them in French or in English.

Any salesclerk will keep staring at you as if she saw the eighth wonder of the world and will even feel sorry that you can not speak "the normal human language". This is the aura, the public aura, which exists around the constitutional first national language of the Republic of Belarus.

Pimen Panchanka was not kidding when called Belarusians the abdicators.

What could be the prospects in life of abdicators with psychology of cripples? An abdicator is a person who tramples his own dignity, hoping someone will like it. It resembles the nature of a slave or a mistress of a rich lover. Abdicators have no faith in their own dignity and will. They are not citizens; they are the population of this country. They need to grow up before they become the "citizens of the Republic of Belarus". One can not be born a ready-made citizen or a hero; he/she can only become the one. The state, which is not interested in bringing up its people for them to later on become citizens, does not deserve to be called a state. It is no more than administration or police department. It keeps digging the hole, into which it will be swept away by the spontaneous forces and events.

What can the country of such people achieve? Their hearts are empty and they live mechanically. Only frogs and tadpoles can live in ditch-water. It is the country of eunuchs. Even this dark prognosis means nothing to them. Russia is sick and tired of that integration with Belarus. The Slavic unity of the retarded minds, who do not even realize such a simple thing that every third citizen of Russia is not a Slav, scares it. Slavic unity can become the fatal hit for Russia. How can we go to the intellectual Kremlin, meet with the patriarchy of Russia having millions of Catholics and Protestants in our own country? One must be real crazy to even think about it!

Stupid politics has no prospects but it can survive for a long time. Stalin, for example, kept slaughtering his people for years and survived until old age. Hitler with similar genocide, directed towards Germans, could not survive even for one year. The thing that is possible in Asia can hardly be tolerated in Europe. Mussolini, a fascist, was thrown down by fascists. Stalin was poisoned while the one who poisoned him was also shot down, just in case. It was done in the pure Asiatic style.

Let us discuss in brief the issue of hostility of the Russian-speaking part of the population towards the Belarusian-speaking one. It is not so open today as it was couple of years before. Let us just think for a while what it means to speak "the normal human language". It means that the Belarusian language is the tongue of the primeval barbarians. The term of the "human language" can be found only in Belarus, nowhere else. It is used to convey the abyss of disgust towards a person who does not speak Russian. Again, in V.I.Lenin's words, a non-Russian, who became Russian, is more dangerous than the Russian chauvinist. An individual like this has a zoological hatred towards non-Russians. Actually, he hates himself and his family-tree…

In what way will the war against the Belarusian culture end? Of course, with a brilliant victory. It will result in devastation of the Belarusian nation and removal of Belarusian presence in the world. Belarusian economy, as the part of the Russian one, but not having its own vital interests, can hardly be called even a colony. It is funny to predict the future of the territory which will be familiar only to geographers. Do you think that the Russian-speaking population of former Belarus will go to Russia and have better life there? No way! Nobody needs them there. They will stay where they are and will start crying over their lost motherland. They will resemble the English-speaking Irishmen who hated the Englishmen and raised the anti-English revolt; they spoke English a bit worse than the Englishmen but their tongues could not utter a single word in their native Irish. Having gained independ-

ence, they did not have better life. An Englishman, before going to Ireland, learned Irish and puzzled the Irishmen a lot. A Pole from Warsaw, speaking Belarusian in Mensk, can expect the same kind of reaction. They will treat him either like a sick person or a former spy. This or that way, he will still look stupid.

Speaking Russian in Belarus means the real catastrophe for this country. It is not by chance that those who continue to speak Belarusian in Belarus, are known to be the most intellectual and energetic individuals. Being a Belarusian-speaking person today requires inner courage and it always means a certain risk. And who wants to undergo any risk? It is always much easier to swim with stream.

Why is Russification so crucial for the future of Belarus? Why did it become a catastrophe with a long-delay action? Marginalization of national culture, based on the national language and the indigenous ethnography, is not the only problem for that. Let us go back to the essence of a national language and treat it as the original unique philosophical system, world outlook of people, specific sense of life, the notion, which we often call *the soul of nation* or *the national spirit*. Assimilation tends to get rid of nations and, later on, the states. Lingual assimilation aims to primarily liquidate the different soul. This, in its turn, will lead to adoption of way of life and spirit. It means castration of the nation and turning it into a ghetto.

Russification of Belarus pushes it down into the swamp of provinciality, into the drift of the ethnic epicenter. It turns Belarus into the spiritual and economic province of Russia, its one of the regions. Mentality of any provincial dweller is known to be depreciated; he is always on his knees before someone. Existence within the natural habitat of the Russian language will mean that Belarusians will be looking back at Moscow or St. Petersburg as a law-maker in the field of culture, but not Mensk. Mensk will become the famous "out-of-the-way place", i.e. it will never define cultural policy of the Russian-speaking community. But this seems to be of no significance. In other words, one can say that the Belarusians used the democratic approach to have abandoned their native language; that was their own choice and their own will. But they remain to be Belarusians. So, why should we cry about it?

Can Belarusians be Belarusians with the Russian soul? Lukashenka always says: "We are the same Russian people". Well, if "the same", then what are we talking about? It appears that Belarus will be the second Russian state. Vladimir Putin wonders: "What the hell do I need this second Russian state for?" It looks like a diversionary structure for him.

So, when we take into account public psychology of Belarusians, the feeling of their all-nation sense of the existence as well as the idea that all of us are dreaming about sharing the Russian fate, it appears that the only prospect for Belarus will

be to get self-liquidated and referendum would be the best way to do it. Voice of people is the voice of God.

One can hear the notes of economic patriotism in Belarus, e.g. "we will not give up our companies and factories in favor of the Russian business". To my mind, even this scream itself sounds like recognition of our weakness. It would be not bad to replace the economic patriotism with the national one, be where can you get it in the country, burnt down in the fire of Russification? Anything with Belarusian spirit in it has become the symbol of oppositional forces. For how long will the economic patriotism survive? It will happen until the moment of time when the aggressor will have secured higher living standard for its slaves. Russia is theoretically capable of doing that. The only thing it will never secure for Belarus is the Belarusian national culture. Frankly speaking, the Russian authorities, possessing higher cultural standards, will never oppress the Belarusian spirit; it can be done only by the local native louts. The Russian cops will not be using their rubber sticks to beat Belarusians for their speaking Belarusian in the street. As for the present regime and the militia men, the Belarusian language became the symbol of anti-government phenomenon, and, therefore, they simply hate it. The officials can apply Belarusian labels to their offices or type up couple of documents in Belarusian only for order's sake. The people know that it is no more than an empty vessel. It is done to throw dust in they eyes of Europe; at the same time, even a little kid in Belarus knows that its present administration will never join Europe. Nowadays official Belarus hates Europe and the latter makes them sick in Mensk. The only question remains: for how long will it last? I mean, a ten-million socialist Republic of Belarus within the capitalist environment, like Cuba in the eastern sector of the Slavic world. Think it over! The union of a frog and a cow.

No, not us, Belarusians, will put on our thinking-caps. Happy people do not bother themselves about thinking hard. And, what kind of future can the happy people have? What for do they need it? Having reached the communist paradise, the humankind would stiffen at all. As if in paradise. The end of the history, period. History of humankind, however, keeps rolling, and not necessarily forwards. In Belarus it froze down. And why should it roll here when life around Belarus seems to be much worse. For example, pensioners are paid their pensions and workers get their salaries in this country. As for Russia – it is the real nightmare down there; the same is about Ukraine where the people are dying of hunger; or Lithuania, in which the people kill each other; or Latvia, in which prostitution is in full swing; or in Poland where streets are covered with dead bodies of those who died of hunger. And in America they beat Negroes! Wow!

As for life in the Republic of Belarus, you can hardly even dream about the better one! But as soon as we have figured it out that it is not true, what country can we catch up with? North Korea?

To predict the future of Belarus is as simple as shelling pees. Belarus in its majority resembles Moses and his Jews who will begin the new life only after the last generation of Belarusians has blotted out of its memory the remembrances of the socialist paradise (i.e. slavery on its own accord).

Do we need ungovernable imagination to be able to see what will become of Belarus in some ten years down the road? No at all. This will be the country with complexes of a provincial suburb and technologies that can be found only in museums. I would like to add some salt to injury and say that without serious investments into foreign high techs Belarusians will be chasing and biting their tails. The reputable serious investors will never come to Belarus. Nowadays it is using the leftovers of the former soviet potential which has already become shabby. Poland went through the same learning curve: once the Polish newspapers boasted about the West being ready to purchase the Polish machinery. It turned out that only one lathe had been purchased by the Swiss museum of polytechnics… However, the official propaganda said nothing about that fact.

Aliaksandr Ryhoravich (for Christ's sake!), how can the country enlarge its potential and power when it is surrounded by the fence of isolation? Pretty soon it will go down the tube and not a single state will be willing to have anything in common with it. Actually, what can they get from Belarus? Even potatoes seem to be more expensive there as compared to the German ones. Even potatoes have not been taken proper care of, like in the fields of the German *Bauers*. The Belarusian potato is traditionally harvested by old women and drunk tractor-drivers. There are not so many alcoholics among the rich people while among the poor ones vodka becomes the national drink. In Belarus, however, "a glass of vodka and a slice of fat" is considered to be the sign of prosperous life, the final stage of the paradise. We have pork while the Russian envy us for that… Let it be. This is the only thing which the Belarusian patriotism is based on.

As my mother used to say: "Have you finished eating? Now, go to the barn!".

A *homo soveticus* can give birth to a *homo soveticus* the same way as a beggar gives birth to a beggar. Genetics comes above all. Our ancestors had not been the soviets, although nearly each of them was very poor. They were striving to get rich as most of the American settlers were (by the way, the USA were built thanks to the European ragged, Australia – to the London slots and convicts). Our children

are not so much soviet and I do hope that our great grandchildren will resemble Europeans to some extent.

It is a mere illusion to wait for the revival of Belarus; although the Belarusian culture will keep smoldering for it to burst into flames when the right time comes. There are no totalitarian ideas in mentality of Belarusians and they can not simply dwell in minds of the people like this. The spirit of power is the mark of a national identity. Republic of Belarus will not die. It has existed for too much time already. It has given birth to too many representatives of its national elite. As for the economic decay, yes, it will come soon. Europe does not actually care a s… about the Belarusian brand of socialism (it is more concerned about the huge Russian market to win). This underdeveloped infantile region can continue playing with its own toys, who cares about it? In case Belarus behaves bad, we will stop supplying it with natural gas and oil and, in no time, it will be kneeling and banning on the doors of the Kremlin again, bagging for a chance to "polish the boots of the master". What for do the Russians need to annex this area? Why should they share the table with the parasite, who is as poor as the church mouse? Let them feed themselves up like a peripheral tribe.

For the coming decade I can predict for Belarus only the fate of Bantustan. I will only pray the Lord for no social collisions to happen in this country when masses of happy people will start joining the majority.

PS. The decade of Lukashenka is a miserably lost decade. Therefore, the coming decade will be the decade of regaining consciousness. And only within the third decade Belarus will set in motion. It can hardly happen earlier as we are speaking about the wrong people, the wrong power and the wrong means.

Translated by ***Ivan Burlyka***.

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Тэза: Русыфікацыя інтэгруе Беларусь у расейскі псыха-культурны прастор, пераўтвараючы беларусаў у варыянт расейскай нацыі, што фінальна перакрэсьлівае шанцы на эўрапэізацыю беларускага этнасу. Беларуская нацыянальная культура, будучы карэнна-эўрапейскай, асуджана ў такім становішчы на маргіналізацыю ў грамадзтве. Рэспубліка Беларусь – гэта не нацыянальная, а сацыяльная дзяржава, рудымэнт Савецкага Саюзу.

Oleg Łatyszonek, Ales' Bely
Алег Латышонак, Алесь Белы

ON THE SCANDINAVIAN ORIGIN OF RAHVALOD

As for the origin of Rahvalod, the "Tale of the Bygone Years" specifies it in a brief way, i.e. "Rahvalod came from across the sea, and he had his own domain back in Polatsk…". In compliance with the Moscow Chronicle Code of the end of the 15th century, "in the reign of Sviatoslav Igorevich, a father of King Vladimir, some prince came from across the sea, whose name was Rahvalod and who became the king of Polatsk". Rahvalod was also known to have a daughter Rahneda and, possibly, a brother Turi or Tur.

The name of Rahvalod has a Slavic form and a convincing Slavic etymology. However, the overseas origin of Rahvalod, attributed to him by the author of the

"Tale…", persuades the supporters of the Norman origin of Rahvalod to search for the Scandinavian equivalents of this name. They usually specify this name as Ragnvald/Rognvald (on analogy with Rahneda<Ragneidr, Ragnhild, and Turi<Tore).

Based on the very assumption that Rahvalod/Ragnvald was a representative of the Scandinavian kings clan (the Slavic "knyaz'" complies with the Scandinavian word "konung") we tried to ascertain what that specific clan was which the Polatsk king could have originated from. Universally known and accessible sources as well as adaptations of the history of Vikings have been applied in this study. O. Pritsak, Yu. V. Konovalov, T. Baranauskas, C. Zuckerman can be specified as the authors whose conclusions were directly associated with the issue of the origin of Rahvalod and/or their works suited the main purpose of this study best of all[1].

The oldest recorded contact of the Scandinavians with the Dzvina region had been described in the "Gutasaga". This is the name of the chronicle from the Gotland Island which was written approximately in 1220. According to it, the population of Gotland became so numerous that all of them together could not survive within their lands anymore. Based on casting of lots each third male was sent out of the country and initially they began looking for a place to live along the Baltic Sea coast. In their search they sailed down to the Dzvina (*Düna*) River across the „ryza land" (i. e. Russia) and finally reached the "Greekland" (i. e. Constantinople). Archaeologists confirm this exodus and date it back to the end of the 5th – beginning of the 6th century. At the same time, one can not confirm any more or less permanent presence of the Gutts on the banks of the Dzvina, the latter having disappeared for some time from the eyes of the Scandinavians in the sea mist as well.

Geographus Ravennatus of the end of the 7th century quotes the words of the Goth philosopher Markomir (*Marcus-Mirrus*). According to the philosopher, "Denmark gives birth to very courageous and learned people, but they are not as enterprising as the same Danes, residing along the banks of the Dzvina (*Dina*) River". They date Geographus Ravennatus' work back to the end of the 10th century; however, the scholar refers to the point of view of Markomir which speaks in favour of early presence of Danes in the area of the Dzvina River.

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[1] O. Pritsak, The Origin of Rus', Vol. 1. *Old Scandinavian sources other than the Sagas*, Harvard, 1981; T. Baranauskas, Saxo Grammaticus on the Balts // Saxo and the Baltic Region, Odense, 2004; Ю. В. Коновалов, *Русско-скандинавские связи середины IX – середины XI вв., Историческая генеалогия, № 5, 1995, p. 42-60; К. Цукерман, Про дату навернення хозар до іудаіізму й про хронологію князювання Олега та Ігоря. Дослідження анонімного хозарского листа з Каіірскоіі генізи*, Ruthenica, T. II, 2003, p. 53-84. Unfortunately, we could not get an access to the work by R. Edberg, *Vikingaresan till Polteskiuborg*, Popular arkeologi, T. 3 (19), p. 36-37.

Danish scholar Saxo Grammaticus specifies that military campaigns of Danes were headed by legendary Ragnar Lodbrok. According to Saxo Grammaticus, Ragnar fought on the banks of the Dzvina against the „Hellespontians", the latter being probably the Latvian tribe of Semigalians. Ragnar defeated the Hellespontians' kings Dian and Daxon as well as their ally, the king of Ruthenia. "Ruthenia" is an anachronism here, which, nevertheless, specifies the territory within which the war was on.

In compliance with one of the versions of this legend by Saxo Grammaticus, Ragnar appointed his son Hvitserk as a king of Scythians, the latter obviously comprising Slavs. Daxon hid his warriors in the merchants' carts and killed Hvitserk. Historians tend to usually associate legendary Ragnar Lodbrok with the Viking Ragnar (Regnar), who attacked Paris in 845. According to one song, dedicated to Ragnar, he fought on the banks of the Dzvina when he was twenty, i.e. it happened approximately in 840. However, in reality it could have happened either much earlier or a bit later.

According to Saxo Grammaticus, the following leader of the Vikings, Hading, fought against the „Hellespontians" (Semigalians) and won the victory over their king. Following that victory, he defeated many more eastern forces. Hading is usually associated with Hasting, who together with Bjorn the Ironside (Jersida) lead the historic campaign of the Vikings to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea in 859-862. In 860 he applied a tremendous war ruse and occupied the city of Luna in northern Italy. He pretended to be sick and asked for a favour to be baptised. Then he seemed to have died and his worriers bluffed into burying him in the town cathedral. Thanks to that trick the Vikings penetrated into the city and destroyed it.

According to Saxo Grammaticus, Hading's son Frothi I, the king of Denmark, whom the historian names as „victor Angliae", captured Polatsk and later on London, using the same war ruse. Campaign in Rus', which ended up in the seizure of Polatsk, was placed by Saxo between the raids on the Curonians and the „Hellespontians". According to T. Baranauskas, the overall plot enables to conclude that this is the same very legend, in which Hading was the main hero. The plot with the false baptising and burial was obviously borrowed by Saxo (who knew nothing specific about occupation of Polatsk and London by Frothi I) from the famous story about the capture of Luna by Hasting and London (Lundonia) here is <Luna.

In contrast to Saxo, O. Pritsak is of the idea, that Frothi is the nickname of Halfdan Ragnarson, the historical leader of the Scandinavian conquest of England and London, and Hading-Hasting was his son. According to Pritsak, Hasting and Bjorn the Ironside are the same as Askold and Dir from the "Tale of Bygone

Years". They met together in Polatsk on the eve of the campaign down to Constantinople which, by mistake, was dated in the „Tale ..." chronicle to 866. In spite of the profound nature of his research, O. Pritsak did not pay attention to some elements of legendary history of Eastern Europe, conveyed in sagas.

The adventurous "Halfdan Eysteinson saga" specifies that Eystein the Old, the Norway king, killed the king of Aldeigjuborg (Staraya Ladoga in Russian) Hergeir. Hergeir was an old man. He had a wife, Isgerd, and a daughter, Ingigerd, who was an extremely beautiful and educated girl. Eystein replaced Hergeir and married Isgerd. Ingigerd married his foster son Ulfkell, who became the Earl of Alaborg. Eystein was killed by the "two men from Rus'" who came to Aldeigjuborg to stay for the winter. Later on the war between the sons of Eystein, i.e. Ulfkell and Ulf, on the one side, and Halfdan, on the other one, began. Halfdan won the war and became a great ruler.

According to an old tradition Eystein was a brother of Ragnar Lodbrok. Their father was supposed to be Sigurd the Ring (Hring), the king of Sweden and Denmark. Ancestors of Sigurd had been continuously mentioned about in the sagas,

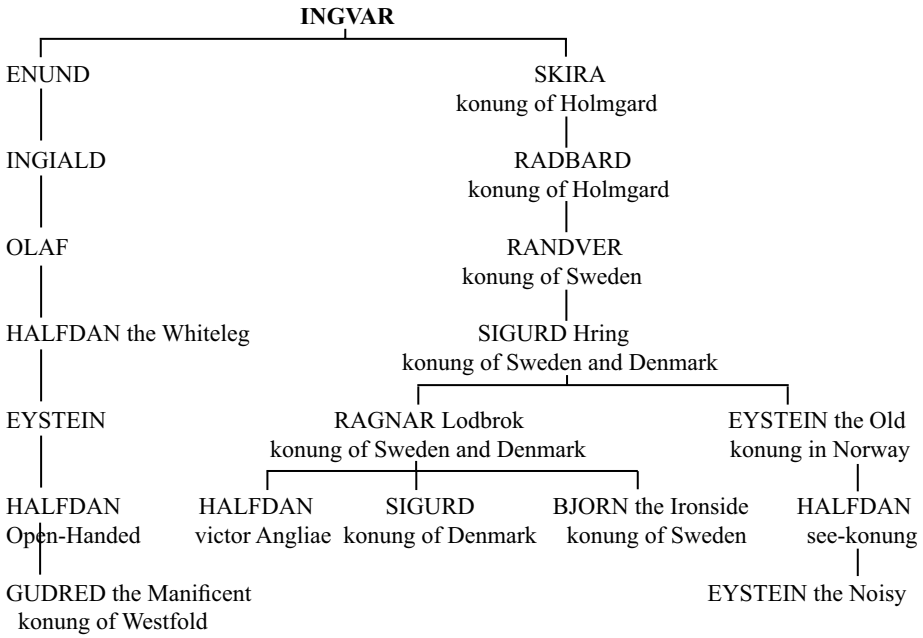

Table 1: **The Ynglings**

i.e. Randver, a father and the king of Sweden; Radbard, a grandfather. Radbard was supposed to be the king of Holmgard and the son of Skyra, the king of Holmgard as well. According to Yu. V. Konovalov, the names of Skira and Radbard are not typical for Scandinavian linguistic traditions. Skira is obviously the eponym, and not the name. This eponym shows that Radbard originated from the clan of Skirs. One of the Germanic tribes of the 5th-6th century had such a name. Odoaker was known to be the most legendary representative of the Skirs who got rid of the Western Roman Empire.

The enumeration of the kings of Sweden seems to be obviously artificial. O. Pritsak is definitely right having stated that it goes here about the Cold Sweden, i.e. Western Europe in general, and about Staraya Ladoga (Aldeigjuborg), in particular. Nevertheless, it sounds pretty accurate that Ragnar Lodbrok and Eystein the Old were full brothers. O. Pritsak, being aware of the fact that scald Bragi, the author of "Ragnarsdrapa", was the scald of both Eystein the Old and Bjorn Jersida, was mistaken in his assumption that Bjorn killed Eystein, the latter being his alien precursor in Ladoga. Taking into account the fact that Eystein was a brother of Ragnar and Bjorn was the son of Ragnar, it is natural that Bragi served both of them. It follows that the glorious Hasting (whose name was interpreted by the western chroniclers as Haestein), who joined Bjorn in their common campaign along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, was nobody else but Eystein the Old. According to the chronicles, Hasting was the "praeceptor" of Bjorn, i.e. he could not be the son of Halfdan Ragnarson; as an uncle could suit perfectly the position of a "praeceptor". More than that, Eystein was much younger than Ragnar. He got his nickname "Old" because of the Halfdan Eysteinson saga, which specifies the events that happened much later. He was also called the "beli", i. e. „white". The name of Askold originates probably from <Hoskuldr, i.e. „grey-head". "Hoss" usually implies a wolf – the grey. Nevertheless, it can also be attributed to the grey hair. The name of Hvitserk can also be specified in this row of names as his name could mean the "white-skinned". All the above mentioned individuals who had similar nicknames were said to be murdered in a traitorous way, by their enemies pretending to be merchants.

Eystein-Hasting could be the son of Ragnar, but it could hardly be possible for him to be a grandson. Whatever can be assumed, he originated from the same clan. The fact that both Ragnar and Eystein named their sons as Halfdan can by implication signify that one of their ancestors could be named as Halfdan. Alternation of Halfdan and Eystein names is known to be characteristic for the clan of Norway kings that gave birth to Harald the Fairhair (Haarfagre), the first king of the whole

Norway. However, it is more reasonable to assume that the name of Eystein was connected with the other Norwegian clan. In compliance with the same family tree, according to which Eystein the Old was a brother of Ragnar, a grandson of Eystein the Old was Eystein the Noisy. The "Orkneyinga saga" contradicts this assumption as according to it a father of Eystein the Noisy was Ivar the Uplanders earl and a grandfather was Halfdan the Old. Besides, Ragnar Lodbrok was the contemporary of Eystein the Noisy. Eystein the Noisy was a father of Ragnvald Maerejarl (Ragnvald Earl of Maeren), a friend of Harald Haarfagre and the founder of the dynasty of earls of Orkney Islands. The "Orkneyinga saga" considers the glorious Ganging Hrolf (whom the saga associates with the invasion of Normandy) to be the son of Ragnvald Maerejarl. Nevertheless, the tradition of relative ties, according to which Ragnar, Eystein the Old and Eystein the Noisy are relatives, can be true. As the Orkneyinga saga specifies only direct ancestors of Eystein the Noisy,

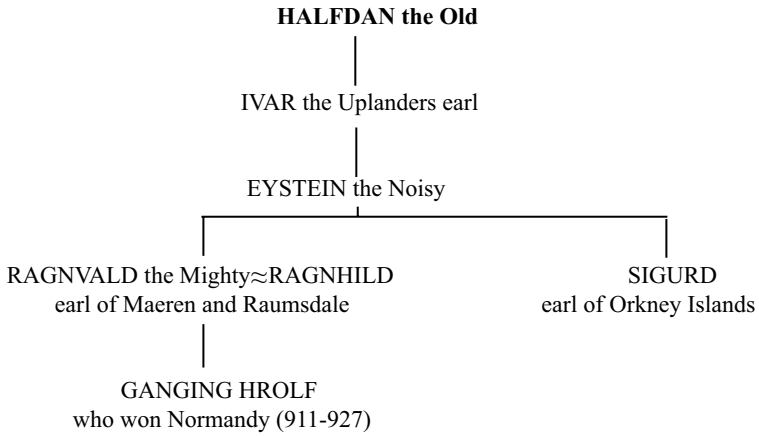

Table 2: **The ancestors of Ganging Hrolf (according to the „Orkneinga saga")**

Ragnar and Eystein the Old could easily originate from Halfdan the Old. It can be indirectly confirmed by the historical ties of Hasting with Rollo, the conqueror of Normandy, as well as by similar timing of legendary campaigns of Ganging Hrolf and Eystein the Old against the kings of Aldeigjuborg.

The subsequent adventurous saga, i.e. the "Ganging Hrolf saga", begins with the story about King Hregvidr, who resided in the kingdom of Holmgard which was also called Gardariki. He possessed all the distinctive features of a real warrior, i.e. he was tall, had strong will and mind. He had a daughter, Ingigerd by name, who was very beautiful and educated. When Hregvidr was young he was a Viking

and, therefore, invaded numerous countries situated along the banks of the Dzvina (*Dyna*) River, and brought them under the control. From there he continued his assaults down to the Eastern kingdom (*Austriki*). He spent there seven years and the people thought he had died already, but he returned back to Gardariki and had a long life there.

As for the Dzvina River, the "Ganging Hrolf saga" specifies that it flows across the kingdom of Gardariki and as for its length, it is considered to be the third or the forth largest river in the world. Its headwaters had been discovered by glorious Ingvar within the course of his travels. The said Ingvar was the glorious Ingvar Vittfarne, the hero of another adventurous saga. In other part of this saga it is said that Ganging Hrolf was bringing his warriors to fight against King Eric and they picked up the fight not far from Aldeigjuborg. The King's army was huge. Among his earls Imi was known to be the tallest and strongest one and he originated from Gardariki. His stepbrother Randolf was also there and his body build and strength could be compared to the ones of a giant; he originated from Alaborg, a motherland of his mother, where he grew up.

Stories about Hregvidr/Randolf from the "Ganging Hrolf saga" and Hergeir from the "Halfdan Eysteinson saga" associate with one and the same person; it was a common thing to mix up names in sagas; some of those names could simply be nicknames. Their hero was a stepbrother of King Imi from Gardariki, grew up in Alaborg, and in his youth he was a Viking and for seven years (a symbolic figure) he had fought and robbed the people along the banks of the Dzvina River; however, nothing had been said about the foundation of a strong state on the banks of the Dzvina by him. He returned to his motherland and became the king of Aldeigjuborg. He married Isgerd who gave birth to Ingigerd, the latter being known all over Gardariki for her beauty and wisdom. In old age he was killed by Eystein the Old.

Scholars attribute the events, specified in the sagas to the period of time ranging from the 9th to the 11th century. Nevertheless, both sagas attribute the events to the times of King Harald Haarfagre who reigned from about 860 to about 930 (i.e. when his father Halfdan the Black died he was only ten years old).

The sagas truly motivate the details on how the Norwegians pushed the Swedes from Gardariki. Ragnar Lodbrok and Hasting were probably attributed to the Danish history because one of Ragnar's sons, Sigurd, became the King of Denmark, and to the Swedish history because "Cold Sweden" (Rus') had been mixed up with the real Sweden. It started with the assault of Ragnar down to the Dzvina River. However, that was most probably a brother of Ragnar, Eystein-Hasting-Askold, who actually pushed the Swedes from Polatsk and Staraya Ladoga.

As for Hasting, he would show up and disappear again for several years. Within those couple of years he could easily be in Eastern Europe. Assuming that Hasting was Eystein the Old and Askold and Bjorn Jersida was actually Dir, and then they were the ones who attacked Constantinople in 860 within the course of the Mediterranean campaign.The story of the Byzantine historian about the Viking leader who was at the time baptized supports the above idea. Hasting was obviously trying to apply the same war strategy which helped him capture the city of Luna, but having evaluated the seize of Constantinople, he gave up the idea to bring his plan into action (the Vikings had only 62 ships). Nevertheless, the deed of Hasting-Askold served as the reason for the legend about the first baptism of Rus'.

Polatsk was attacked obviously right after the campaign along the banks of the Mediterranean Sea, as after that particular crusade Bjorn Jersida had never been seen in the West again. It was already at the beginning of the 10th century when the Arab chroniclers called the Russian state as ad-Dir. That is why the year of 865, specified in the „Tale of the Bygone Years" is close to be true.

Hasting/Haestein acted as the leader of the campaign in Britain for the last time in 894-896. Having been defeated by King Alfred the Great, he sailed down to France and later on disappeared from the West at all. The old Viking, having been defeated by King Alfred the Great, had apparently headed down to Austrvegr and invaded Aldeigjuborg (Staraya Ladoga).

Taking into account that settlement of Eystein in Ladoga happened obviously right after 896, it does not contradict the events, specified in the „Tale of the Bygone Years" about Rurik, as the latter had been already dead by that time. It is close to be true that Eystein-Askold and Bjorn-Dir made their first assault to Gardariki together with Rurik.

In compliance with the „Tale of the Bygone Years", Askold and Dir were murdered in Kiev by Oleg. We support the idea of Pritsak that it is not true concerning death of Askold as Eystein-Askold had definitely perished in Staraya Ladoga and, following his death, his son Halfdan became the King of Aldeigjuborg.

As Oleg<Helgi was probably the nickname, and not the actual name, it could be applied to Halfdan Eysteinson as well. In this case the „Tale of the Bygone Years" is not more than a vague retelling of the story about mutual disputes between descendants of Ragnar and Eystein, presented in the "Halfdan Eysteinson saga". There are reasons to believe that the clan of Eystein survived in Ladoga until the 11th century, although being only the earls of Ladoga. Earl Ulf of Ladoga can be treated as an ancestor of Eystein the Old, who, according to his name, could be easily a grandson of Ulf Eysteinson. According to the Russian historian

V. Tatishchev, Ulf, Earl of Ladoga, was murdered by Vladimir in 970. Tatishchev can hardly serve as a reliable source of information, but, nevertheless, Ladoga definitely had its own earls. The best known of them, Ragnvald, is considered to be the son of Ulf, who returned from Sweden back to Ladoga in 1019 and became the earl there. Another Russian historian, A. Shakhmatov, supposed that Rahvalod was murdered and Rahneda was captured by Vladimir just in 970. One can guess, that Rahvalod/Ragnvald from Polatsk could be the relative of Ulf. It seems that the whole clan had been liquidated as they tried to question the authority of Rurikides upon Rus'.

O. Pritsak has a different point of view regarding relations of Oleg. According to him, Oleg related to Helgi, the king of Denmark and a member of the Jelling dynasty, the latter being known for their legendary ancestor Hermanaric, the king of Goths. In about 900 Helgi was removed from power by the Swedes. Assuming that Helgi was obviously a nickname, O. Pritsak equates him with the Danish king Lota Knut and attributes to him founding both Polatsk and Smolensk. According to H. Łowmianski, Oleg was initially the Duke of Smolensk. The chronicler specifies that Saint Olga, who was probably a daughter of Oleg, came from the area of Pskov. Polatsk, Smolensk, Pskov – these are the towns of the Crivitians (Krivichi people). Thus, it is quite possible that Oleg-Helgi was initially the leader of the Crivitian tribal union. Unfortunately, there are no Scandinavian sources that could mention about Helgi or Lota Knut, ruling mainly Polatsk.

The archaeologists have also not as yet found anything definite during their archaeological dig that could enable to treat the city as the first capital of Viking Oleg. At the same time, 10% of the territory of the initial Polatsk, i.e. the so-called site of ancient settlement of Rahvalod, has been already explored.

According to Pritsak, the Jelling dynasty belonged to the clan of Ylfings, i.e. the descendants of a mythical wolf Ulfhamr. Pritsak also associates with them the Polatsk king Usiaslau the Wizard, the descendant of Rahvalod; he was believed to be not only a magician but a werewolf as well, i.e. "Helgi".

C. Zuckerman, in his brilliant research of the Russian 941 assault to Byzantium, made all his conclusions on the basis of the Greek and Jewish sources; in compliance with them he specifies 945 as the year of death of Oleg. According to C. Zuckerman, the 941 campaign was headed by both Helgi and Igor. After they lost the battle Igor ran away to Kiev and usurped all power in his hands. Oleg, having not enough warriors to take his power back by force, concluded the agreement with the Khazars and attempted to gain the new reign in the town of Berdaa on the bank of the Caspian Sea (modern Azerbaijan), but he was killed by the Moslems

in 945. Also, the Zuckerman's version can be supported by the fact that Polatsk was not mentioned in agreement of Igor with Byzantium in 944. Polatsk had not

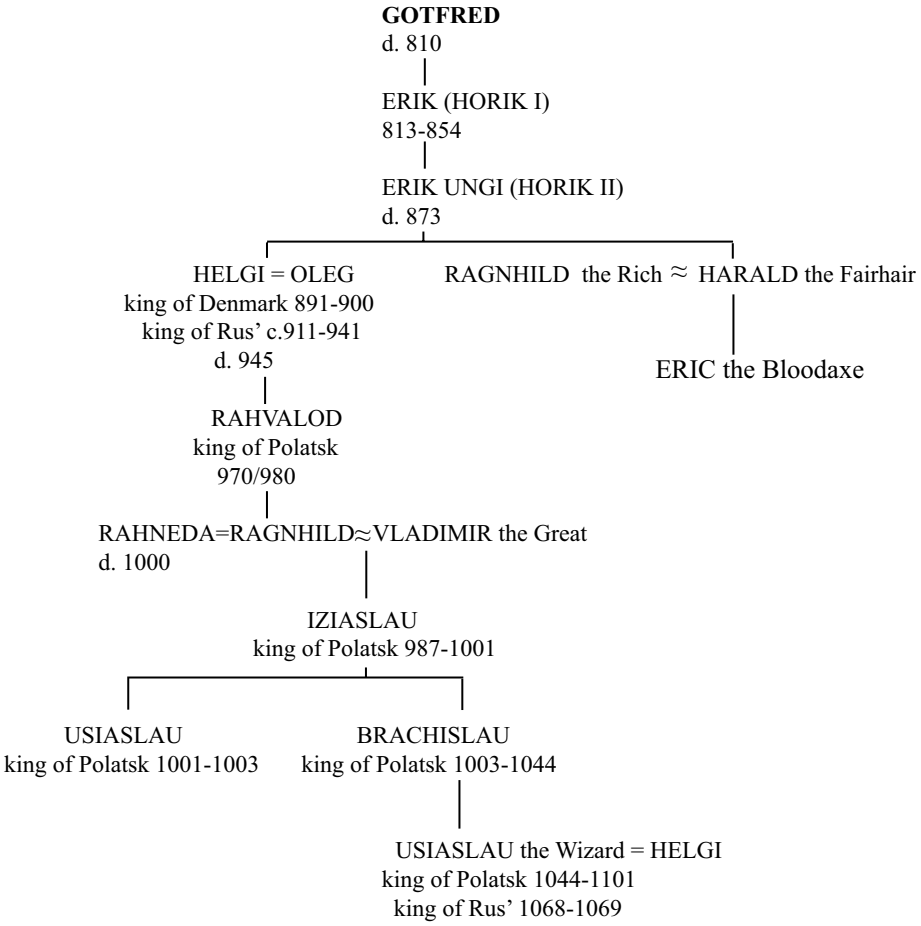

Table 3: **The Danish Jelling dynasty in Belarus (based on O. Pritsak' and C. Zuckerman's conceptions)**

obviously recognized usurpation of Igor. Thus, Rahvalod could be either the son of Oleg or some kind of an overseas relative, who was invited from Denmark by the Polatsk citizens to come and occupy the deserted throne.

Another possible proof of the Scandinavian origin of Rahvalod was given by Yu. B. Konovalov. Reconstructing the clan relations of the Russian Scandinavians, he came to the conclusion that Ragnvald the Glorious (whom Thiodolf the Wise dedicated his "Ynglinga saga" to) could be Rahvalod of Polatsk.

According to the said saga, Ragnvald the Glorious was a cousin of Harald Haarfagre, the Norwegian King and the son of Olaf Geirstadir's Alf, in other words, he could not be Rahvalod. Nevertheless, Konovalov paid attention to the fact that there were two Olafs who had the similar specific nickname, i.e. Geirstadir's Alf. The younger Olaf Geirstadir's Alf was one of the sons of Harald Haarfagre and a grandfather of Olaf Tryggvason. Thus, Ragnvald the Glorious, i.e. Rahvalod, could be an uncle of Olaf Tryggvason.

Members of that family would frequently bear the name of Ragnhild. A mother of Harald Haarfagre was Ragnhild. One of the wives of Ragnhild the Rich as well. Their granddaughter, i.e. a daughter of Eric Bloodaxe, was also Ragnhild. One of the other sons of Harald was Ragnvald the Straight-Legged.

One of the wives of Harald Haarfagre was Svanhild, a mother of Olaf Geistradir's Alf II. Konovalov considers her to be the sister of Ragnvald of More, the

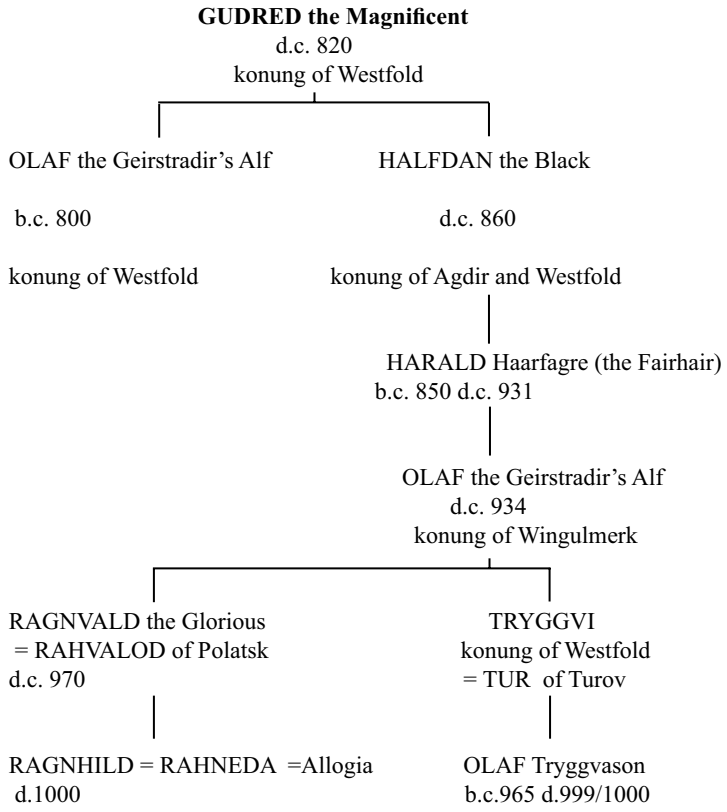

Table 4: **The Norwegian Ynglings in Belarus (according to Yu. V. Konovalov)**

son of Eystein the Noisy. Thus, the names of Ragnvald and Ragnhild among the descendans of Olaf the Geirstadir's Alf could have been given in honour of his ancestors from both the maternal and paternal line.

Olaf Geirstadir's Alf II, whom Konovalov considers to be the real father of Ragnvald the Glorious, was killed by his stepbrother Eric Bloodaxe in about 934 in the battle of Tunsborg. His son could go to Polatsk to gain the throne after Oleg's death. In that case he would need some time to have gained the big glory for Thiodolf, the scald of his grandfather, to have enough time to dedicate the "Ynglinga saga" to him. Konovalov finds the way out by means of transference of the activities of Thiodolf from the court of Harald Haarfagre to the court of Harald the Gray Coat who was his grandson and the King of Norway in 960-975. Unfortunately, Ragnvald the Glorious is the only representative of the Ynglings clan whom Thiodolf the Wise said nothing about. He only mentioned about the fact that he was the King of Westfold. The reason for fact that the saga contains no information about Ragnvald the Glorious is explained by Konovalov in the way that the saga had been written at the times when Ragnvald was still alive and it could not contain the information about his death and burial place. Nevertheless, Ragnvald had already been given the nickname of Glorious which could mean that he had already achieved some special things in his life, for example, had become the king. However, the saga says nothing about him. Although, according to Konovalov, that would be a very strange way to treat a person like Ragnvald who would be active in Norway and its surroundings. However, in case Ragnvald had become famous for his deeds faraway from Norway, Thiodolf the Wise could not hear about his nickname and know about the conditions of his life.

Reasoning of Konovalov in this respect does not seem to be convincing. Sagas tend to narrate about initiatives of their heroes on the periphery of the well-known world. How could not Thiodolf the Wise be aware of the initiatives of Ragnvald the Glorious dedicating the "Ynglinga saga" to him? In such cases the only reasoning is left, which was actually used by Konovalov, i.e. the fragment about Ragnvald the Glorious had been lost within the long period of oral existence of the saga.

In spite of all doubts and uncertainties, hypothesis of Konovalov about Rahvalod being the part of the Harald Haarfagre clan sounds very attractive. Some more names of Harald Haarfagre's sons could be added here as well. According to N. T. Belayev, Rahvalod's ancestor could also be the above-mentioned Ragnvald the Straight-Legged, known as a wizard and therefore burnt alive at the order of Harald by Eric the Bloodaxe. However, in our estimation, most likely the last one, a son of Ragnhild the Rich (a sister of Helgi/Oleg) could have been the possible

father of Rahvalod (see the Table 3). Eric and his wife Gunhild (known as a witch) had got eight sons: Ragnvald, Harald Grefell (Gray Coad), Ragnfred, Erling, Gudred, Sigurd (Sleva), Gamli and Gorm, and a daughter Ragnhild. Ragnvald is said to be murdered by the legendary skald Egil Skallagrimson in the waters around Herdla Island about 940. Nevertheless, this can be only a legend reflecting fact, that Ragnvald was lost to view of Icelandic skalds at the time.

The tradition to create sagas survived from the end of the 12th to the beginning of the 16th century. Sagas were known to be literary works rather than historical. The stories kept travelling from people to people and would get added with new topics. Such heroes like Rollo, the conqueror of Normandy, were highly appreciated by various clans and wanted to have him among his people as well.

The Polatsk Rahvalod is known only from one single source, i.e. the "Tale of the Bygone Years". According to scholars who studied the "Tale…" in details, it had been written within at least several decades. In the middle of the 11th century the core of the chronicle, dealing with christening of Russia, had been initially completed. In 1160s-1170s the fragments about the first grand dukes, i.e. Rurik, Oleg, Igor and Olga, are believed to have been added by Nikon. That was obviously mainly Nikon who added to the chronicle the story about Rahvalod and marriage of Vladimir and Rahneda. At the beginning of the 12th century someone (traditionally he is called Nestor) created the new chronicle instead of the old one. We can not be sure who had actually created the „Tale of the Bygone Years", as authorship of Nestor is recognized to be very problematic. Hypothetical the chronicle is believed to be written in the second half of the 11th – beginning of the 12th century. However, it reached modern times in the form of two versions, i.e. the Lavrent'yevskaya chronicle of 1377 and the Ipatyevskaya one (1420s). So much could be added and composed within all that period of time. From the scientific point of view only Igor, mentioned about by the Byzantine author Constantine Porphyrogenitus, can be treated as the first historical representative of Rurikides, specified in the "Tale of the Bygone Years".

The legendary ancestor of Rurikides had to be a Viking leader Rurik, who came to the Great Novgorod with his brothers Sineus and Truvor. Rurik is often identified by many of the historians as Roric from Jutland or Frieseland. Unfortunately, neither Scandinavian scalds nor historians had ever mentioned about the activities of any Rurik in Gardariki. The Old Scandinavian „Reriks" stands for the one who is „rich in glory". Such a nickname could be attributed to any outstanding leader of Vikings. "Sine hus thru varing" means „with his clan and the retinue". And the latter means that Rurik had no brothers named Sineus and Truvor. It is quite pos-

sible that „Rurik, Sineus and Truvor" are no more than a literary image, created by Nikon in order to prove noble origin of Igor. In case there was no Rurik with his brothers Sineus and Truvor in reality, then we can really doubt about the existence of Rahvalod with his brother Turi and a daughter Rahneda. The actual historical documents comprise no such names.

At the time when the „Nikon's" part of the „Tale of the Bygone Years" chronicle was being composed, Guillaume le Bâtard from Normandy conquered England and became William the Conqueror. His clan was definitely spoken about through the whole Europe. Different stories were told about the initial origin of William the Conqueror; some of them had definitely reached the Dnieper River as well. The names of Ragnvald Maerejarl, his wife Ragnhild and son Tore could be learned by the chroniclers from the "Orkneyinga saga". The author of the "Tale of the Bygone Years", who interpreted the "sine hus thru varing" phrase like "with brothers Sineus and Truvor", could as easily transfer Ragnvald of More into Rahvalod „from across the sea" (as "more" in Russian stands for the "sea"). In this case replacement of a wife with a daughter and a son with a brother seems to be a minor detail, no more.

As for locating them in the area of the Dzvina River, the chronicler could do that under the influence of the stories about Hregvidr from the "Ganging Hrolf saga". A daughter of Hregvidr suits perfectly the prototype of a glorious daughter of Rahvalod.

The two famous Ragnvalds served Yaroslav the Wise, the king of Rus'. The first one, i.e. Ragnvald of the earls from Ladoga, whose clan can originate from Eystein the Old, a killer of Hregvidr. Another Ragnvald, Brusason, is known to originate from Ragnvald Maerejarl.

The story about Rahvalod could be attached to the "Tale of the Bygone Years" on advice of the Polatsk kings. However, the same "Tale…" contains the proof that it was not the case. The name of Rahvalod appears to be among the "Rahvalod's grandchildren", i.e. the dynasty of Rahvalod at the beginning of the 12th century, i.e. after the "Tale..." had been finished. The same refers to the name of Rurik. We face similar situation in the Polish history as well. The first Polish historian, Anonymous (later on called Gallus), defined the origin of the Polish dukes as the one that begins with Piast, whose descendants (as if!) were Siemowit and Lestko (Leszko) and Siemomysł; the son of the latter was the first Mieszko, duke of Gniezno. It was probably the way it was specified by the historian but the descendants of "Piast" did not obviously know about it; they began to call their sons Siemowit and Lestko (Leszko) only after "Gallus" finished the above mentioned work. Today it is prob-

lematic for us to believe that even dukes could not know the names of their great grandfathers, but that was the way it was. The Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus could give only the name of his grandfather, an ordinary Macedonian peasant. On analogy with the story about Russian kings of the 11th century, the same thing happens about the Lithuanian kings of 13th and even 14th century. Who can definitely specify the name of at least a father of Mindowg, the first King of Lithuania, or the one of Grand Duke Gedimin? And they have founded their states in the eyes of the whole Europe, both the Eastern and the Western one.

Rahvalod of Polatsk as well as all the above mentioned possible ancestors of him remain to be the legendary figures. Nevertheless, the Scandinavian scalds and historians could be more accurate as compared to the author of the "Tale of the Bygone Years". Speaking about the legends, we should also remember about the fact that among the participants of the famous battle of Bravalla, i.e. among the forces of the Danish King, Harald the War Tooth, and his cousin Sigurd Hring, the Swedish King, one could also find King Ragnvald the Ruthenian.

The Bellum Bravicum is known to be the apocalyptic battle among all the forces of Northern World. Its participants comprised not only Scandinavian warriors but also all the peoples of the Baltic region. Among the warriors one could also find gods, mythological heroes of numerous peoples. We have the right to see the legendary Ragnvald-Rahvalod, the King of Polatsk, among them.

Translated by ***Ivan Burlyka***

РЭЗЮМЭ

Аўтары досьледу, зыходзячы з перадумовы, што Рагвалод быў скандынавам іменем Рагнвалд і паходзіў з каралеўскага роду, спрабуюць устанавіць яго радаслоўную.

Першым вядомым па імені вікінгам, якому прыпісваюць паходы па Дзьвіне, быў славуты Рагнар Футравыя Нагавіцы, які зьявіўся тут каля 840 г. Рагнар па паходжаньні быў праўдападобна нарвежцам, але яго род зьвязаўся з Даніяй. У сярэдзіне IX ст. над Дзьвіной прабаваў замацавацца шведзкі вікінг Рэгвід з роду каралёў Ладагі, але праз некалькі гадоў прымушаны быў вярнуцца дадому.

На пачатку 860-тых гг. Полацак узяў брат Рагнара Эйстэйн, якога пазьней назвалі Старым, разам з сынам Рагнара Бёрнам Жалезнабокім. Гэтыя вікінгі вядомыя з "Аповесьці мінулых гадоў" як Аскольд і Дзір. Раней, у 860 г. наехалі Канстантынопаль падчас свайго паходу ўздоўж берагоў Міжземнага мора. Пасля заваяваньня Полацка яны разьдзяліліся й Эйстэйн вярнуўся на захад, дзе вядомы быў як Хастынг, або Хастэйн. У сярэдзіне 890-тых гг. спрабаваў заваяваць Англію. Пасьля паражэньня з рук караля Альфрэда Вялікага вярнуўся на Ўсходні шлях і наехаў Ладагу, забіваючы ўспомненага вышэй Рэгвіда, які ў міжчасе стаў тут каралём.

На пачатку X ст. Полацак папаў у рукі дацкага караля Лёта Кнута зь мянушкай Хельгі ("Вещий"), якая абазначае адначасова і чарадзея, і ваўкалака, вядомага з "Аповесьці мінулых гадоў" як Алег. Алег, пазбаўлены шведамі дацкага трону каля 900 г., падаўся на Ўсходні шлях і спачатку ўзначаліў крывіцкі племянны саюз, а пасьля перамог Бёрна Жалезнабокага - Дзіра.

Пад канец жыцьця ўладарыў разам са сваім зяцем Ігарам. У 941 годзе яны ўдвох павялі паход на Візантыю. Пасьля паражэньня Ігар уцёк у Кіеў і ўзурпаваў самастойную ўладу. Алег няўдала прабаваў працягваць змаганьне з візантыйцамі, а пасьля, ня маючы ўжо дастаткова моцнага войска, каб вярнуць сабе пасад сілай, дамовіўся з хазарамі і спрабаваў заваяваць новыя ўладаньні над Касьпійскім морам, у горадзе Бердаа ў сёньняшнім Азербайджане, дзе й загінуў у 945 г. Полацак тым часам не прызнаў узурпацыі Ігара і прызваў на трон Рагвалода.

Рагвалод мог быць нашчадкам Алега з Даніі, бо крыху раней унук Алега Харда Кнут (Горм) вярнуў свайму роду дацкі трон. Магчыма таксама, што падчас безуладзьдзя полацкі трон папаў у рукі нашчадкаў нарвескага караля Харальда Прыгожавалосага. Гэта мог быць Рагнвалд Славуты, які праўдападобна быў сынам Олава Альва Гейрстадзіры II і братам Тругві (ён жа Тур?). Усё-ж такі, на погляд аўтараў, больш праўдпадобным бацькам Рагвалода зьяўляецца іншы сын Харальда Прыгожавалосага, Эйрык Крывавы Тапор, нарожданы з Рагнгільд Магутнай, сястры Алега.

Паколькі Рагвалод вядомы толькі з адной крыніцы, г. зн. з "Аповесьці мінулых гадоў", можа быць толькі літаратурным персанажам, так як браты Рурыка, Сінеус і Трувар, ды магчыма, і сам Рурык. У такім выпадку постаці Рагвалода і Рагнеды маглі ўзнікнуць на аснове сюжэтаў з "Сагі пра аркнейцаў", "Сагі пра Хролва Пешахода" і "Сагі пра Хальвдана, сына Эйстэйна". Дзьве першыя датычаць нашчадкаў Рагнвалда з Мёрэ, чыйным сынам лічыўся Хролв Пешаход, продак Вільгельма з Нармандыі, які ў час, калі пісалася "Аповесьць" заваяваў Англію; апошняя – роду ярлаў Ладагі. Два вядомыя Рагнвалды служылі Яраславу Мудраму, аркнеец Рагнвалд Брусасон (нашчадак Рагнвалда з Мёрэ) і Рагнвалд Ульвсон з Ладаскіх ярлаў.

Рагнвалд Русін - адзін з персанажаў аповесьці пра бітву на раўніне Бравіка. Праславутая Бравіцкая вайна гэта вялікая бітва ў амаль эсхаталягічным вымярэньні, апакаліптычнае ўзаемазмаганьне ўсяго паўночнага сьвету. Няма ведама, калі адбылася. Удзельнічалі ў ёй багі, мітычныя героі і войскі ўсіх народаў з берагоў Балтыцкага мора. Рагнвалд Русін увасабляе, відаць, усіх славутых Рагнвалдаў, чыйны лёс зьвязаны быў з Русьсю. Маем поўнае права бачыць у ім і полацкага Рагвалода.

Аўтары гэтага досьледу маюць намер падрыхтаваць беларускамоўную вэрсыю гэтага артыкула для часопіса "Спадчына".

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Nina Barshcheuskaya
Ніна Баршчэўская

The way belarusian emigration treats ethnographic borders of Belarus

Attempts to define the boarders of the Belarusian national expanse had been made until the second half of the 19th century. Both in central as well as Western Europe the language served (and will obviously serve in the future) as the most important and characteristic national feature, which could be easily applied within the course of the objective scientific reasoning. When we add it to those political and historical conditions and evaluate ethnographic maps of Belarus of the 19th – 22nd century, we can conclude that these are primarily the maps displaying spread of the Belarusian language.

This issue has been thoroughly discussed in the "Batskaushchyna" newspaper in the series of articles named *Ethnographic expanse of Belarus* and written by M. Ahniavida.

The author of the articles starts his reasoning with the quotation from the Document (Act) of March 25, 1918 of the Third Charter of the BNR (Belarusian Peo-

ple's Republic), according to which "the Belarusian People's Republic should unite all the lands within which the Belarusian people enjoy numeral superiority…"[1]

M. Ahniavida begins consideration of ethnographic expanse of Belarus starting with 1875, i.e. the time, when the first ethnographic map of Belarus had been published.

The pioneer attempt to evaluate the ethnographic borders of settling of the Belarusian people was made by A. F. Ryttykh. In 1860s he was assigned by the Russian General Staff to process the ethnographic map of the European part of the Russian Empire. Research activities of Ryttykh ended up in 1875 in publication of *Ethnographic map of the European part of Russia* in St. Petersburg. That was the first map on which ethnographic boarders of the Belarusian national expanse had been specified.

At the beginning of the 20th century Yaukhim Karski processed *Ethnographic Map of the Belarusian People*, which was published in Volume I of his book *Belarusy (Belarusians)*, the latter having been revised and published again in 1918. In general, ethnographic borders of Belarus, defined by Karski, were approximately similar to the ones, shown on the map of Ryttykh.

1917 through 1920, i.e. within the time of the All-Belarusian Congress and formation of the Belarusian People's Republic (the BNR), Belarusian politicians and statesmen faced the definite task, i.e. they were to define state borders of the BNR. To fulfill that task, they based their conclusions on the previously published materials and maps. The *Ethnographic map of the Belarusian People's Republic*, published in 1919, had covered the area, which had been generally specified on maps of Ryttykh and Karski. There are also some corrections on the map. The most essential one deals with the area, located in the south-west of the country, i.e. the Berastseishchyna and the Pinshchyna had been included into the frame of the Belarusian borders. Formerly, those territories, because of strong influence of the Ukrainian language, were left outside the Belarusian ethnic expanse. The southern borderline of Belarus, shown on that map, was drawn more or less along the historical border of the Grand Duchy of Litwa of 1569. It is similar to the present borderline between Belarus and Ukraine. One could also find some other minor changes on the map. For example, the city of Bransk was the part of the BNR while Ryttykh and Karski left it outside the country.

1 M. Ahniavid, *Etnahrafichny prastor Belarusi (Ethnographic expanse of Belarus*, in: "Batskaushchyna", # 23 (409), München, June 22, 1958, p. 2-3

According to M. Ahniavida, those borders in many cases did not reflect the actual linguistic situation and, more than that, they conflicted with the historical and ethnographic facts. The author stressed in his article, published in the "Batskaushchyna" newspaper", that "the tribe of Kryvichy, residing in the north-eastern territories of their habitat, served as the tribal and ethnic basis of the modern Belarusian people. In compliance with the archeological data as well as historical and chronicle findings, the borders of habitat of the Kryvichy tribe in the north-eastern section of the area significantly overlapped and exceeded the borders, specified on the maps of Ryttykh, Karski and the BNR."[2] As for the linguistic situation, it had been known for a long time, that outside the eastern and northern borders of the BNR one could clearly hear peculiar features of the Belarusian language, mixed up with a good deal of elements of spoken Russian.

Prior to World War I, the Moscow Dialectological Committee had been founded, which comprised the following famous Russian linguists: N. N. Durnavo, N. N. Sokolov, D. N. Ushakov. Among other tasks, the Committee was assigned to develop the dialectological map of the Russian Empire. That was for the first time in history, when the Committee studied the Belarusian-Russian linguistic borders. Activities of the Committee resulted in publication in Moscow in 1915 (i.e. some years prior to publication of the BNR map) of the map, named *Attempt to Create Dialectological Map of Spread of the Russian Language in Europe with Enclosed Essay on Russian Dialectology.* "On that map they revealed the very important fact that both in the east and the north of the Belarusian ethnographic expanse as well as beyond the borders, specified on the pervious maps, there existed vast areas, the inhabitants of which did not speak Russian as it had generally been assumed before. Such a linguistic phenomenon had been registered along the vast strip located behind the city of Bransk in the east and in back of the Pskoushchyna, in the north."[3]

M. Ahniavida pointed out that the results of the Moscow Dialectological Committee were of special significance as the Committee matched ethnographic borders of Belarus with the already well known facts from archeology, history, tribal geography as well as linguistics. "History tells us that the Pskoushchyna was the land of the same Kryvichy tribe, which inhabited the Polachchyna and the Smalenshchyna, and, therefore, its language should have the same Belarusian

[2] Same, p. 2.
[3] Same, p. 2-3.

Kryvichy-based origin. As for the Russian elements, present in the language, they had been acquired much later as the result of a long lasting (beginning with 1510) dependence of Pskou and the Pskoushchyna upon Moscow."[4]

One of the Belarusian emigrant researchers emphasized that at the beginning of the 20th century, because of the discovered huge areas of transitional dialects, the Russian scholars raised the issue of significant broadening of eastern and northern ethnographic borders of Belarus. Later on, further research of other authors had only confirmed and better substantiated the initially obtained interesting results.

M. Ahniavida specifies names of several authors who did not have enough courage to attribute the transitional Belarusian-Russian dialects to the Russian language area.[5]

Taking into account all the existing works on linguistic geography, Andrei Bahrovich pointed out that "On all ethnographic and linguistic maps of the Russian scholars, i.e. beginning with the "Ethnographic Map of the European part of Russia" (Ryttykh, 1875)[6], Smalensk and the Smalenshchyna, the western part of the Branshchyna, Nevelshchyna as well as southern parts of the Pskoushchyna had been definitely specified as the Belarusian ones. The same status had been confirmed on the maps of Karski, published in 1903[7], 1917 and on[8], on the map of the Moscow Dialectological Committee of 1915[9], on the post-war maps processed by the Russian linguists, i.e. Avanesov (1949[10]), Chernykh[11] and Kuznetsov[12], pub-

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[4] Same, p. 3.

[5] They are, by the way, R. I. Avanesov (*Ocherki russkoi dialektologii (Outline of Russian Dialectology)*, part.1, Moscow, 1949), P. S. Kuznetsov (*Russkaya dialektologiya (Russian Dialectology)*, Moscow, 1954), P. Ya. Chernykh (*Istoricheskaya grammatika russkogo yazika (Historical Grammar of the Russian Language)*, Moscow, 1954), V. Kurashkevich (*Zarys dialektologii wschodnio-slowianskiej,* Warszawa, 1964), T. Ler-Splawinski, V. Kurashkevich, F, Slauski (*Przegląd I charakterystyka języków słowiańskich,* Warszawa, 1954): in: M. Ahniavida, *Etnahrafichny prastor Belarusi* (*Ethnographic expanse of Belarus),* in: "Batskaushchyna", # 24-25 (410-411), München, June 29, 1958, p. 6-7.

[6] A. F. Ryttikh, *Etnographicheskaya karta evropeiskoi Rossii (Ethnographic map of the European part of Russia)*, St.-Petersburg 1875.

[7] Ye.F.Karskiy, *Belorusy (Belarusian)*, t. 1, Warsaw 1903.

[8] Ye.F.Karskiy *Etnograficheskaya karta belorusskogo plemeni. Trudy Komissii po izucheniyu plemennogo sostava naseleniya Rossii (Ethnographic map of the Belarusian nation. Works of the Committee for studies of national composition of the population of Russia)*, Petrograd 1917. The map was published again in 1918, 1920, 1921.

[9] N. N. Durnovo, N. N. Sokolov, D. N. Ushakov, *Opyt dialektologicheskoy karty russkogo yazyka v Yevrope, s prilozheniyem ocherka russkoy dialektologii. Trudy Moskovskoy dialektologicheskoy komissii (Attempt to Create Dialectological Map of Spread of the Russian Language in Europe with Enclosed Essay on Russian Dialectology. Works of the Moscow dialectological Committee)*, ch. V, Moscow 1915.

[10] R.I.Avanesov, *Ocherki russkoy dialektologii (Outline of Russian Dialectology)*, ch. I, Moscow 1949.

[11] P. Ya. Chernykh, *Istoricheskaya grammatika russkogo yazyka (Histroical Grammar of Russian)*, Moscow 1954.

[12] P. S. Kuznetsov, *Russkaya dialektologiya (Russian Dialectology)*, Moscow 1954, 1960.

lished in 1954 and on. Those territories had been recognized as the Belarusians ones by the Decision of the First Congress of the Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) of Belarus of December, 1918, named "On Borders of the Byelorussian Soviet Republic". Paragraph 4 of the said Decision specified that the territories of the Byelorussian Republic should comprise the Smalenski district with the Smalenski, Belski, Dukhaushchynski, Paretski (Dziamidauski), Darahabuski, Elninski, Krasinski and Roslauski sub-districts; the Homelski district with the Surski, Mhlinski, Staradubski sub-districts; the Vitsebski district with the Vialiski, Nevelski and Sebezhski sub-districts.[13] Mainly all those "sub-districts" had been taken by Moscow away from its own (i.e. Soviet) Byelorussian Republic and added to the Russian Federal Soviet Republic."[14]

A. Bahrovich emphasized that "in spite of the numerous historical, ethnographic and linguistic proofs of the Russian scholars, concerning the Belarusian nature of that expanse, in general, and from the point of view of its linguistic background, in particular, as well as contrary to the fact that even today the bulk of the population, residing in those areas, speak Belarusian, nevertheless, according to the Russian census of the population (of 1897, 1926, 1939 and 1959) inhabitants of those territories were considered by both tsarist Russian and the soviet Russian census registers to be always the Russians not only according to their nationality but their native language as well."[15]

The Moscow Committee, which had systematically treated the materials of the Belarusian-Russian linguistic border, did nothing to have done similar survey at the Belarusian-Ukrainian border. But, nevertheless, in light of the results of the work of the Committee it became clear that both former researchers (i.e. Ryttykh and Karski) attributed to the ethnographic borders of Belarus only pure Belarusian dialects and left outside that area the ones, which contained some major elements of the languages, spoken in the neighboring countries. Also, while processing their maps they did not take into account at all ethnographic, historical and other non-linguistic (but very essential) factors. "As the result of their work, the Branshchyna, the Pskoushchyna and the part of Palessie happened to be outside the

[13] *Iz istorii ustanovleniya sovetskoy vlasti v Belorussii i obrazovanii BSSR. Dokumenty i materially po istorii Belorussii (On history of establishment of the soviet power in Byelorussia and formation of the BSSR. Documents and materials on history of Byelorussia)*, t. IV, Minsk 1954, s. 446-447.

[14] Andrei Bahrovich, *Zhyharstva Belaruskaye SSR u sviatle perapisu 1959 hodu (Population of the Byelorussian SSR in light of the 1959 census of the population)*, in: "Zapisy", kn. 1, München 1962, s. 75-76.

[15] Same, p. 76.

ethnographic borders of Belarus" – wrote M. Ahniavida in the "Batskaushchyna". As for the area of the Western Palessie, that error had been noted by the activists of the BNR and had been corrected on the *Ethnographic map of the Belarusian People's Republic,* published in 1919.

According to the evaluation by M. Ahniavida, only in the area of the southern Belarusian-Ukrainian border the actual border approximately matched the ethnographic one.

Ryhor Maksimovich[16], another Belarusian emigrant researcher, pointed out in the "Zapisy" journal that within the course of establishment of the southern border of distribution of the Belarusian people, all the researchers, beginning with the maps of Ryttykh (of 1875) and Karski (of 1904 and 1918), tended to specify different ethnographic borders; they substantiated their decision only based on the linguistic aspects of the problem rather than on the ethnographic ones. It goes without saying that the language can serve as a powerful marker but, in compliance with the results of work of the Moscow Dialectological Committee[17], both within the area of the Belarusian-Ukrainian and the Belarusian-Russian border line there was no clear linguistic border; the latter was replaced by the wide layer of transitional accents and dialects. Therefore, according to R. Maksimovich[18], upon evaluation of the borders between the nations, besides the linguistic features, one should also take into account the historical, anthropologic and ethnographic factors.

The southern ethnographic border had been specified by Kazimerz Moszynski, a famous Polish ethnographer. He considered the ethnographic border, defined by him, to be the former geographic border of the nation. "According to his point of view, ethnographic phenomena were to help him define the south-western line of that huge terrain of the pushcha ancient thick forests, which formerly covered the north-eastern part of the European continent".[20] On the map of K. Moszynski all ethnographic differences lie to the south of the Prypiats river. In case we would

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[16] R. Maksimovich (pseudonym of Vitaut Tumash), *Da spravy belaruskai paudzionnai etnohrafichnai miazhy (On the issue of the Belarusian southern ethnographic border)*, in: "Zapisy", # 1(5), New York 1954, p. 18-24.

[17] N. N. Durnovo, N. N. Sokolov, D. N. Ushakov, *Opyt dialektologicheskoy karty russkogo yazyka v Yevrope, s prilozheniyem ocherka russkoy dialektologii. Trudy Moskovskoy dialektologicheskoy komissii (Attempt to Create Dialectological Map of Spread of the Russian Language in Europe with Enclosed Essay on Russian Dialectology. Works of the Moscow dialectological Committee)*, ch. V, Moscow 1915.

[18] R. Maksimovich (pseudonym of Vitaut Tumash), *Da spravy belaruskai paudzionnai etnohrafichnai miazhy (On the issue of the Belarusian southern ethnographic border)*, in: "Zapisy", # 1(5), New York 1954, p. 18.

[19] K. Moszyński, *Atlas kultury ludowej w Polsce.*

[20] R. Maksimovich (pseudonym of Vitaut Tumash), *Da spravy belaruskai paudzionnai etnohrafichnai miazhy (On the issue of the Belarusian southern ethnographic border)*, in: "Zapisy", # 1(5), New York 1954, p. 20.

need to draw the medium geometric line, it would have to go approximately along the southern border between Palessie and Valyn'; the said line would match the line of the old historical border of the times of the Grand Duchy of Litwa and the present-day state border between Belarus and Ukraine.[21] One of the facts that clearly supports the presence of a vivid ethnographic Belarusian-Ukrainian border is the way how the people used to build their farmhouses in the area of Palessie as well as other ethnographic peculiarities that differed from the Ukrainian but were similar to the Belarusian ones.[22]

"At the same time, - writes I. Kasiak, an engineer, in the "Belaruskaya Dumka" newspaper, – some of the Ukrainian foreign unions claim to the Belarusian southern lands."[23] Thus, in the book named *Ukrainian Resistance*, published by the Ukrainian Congress Committee in 1949 in New York, they published the map of Ukraine which was signed by R. V. Galvin. According to that map approximately half of the present-day Brestskaya region with the cities of Brest and Pinsk as well as south-eastern and south-western parts of the modern Homelskaya region, including the towns of Staradub and Turau, have been incorporated to Ukraine.[24] On the map of 1930, processed by V. Kubiyovych and M. Kulytski in English (it was published in the second volume of the *Ukraine – A Concise Encyclopedia*, published in Toronto in 1971), similar part of the territory of Belarus had been added to Ukraine. In volume I of the said Encyclopedia (published in 1963) they had printed the map of the Reichskommissariat of Ukraine (1942), according to which the cities of Brest and Homel had been incorporated to the Reichskommissariat of Ukraine.[26] The same volume contains the map of spread of the Ukrainian population. According to it, almost 100 per cent of the population of the southern part of the Brest region was considered to be the Ukrainians. Also, the area around the town of Mazyr was marked to comprise 75, 90 and 100 per cent of the Ukrainian population. At the same time, the author stresses that no sources had been specified which could lead to such high percentage of the Ukrainian population in Belarus[27]. I. Kasiak, sub-

[21] Same, p. 22.
[22] Same, p. 23.
[23] Inzh. I. Kasiak, *Ukrainskiya pretensy da Belarusi (Ukrainian claims to Belarus)*, in: "Belaruskaya Dumka", # 34, New York-South River 1989, p. 32-37.
[24] Same, p. 32.
[25] *Ukraine – A Concise Encyclopedia*, prepared by Schevchenko Scientific Society, University of Toronto Press, Volume 2, 1971.
[26] Inzh. I. Kasiak, *Ukrainskiya pretensy da Belarusi (Ukrainian claims to Belarus)*, in: "Belaruskaya Dumka", # 34, New York-South River 1989, p. 33.
[27] Same, p. 32.

stantiating his conclusions on the results of various censuses of the population[28], specifies the data concerning the number of population of the Homelshchyna and the Berastseishchyna. According to them, the Ukrainians happen to have no ethnographic grounds to be able to presently claim to annexation of large parts of the Berastseiskaya and Homelskaya regions to the territory of Ukraine.

Andrei Bahrovich also draws our attention to the Belarusian-Polish borderline. In his publication named *Zhyharstva Belaruskaye SSR u sviatle perapisu 1959 hodu (Population of the Byelorussian SSR in light of the 1959 Census of Population),*[29] he pointed out that "… we have Belastok with its region and the Belarusian Padliashsha within the territory of the present-day Poland, but not in the BSSR or the USSR. In the said area they have more than one hundred primary Belarusian schools with Belarusian as the major language of study as well as three secondary schools, more than one hundred circles of the Belarusian cultural society and about one hundred Orthodox congregations."[30]

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[28] In the publication named *The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic*, published in Minsk in 1927 it had been specified that in 1897 the citizens of the Homel' pavet (province) comprised 74.1% of Belarusians, 14.4% of Jews, 10.2% of Russians and Ukrainians and 1% of Poles. In 1917 the rural population comprised 94.6% of Belarusians, 1% of Jews, 1.2% of Russians and Ukrainians as well as 1.8% of Poles. In 1923 the urban population comprised 44.6% of Belarusians, 42.1% of Jews, 10.3% of Russians and Ukrainians and 1.8% of Poles. The Berasteishchyna was the part of Poland at that time. According to the *Główny Urząd Statystyczny Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej* (see publication *Drugi powszechny spis ludności z dn. 9.XII.1931 r., województwo poleskie* (Warszawa 1938)) with the help of their mother tongue 164 106 of the citizens could speak Polish; as the mother tongue 54 047 recognized the Ukrainian language, 75 338 –Belarusian, 16 198 - Russian, 707 088 – the "local" one, 96 514 – Jewish and 16 452 – Yiddish. The author of the article, published in the "Belaruskaya Dumka", is of the opinion that the "locals" were the Belarusians, and, therefore, the total number of Belarusians should comprise 782 426 people. Based on the above said, percentage of the Ukrainian population vs. the Belarusian one comprised 8% in the Homelskaya province and 6.9% in the Berastseiskaya one. Eng. I. Kasiak also refers to the censuses of the population, conducted in later times, e.g. in publication, named *Itogi vsesoyuznoi perepisi naseleniya 1959 goda. Belorusskaya SSR (Results of the 1959 Census of Population. The Byelorussian SSR)* (Moscow 1963), it has been specified that in the Homelskaya region there lived total 1 361 841 people and they comprised 1 181 096 Belarusians, 89 720 Russians, 45 007 Jews, 33 317 Ukrainians and 7 172 Poles. In the Berasteiskaya region there lived total 1 190 729 people and they comprised 1 024 618 Belarusians, 87 920 Russians, 42 085 Poles, 25 649 Ukrainians, 6 012 Jews and 707 Tatars. According to that census of population the percentage of the Ukrainian population comprised 2.5% and 2.82% in the Berastseiskaya and the Homelskaya regions, accordingly. Similar figures could be found in publication *Itogi perepisi naseleniya 1970 goda (Results of the 1970 Census of the Population)* volume IV, Moscow 1973). Total population of the Homelshchyna comprised 1 533 304 people which consisted of 1 294 046 Belarusians, of 137 410 Russians, of 46 483 Ukrainians, of 43 312 Jews and of 4 841 Poles. The population of the Berastseishchyna equaled 1 294 550 people and comprised 1 114 706 Belarusians, 106 047 Russians, 32 491 Poles, 31 626 Ukrainians, 50 15 Jews and 847 Tatars. According to that census of population the percentage of the Ukrainian population comprised 2.84% and 3.59% in the Berastseiskaya and the Homelskaya regions, accordingly.

[29] Andrei Bahrovich, *Zhyharstva Belaruskaye SSR u sviatle perapisu 1959 hodu (Population of the Byelorussian SSR inlight of the 1959 census of the population)*, in: "Zapisy", kn. 1, München 1962, s. 9-88.

[30] Same

Viktar Siankevich, in his turn, studied the issues of the Polish minority in Belarus.[31] He grounded his conclusions on the basis of the studies carried out in the former Soviet Union. In 1952-1953 the Institute of Ethnography at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR carried out anthropological studies in the Baltic republics. Settlements along the Belarusian-Lithuanian border were the first on the list of studies. It turned out that the inhabitants of those areas happened to speak three languages, i.e. Belarusian, Russian and Lithuanian. The majority of the respondents considered themselves to be the Poles although in everyday life they spoke "in a simple way", i.e. Belarusian. The researchers concluded that the choice of the population's nationality was based on their religious background, i.e. the majority of the people residing in the area under study were Catholics.[32] At the time, when Belarus was the part of Recz Pospolita, religion played the decisive ethno-differentiating role and religious beliefs were associated with the national identity of the population, i.e. Catholics considered themselves to be Poles while the Orthodox believers treated themselves as either Belarusians or Russians. Traces of that mentality survived until today. (…) It is indicative that only 16.7% of Poles considered Polish to be their mother tongue."[33]

The issues of the situation along Belarusian-Lithuanian borderline were paid great attention to in editions published by Belarusian emigration abroad.

The article *Fakty i Prauda (Facts and the Truth)* by Andrei Bahrovich[34] deserves special attention. The Belarusian emigrant researcher published his critical notes concerning the book *Musu Lietuva (Our Lithuania)* by Bronius Kviklys [35] in which the author, according to Bahrovich's point of view, "specifies "historical, geographic and ethnographic information" about the key settlements, located not within the territory of the inter-war Lietuva or the present-day Lithuanian SSR, but *Litwa* within the broader borders, which he had defined himself."[36]

According to Kviklys, the territory of the future Lietuva could reach 105 000 square kilometers (while the inter-war Lietuva comprised only half of that terri-

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[31] Viktar Sian'kevich, *Da pytannia polskaye mianshyni na Belarusi (On the issue of Polish minority in Belarus)*, in: "Zapisy", # 14, New York 1976, p. 76-84.

[32] Same, p. 77; also: M. V. Vitov, K. Yu. Mark, N. N. Cheboksarov, *Etnicheskaya antropologiya Vostochnoy Pribaltiki. Trudy Pribaltiyskoi Obyedinionnoi kompleksnoy ekspeditsii (Ethnic anthropology of Western part of Baltic States. Works of the Baltic United Complex Committee)*, kn. 2, Moscow 1959, s. 10

[33] Same, p.78; also: E. R. Sabalenka, *Suchasnaya etnichnaya situatsiya u Belarusi (Modern Ethnic Situation in Belarus)*, in: Vestsi AN BSSR. Seriya hramadskih navuk, # 3, Minsk 1976, s. 107.

[34] A. Bahrovich, *Fakty I prauda (Facts and the Truth),* in: "Zapisy", kn. 4, München 1966, s. 252-256.

[35] *Musu Lietuva. Krasto vietoviu istoriniai, geografiniai, etnografiniai bruozai. I* tomas. Paruose Broniu Kviklys. Lietuviu Enciklopedijos Leidikla. Boston 1964, 752 s.

[36] A. Bahrovich, *Fakty I prauda (Facts and the Truth),* in: "Zapisy", kn. 4, München 1966, s. 252.

tory, i.e. 56 670 square kilometers). On the Belarusian side, Kviklys thinks, the border should stretch approximately via Druya,

Braslau, Postauye, Maladechna, Valozhyn, Mikalayeushchyna, Indura, Auhustova. The author also points out that Kviklys did not add to that list other territories of Lietuva, which, according to him, Lithuania has the historical right for, i.e. the Belarusified districts of Dzisna and Vialeyka, the lands of the Slonimshchyna and Navahradchyna.[37]

It follows from the book by B. Kviklys that the territory of Lietuva should comprise Belarusian lands of the Vilenski, Trotski, Vialeyski, Maladechanski, Ashmianski, Valozhynski, Lidzki, Shchuchynski, Horadzenski, Braslauski and the Sviantsianski districts (pavets). Kviklys substantiates his points of view based on the fact that Belarusian Catholics are the Lithuanians who only speak Belarusian because they had already gotten Belarusified.

G. Grinavickiene, in her description of some phenomena, dealing with contacts of Lithuanian and Slavic dialects in south-western part of the Lithuanian SSR, points out that the population of the Belarusian-Lithuanian borderline is multilingual. Viktar Siankevich, referring to the publication of G. Grinavickiene in the "Zapisy", specifies that "For example, the inhabitants of the south-western suburbs of the Lithuanian capital (i.e. south-eastern part of the Vilenski district, the eastern part of the Trotski district and the Eishyshki district) are known to speak mainly Belarusian (or, they call it – *pa-prostu* or "in a simple way") and Polish; they can also speak Russian; some of the people aged 70 to 80 and older can speak Lithuanian; the children of school age can speak only broken Lithuanian. (…) The people, residing in the areas under study, although considering themselves to be Poles, in everyday life in the majority of cases tend to speak Belarusian ("in a simple way"), especially the middle-aged population and the youth."[38]

Numerous problems, arising out of failure to see the difference between the terms of "Litsviny" and "Lithuanians" have been considered by Chuly Naziralnik. He wrote that "If we accept the way Lithuania percepts the history, i.e. the fact that the Grand Duchy of Litwa was a Lithuanian state, we can hardly remember the time from that historical period when the Belarusian lands, stretching only from Yeuya to Maladechna, belonged to the Duchy. Even within the worst times of the *historical Litwa*, i.e. at the time of decay of the state – in 1772, the Grand Duchy of

[37] Same, p. 253.

[38] Viktar Siankevich, *Da pytannia polskaye menshyni na Belarusi (On the issue of the Polish minority in Belarus)*, in: "Zapisy", # 14, New York 1976, p. 79.

Litwa comprised the whole territories of the Vilenshchyna, the Horadzenshchyna and the Minshchyna (both of them with the Palessie regions, of course), the Polachchyna, the Vitsebshchyna and the Mahilioushchyna. At the time of prosperity of the Grand Duchy of Litwa the latter also comprised the Smalenshchyna, the Severshchyna and some other lands."[39]

The reasons for claims of Lithuania to the Belarusian lands have been also studied by Licwin-Hudas-Krews, who came to the conclusion that on analogy with some other similar issues, they had been assisted by their "big brother", i.e. the "maskal" (a Muscovite – *IB*). "Having

conquered Belarus, the Muscovites realized that it was not in their favor to call Belarusians the "Litsviny (i.e. their second original name, along with the "Kryvichy" one) as it would always remind our people about the times when our ancestors happened to constantly fight against Moscow. Therefore, the Muscovites applied the term of "Belarusians" to our people while the name of "Litsviny" was attributed to the Lithuanians; at the same time the propaganda publications tried to propagate the idea that the Grand Duchy of Litwa was the Lithuanian state, i.e. it was a foreign country that did not have any close ties with Moscow. At a definite stage the Lithuanian revival movement utilized that concept, although, originally that movement was called the "zhamoitski" one."[40]

Licwin-Hudas-Krews refers to earlier works of the researchers and quotes the conclusion made by Brukner, the Polish professor, when he was reviewing the Polish translation of the Belarusian manuscript, made in Zamos'tse, i.e. *"I keep referring to the word "Lithuanian", but in reality it means "Belarusian" as in the 16th century no one could have even dreamed about Lithuania in its modern meaning".* The regular Muscovites as well as the Ukrainians would traditionally call Belarusians the "Litsviny". The dictionary by Dal' contains a very demonstrative example: *"Let a Litsvin say whatever he wants to, but he will still pronounce it with palatalized "dz'. Only the dead Litsvin won't do it."*

The Belarusian language was also the state language of the Grand Duchy of Litwa. The Code of Laws of the Grand Duchy of Litwa and the Charter had not only been written in Belarusian but also contained the laws that originated from the Belarusian lands, e.g. common law on the … courts. The Charter contained some laws that had been previously adopted in certain Belarusian lands (i.e. Polatsk,

[39] Chuly Naziralnik, *Pra letuviskiya vodhuki (On the Lithuanian Echo)*, in: "Batskaushchyna", February 23, 1949, p. 2.

[40] Licwin-Hudas-Krews, *My i nashy susedzi (We are our neighbors)*, in: "Batskaushchyna", # 50, p. 3.

Vitsebsk, Smalensk) and were the parts of their constitutions, e.g. the clause about personal immunity. Earlier they happened to be the part of the Privileges of Grand Duke Kazimer (1547) and from that document they were transferred to the Charter of Grand Duchy of Litwa.

Because of the dominance of the Belarusian language within the frame of the Grand Duchy of Litwa, the Zhamoitskaya and the Aukshtotskaya gentry considered their mother tongue (dialects of Lithuanian – *IB*) to be too "simple" and applied Belarusian (which was recognized to be the one of a "higher" standard) in writing their chronicles. This is known to be the routine choice which is usually made by the nationally-assimilated peoples.

Licwin-Hudas-Krews points out that one should not speak about the right of the Lithuanians for Mensk or Berastse only because the towns were formerly called Mensk Litouski and Berasts Litouski. The presence of the toponyms of the Baltic origin within the territory of Belarus also does not speak in favor of their Lithuanian nature as such place names are known to be the normal thing for the Baltic-Slavic people which Belarusians are.

Discussing the issue of modern history, Chuly Naziralnik points out that in 1920s there had been no border between the Belarusian and Lithuanian people at all. "There had been only the agreement of 1920 between the Lithuanians and the Russian communists on the borderline. That agreement had never been brought into life; in the fall of 1939 it had been terminated because of the annexation of Vilna to the soviet Byelorussia. The same fall, only a bit later, there had been another soviet-Lithuanian agreement signed, according to which Lithuania acquired a piece of land up to Medniki, i.e. one hundred kilometers smaller that the previous one. However, Moscow ceded that territory to Lithuania not because of some objective reasons; on the contrary, Molotov had stated that Moscow gave those Belarusian territories away not because of Vilna being the Lithuanian city, but for the sake of Lithuanian "aspiration". Molotov failed to add that Moscow was meeting "aspiration" of Lithuania, giving up neither Lithuanian nor Russian city of Vilna; Moscow wanted to satisfy its own "aspiration" for the future of Lithuania. Actually, that happened on June 15, 1940."[41] The "Batskaushchyna", polemizing with the "Teviskas Ziburiai"[42] Lithuanian newspaper, published in Canada, points

[41] Chuly Naziralnik, *Pra letuviskiya vodhuki (On the Lithuanian Echo)*, in: "Batskaushchyna", February 23, 1949, p. 2.

[42] # 117, 30.03.1952.

out that Belarusians would never recognize the Lithuanian-Belarusian border of 1920 in compliance with the agreement, signed in Moscow by the soviet republics. It should be clear to Lithuanians that the Belarusian people will never recognize any agreements, signed by the soviet government and its partners, which aimed to eliminate the will of the Belarusian people to independent life within its ethnographic borders,

approved on March 25, 1918. It had been specified in the Charter of the Council of the Belarusian People's Republic, that the Council recognized all the agreements, signed by tsarist Russia as well as the one that would be signed by Red Moscow without any consent of the Belarusian people, to be invalid.

Ryhor Maksimovich, summing up his reasoning on ethnographic borders of Belarus, concluded with the quotation of words of Piatro Biassonau (said in 1871): This is the way how Belarus embraced, connected and united, marked and isolated its land, the whole vast Krai, stretching from the Dzvina down to the Nioman as well as between the two rivers, from the Polish borders to the ones of Pskou, Nouharad and Smalensk where it cut right into the Vialikaya Rus' close to Mazhaisk, in the south – even further down the rivers, especially the Dniapro, across Valyn' and the Charnihaushchyna, joining in the gradual tints with the Malaya Rus'."[43]

In conclusion it is worth paying closer attention to the ethnographic borders of Belarus, specified by Yan Stankevich in his publication *Etnohrafichniya I histraychnyia terytoryi I hranitsy Belarusi (Ethnographic and historical territories and borders of Belarus)*[44]. Thus, according to his words, starting with the Pskouskaye Lake to the north of Piachora, the border with Estonia runs approximately along the state border in such a way that the cities of Piachora and Izbarsk remain on the Belarusian side. Reaching Latvia, the border stretches down to the Korsuka railroad station (which is located in the Liutsynski pavet of the Vitsebskaya region). From this point the border goes down to the south-east, being only ten kilometers away from the Sebeski pavet (district). Having reached the Siniuha River, the border turns sharply to the west and, later on, from the Cherza Lake to the north-west. In the form of arch it approaches the Rezhytski pavet and from there, its broken line goes to the south-east of the borders of the Liutsynski, Sebeski and the Drysenski districts. Then, the border runs to the south-west ap-

[43] R. Maksimovich, *Da spravy belaruskai paudzionnai etnohrafichnai miazhy (On the issue of the Belarusian southern ethnographic border)*, in: "Zapisy", # 1 (5), New York 1954, p. 24.

[44] Ya. Stankevich *Etnohrafichnyia i histarychnyia terytoryi i hranitsy Belarusi (Ethnographic and historical territories and borders of Belarus)*, in: "Veda", ## 9-10 (14-15), September-October 1952, p. 257-279.

proximately along the line, separating the Liutsynski and Rezhytski districts from the Dzvinski and the Drysenski ones in the direction of the Dzvina, i.e. more than 6 kilometers west of Prydruisk. Further on, the Belarusian border continues to run initially to the west of Dzvinsk and then to the north-west of Ilukst. The area east of Ilukst has been inhabited by the Belarusians.[45]

From Ilukst the border stretches to the east in the direction of the Kovenskaya province and west of the Drysviaty Lake, having enveloped some territory of the Novaaliaksandrauski district. From the Drysviaty Lake the border runs to the east of the Vilenskaya province and the Dzisna river. Having crossed the Dzisna river, it continues across the area of the Sviantsianski district in a bit curved way to the east and to the west, crosses the Zhamaitsianka river and the curved borderline goes across the Vilenski district west of Kernava. At this point it switches to the opposite bank of the Villia River and its curved line goes to the south, adding Yeuye and Troki to the Belarusian lands, i.e. to the Lidski and Ashmianski districts. The Lithuanian territory covers the Dzevianishki volost and part of the Sedlisk volost. The, the borderlinegoes along the northern part of the Lidski district, i.e. from Heraniony to south-west of the Bastuny train station, attached to the Palesskaya railroad system, and then as far as Zabalats'. From this point the border goes to the north of Eishyshki, then to the south-west of the Dub Lake. From the Dub lake the Belarusian ethnographic border reaches the borders of the Haradzenskaya province and flowing of the Ratnichanka River into the Nioman in the area of Druskeniki.

From Druskeniki the Belarusian language travels down to the Suvalskaya province, occupying south-eastern part of the Seinenski district and, partially, the Auhustouski district as well. Within the area of the Suvalskaya province the borderline goes from the Nioman river to the Auhustouski channel and then along the Netsa River down to the border with the Horadzenskaya province. The Polish dialectologist Kazimerz Nitsch in his book *Dialekty jezyka polskiego (Dialects of the Polish language)* also supports the idea, that the territory, within which Polish is currently spoken, had once belonged to the Belarusian ethnographic expanse.[46]

From that point on the Belarusian ethnographic border directs to the south and west of Suhavolia and Karytsina and reaches Knyshin and Haroshcha (which is 14 km west of Belastok), then towards Surazh down to the Narau river and Mizhrech-

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[45] Ya. Stankevich refers to the publication of Karski, i.e. *Etnograficheskaya karta belorusskogo plemeni (Ethnographic map of the Belarusian race)*, published in 1918 in Petrograd.

[46] Kazimierz Nitsch, *Dialekty języka polskiego (Dialects of Polish)*, in: *Encyklopedia polska,* t.II – dzial III. (cz.II), 1915, s. 253-254).

cha of the Bela-Padliaski district. Beginning with Mizhrechcha the Belarusian ethnographic expanse borders on the Ukrainian one. The border stretches in the south-eastern direction and reaches Liubiazh and remains some 10-15 kilometers away from the towns of Bela-Padliask and Berastse; from Liubiazh it goes down to Dubravitsy and then to the north of Aleusk; from that point the border goes in the south-eastern direction of Patapavichy of the Aurutski district and continues down to point where the Tsetserava River flows into the Dniapro. The above is the description of the Belarusian ethnographic border, specified by Yan Stankevich, who, in his turn, borrowed it from the publication *Zagadnienie jezykowe Polesia* by Leszek Assowski.[47]

From the point where the Tsetsiarava River flows into the Dniapro, the border continues up to the town of Os'tser, located on the Dzisna River, and then reaches the point where it flows into the Seima River; from that point the border goes direct to the east, deviating a bit to the south of Hluhava. From here the border runs to the south and adds to the Belarusian ethnographic expanse the north-eastern part of the Putsivel district of the former Kurskaya province together with the town of Putsiul'. Here, in the west, the Belarusian-Ukrainian border goes along the border between the formed Hluhauski district and the Putsivelski one; in the south the border with the territory, within which they speak Ukrainian, is formed by the Seim River while in the east the eastern border of the Putsivelski district separates the Belarusian terrains from the Russian-speaking ones.

From that point the border with the area, where they speak Russian, goes up to the north and is located 25 kilometers away from Dzmitrausk (the former Kurskaya province) and a bit to the east of Dzmitrausk and Karacheva of the former Arlouskaya province. Then, the borderline turns to the east of Bolkhava and Beleva, then stretches along the Oka River down to the point where the Vuhra River flows into it; it continues in the direction of Medyn' and the settlement of Matayeva, which is a bit east of Gzhatsk; from there the border keeps going along the east bank of the Gzhats River; some 10-14 kilometers away from the border between the former Tverskaya province and the Smalenskaya one.

The Belarusian ethnographic expanse, encircled by the east border, comprises almost all of the territories of the Smalenshchyna, most of the Kaluzhskaya province as well as the major parts of the Arlouskaya and Kurskaya provinces. That border had been determined by the Moscow Dialectological Committee and was

[47] Leszek Ossowski, *Zagadnienie językowe Polesia,* Warsaw 1936.

specified in the book by N. N. Durnavo, N. N. Sokolov, D. N. Ushakov named *Opyt dialektologicheskoy karty russkogo yazyka v Yevrope (Attempt to Create Dialectological Map of Spread of the Russian Language in Europe)*.[48] Yan Stankevich also refers to works by Dal' who registered the presence of palatalized "dz'" and "ts'" in accents of the inhabitants of the Smalenskaya province. Studying the language spoken in the Kaluzhchyna, Arloushchyna and the Kurshchyna, the Belarusian emigrant researcher quoted not only works by Dal and Karski; he also referred to the works by S. Maksimau who in 1876 in his publication *Drevniaya i Novaya Rossiya (Ancient and New Russia)*[49] mentioned about the existence of palatalized "dz'" in speech of the inhabitants of the Kaluska-Arlouskaye Palessie.

From the border between the Smalenskaya and the Tverskaya provinces the Belarusian-Russian borderline goes along the left bank of the Volga, approximately 40 kilometers away from the latter and the same distance to the town of Dziamiansk, having left the chain of lakes together with the Selihersk Lake on the Belarusian side. Speech of the people, residing in that area, had been studied by V. Popov and I. Galanov. They registered the presence of transition of **л** into **ў**, fricative **г**, the interrogative particle **ці** and other features of the Belarusian language.

From Dziamiansk the border turns to the west, and, having reached Porkhava, it rather rapidly turns to the north-west in the direction of the Pskouskaye Lake right in the point where the Chornaya River flows into it. The old accents of the Pskoushchyna had been studied mainly by N. Karynski and A. Shakhmatov. According to Karynski, the Pskov language of the 15th century possessed all the most important phonetic, and partially the morphologic features of the Belarusian one. Professor Piotar Buzuk studied that language in 1930s and concluded in his *Da haraktarystyki paunochna-belaruskih dyyalektau – Hutarki Nevelskaha i Vialiskaha pavetau (On characteristic features of northern Belarusian dialects – Accents of the Nevelski and Vialiski districts)* that the presence of such peculiarities as "tsokannie" (i.e. failure to see the difference in pronunciation of **ч** and **ц** and pronunciation of these two consonants as universal **ц**, e.g. *petska*), transition from **яць** into **е** and the existence of the **гл** **кл**-group (e.g. *myhla, pamiaklo*) instead of the common Belarusian **дл** , **тл** enable us to attribute the Pskov accents to the northern group of the Belarusian accents.

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[48] N. N. Durnovo, N. N. Sokolov, D. N. Ushakov, *Opyt dialektologicheskoy karty russkogo yazyka v Yevrope, s prilozheniyem ocherka russkoy dialektologii. Trudy Moskovskoy dialektologicheskoy komissii (Attempt to Create Dialectological Map of Spread of the Russian Language in Europe with Enclosed Essay on Russian Dialectology.Works of the Moscow dialectological Committee)*, ch. V, Moscow 1915.

[49] S. Maksimov, *Drevniaya i novaya Rossiya (Ancient and New Russia),* 1876, # 8, s. 299-300, 306.

M. Ahniavida specifies approximate figures of the total area of nowadays Belarus, the Belarusian People's Republic and the ethnographic Belarus which are as follows:

The BSSR comprised	– 208 000 square kilometers
The BNR	– 320 000 square kilometers
Ethnographic Belarus	– 480 000 square kilometers.[50]

Translated by ***Ivan Burlyka****.*

РЭЗЮМЭ

Спробы вызначэньня межаў беларускай нацыянальнай прасторы рабіліся ўжо ад другой паловы XIX стагодзьдзя. У Цэнтральнай і Ўсходняй Эўропе найбольш важнай і характэрнай нацыянальнай асаблівасьцяй зьяўлялася (і, відаць, надалей зьяўляецца) мова, якая лёгка паддаецца аб'ектыўнаму навуковаму сьцьвярджэньню. І таму, беручы яшчэ палітычна-гістарычныя абставіны, этнаграфічныя карты Беларусі XIX-XX стагодзьдзяў гэта ў першую чаргу карты пашырэньня беларускае мовы.

Першым, хто спрабаваў вызначыць этнаграфічныя межы расьсяленьня беларускага народу, быў А.Ф.Рыттых. У выніку праведзеных ім досьледаў была складзеная ды надрукаваная ў 1875 г. у Пецярбурзе *Этнаграфічная карта эўрапейскае Расеі*, дзе першы раз былі зарысаваныя этнаграфічныя межы беларускай нацыянальнай прасторы. На пачатку XX стагодзьдзя Яўхім Карскі апрацаваў *Этнаграфічную карту беларускага племені*, якая была зьмешчаная ў I томе ягонай працы *Беларусы*.

Калі ў 1917-1920 гадох – у пару Ўсебеларускага Кангрэсу ды тварэньня Беларускае Народнае Рэспублікі – беларускія палітыкі й дзяржаўныя дзеячы сталі перад канкрэтным заданьнем вызначэньня дзяржаўных межаў БНР, яны ў сваёй працы абаперліся на апублікаваныя раней матэрыялы й карты. Надрукаваная ў 1919 годзе *Этнаграфічная Карта Беларускай Народнай Рэспублікі* ў асноўных рысах ахоплівала прастору, зазначаную на картах Рыттыха й Карскага. Ёсьць на ёй некалькі паправак. Найбольш істотная датычыць паўдзённага захаду. У межы Беларусі былі ўключаны Берасьцейшчына й Піншчына – абшары, якія, відаць, з увагі на ўкраінскія моўныя ўплывы, пакідаліся па-за беларускай этнаграфічнай прасторай.

Этнаграфічныя межы Беларусі абмяркоўваліся на старонках такіх беларускіх эміграцыйных выданьняў, як: „Бацькаўшчына", „Беларуская Думка", „Веда", „Запісы". Гэтым пытаньнем цікавіліся: М. Агнявіда, А. Багровіч, Р. Максімовіч, І. Касяк, В. Сянькевіч, Чулы Назіральнік, Licwin-Hudas-Krews, Я .Станкевіч.

Разважаньні пра этнаграфічныя межы Беларусі Рыгор Максімовіч заканчвае словамі Пятра Бяссонава з 1871 году: „Гэтак Белая Русь абняла, злучыла й аб'яднала, азначыла й абасобіла сваю зямлю, цэлы й абшырны Край, ад Дзьвіны да Нёману й у паміжлежным пабярэжжы, ад

[50] M. Ahniavida, *Etnahrafichny prastor Belarusi (Ethnographic expanse of Belarus)*, in: "Batskaushchyna", # 26 (412), München, July 13, 1958. p. 3.

граніцаў польскіх у Каралеўстве й пад Каронай да Пскоўскіх, Наўгародзкіх, Смаленскіх, дзе ўрэзалася ў Вялікую Русь пад самы Мажайск, на поўдзень-жа яшчэ далей па цёку рэк, асабліва Дняпра, праз Валынь і Чарнігаўшчыну, зьліваючыся паступовымі пералівамі з Малою Русяй."

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Michael Fleming

The Belarusian minority in the 2002 Polish census[1]

This paper analyses the results of the 2002 Polish census with specific focus upon the Belarusian minority in the Podlaskie voivodship. I argue that the census results regarding the Belarusian minority (and other minorities) need to be contextualised by other data and sociological studies if the aim is to formulate policies congruent with the demands of the new minority rights regime. I contend that the value of the census data in regards to minorities rests upon recognising that the 'snapshot' of spring 2002 does not actually provide an empirical account of minorities in Poland and certainly not of the Belarusian population, rather it is an indirect measure of underlying social pressures affecting minority populations. It can therefore provide a good benchmark from which to develop policies that aim

[1] This paper draws heavily upon my 'National minorities in the 2002 Polish census' presented at the ASN special convention Warsaw University 19th July 2004 and some passages have been reproduced.

to deliver the full benefits of the new minority rights regime to minority members and communities.

Introduction

In 2002, for the first time in more than 50 years, the Polish census included questions pertaining to nationality and to the language citizens speak at home in order to ascertain the size of national minority populations within the country.[2] The collection of such data will, it has been argued, enable the production of reliable data to guide policy decisions, resource allocation and to ensure compliance with the new minority rights regime. However, many of Poland's national minorities were very concerned about the inclusion of questions pertaining to nationality prompting the Minister of the Interior, Krzysztof Janik, to reassure Poland's national minority populations stating: 'Do not be afraid of the census. This census and its results will allow [the government] to create a special database on minorities. It will be a basis for the government and it will make it possible to work out an appropriate position for negotiations with the European Union regarding the protection of national minorities. It will also serve as a basis for talks between the government and local self-governments in order to conduct a consistent policy toward the minorities.'[3]

However since the fall of communism there have been inconsistencies in the treatment of national minorities – a consequence of the minorities differing positions within Polish polity, their differential access to key resources such as independent finance, and their varying ability to achieve voice within and without democratic fora. For while the advent of the new minority rights regime has produced real benefits for minority populations, these benefits have not been enjoyed fully by all minorities.[4] I have explored the differential treatment of minorities in Poland elsewhere and have shown how the Belarusian minority has been subjected to hegemonic control, and follow Czykwin (2000) in describing the minority as a stigmatised group. The key question therefore becomes what does the census

[2] During the Nazi occupation of Poland several censuses were taken, including the census of Warsaw's Jewish population of 28th October 1939. The taking of this census was part of the first stage (identification) towards the destruction of the Jews. See Hilberg (1985). In the immediate post-war period a nationality verification process was undertaken which aimed to identify those to be expelled to Germany, and / or to migrate to neighbouring socialist countries. See Mironowicz, E. (1993:111)

[3] RFE/RL Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine Report Vol. 4, No. 9, 5 March 2002

[4] See Fleming, M. 2002 'Substantiating the New Minority Rights Regime in Poland: Political capital and the importance of deliberation' in Annus Albaruthenicus 2002 p167-189

actually record given the socio-economic context in which it takes place?

Firstly, the census is an attempt (amongst others) to quantify the number of Polish citizens declaring non-Polish nationality. But its wider relevance is the manner in which it may also reflect their condition. In short, data derived from the census could be used to answer the questions – Are national minorities enjoying the full benefits of Polish society? And more pointedly – Is the Polish state fulfilling its legal obligations towards national minorities? – since the level of response / non-response to the nationality and language questions can be adjudged, in some sense, to reflect minorities confidence and inclusion within the wider Polish society.

The 2002 Census[5]

Table 1.1 National minority populations in Poland in 1992-1993 according to various organisations and in 2002 according to the 2002 census and Polish government estimates:

	Estimates of the number of minorities 1992-3 (in thousands)				Number of minorities 2002 (in thousands)	
Minority	**PTS-GUS**	**MEN**	**SKM-NiE**	**ACTIV-IST**	**Census 2002***	**Report to CoE 2002***
Germans	260	305-308	350-500	500-1000	152.9	300-500
Ukrainians/ Lemkos	70	250-280	250-300	300-500	31.0	200-300 / 60-70
Belarusians	**76**	**200-230**	**250-300**	**300-400**	**48.7**	**200-300**
Gypsies	25	25	25	-	12.9	20-30
Lithuanians	9	20	15-20	25-30	5.8	20-25
Slovaks	5	20	10-15	20-25	2	10-20
Jews	3	15	8-10	6-10	1.1	8-10
Total (% of population)	450 (1.2)	838-940 (2.1-2.4)	908-1145 (2.3-3.0)	1151-1965 (3.0-5.1)	471.5 (1.23)	841-1276 (2-3)

* Note: not all 'national minorities' are recorded in this table.

SOURCE: Szczepański, M.S. (1997:9), data for the 2002 census is drawn from www.stat.gov.pl, and the 2002 Polish government estimates are from the 'Report submitted by Poland pursuant to article 25, paragraph 1of the Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities' Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

The organisations are: Polish Statistical Society (PTS) and the Chief Central Statistical Office (GUS), the Ministry of National Education (MEN), the Parliamentary Commission for National and Ethnic Minorities (SKMNiE) and activists of the national minorities (ACTIVISTS).

[5] For the results of the 2002 census see www.stat.gov.pl. The census data cited in this paper comes from this source.

In relation to national minorities the 2002 census asked two questions. Firstly, it asked citizens to answer the following question:

What is you nationality? (*Do jakiej narodowości się Pan(i) zalicza?*)

The question was formulated with reference to the 1921 census and contemporary European standards. The results of the census are illustrated below, together with various government agency estimates taken from 1993 and 2002.

The census form defined nationality as follows:

Nationality is a declarative (based on a subjective sentiment) individual trait of every person that expresses his/her emotional, cultural, or genealogical (because of the parents' background) linkage to a certain nation.

(Narodowość jest deklaratywną (opartą na subiektywnym odczuciu) cechą indywidualną każdego człowieka, wyrażającą jego związek emocjonalny (uczuciowy), kulturowy lub genealogiczny (ze względu na pochodzenie rodziców) z określonym narodem).

This definition of nationality emphasises an individual's freedom to choose nationality within the fairly loose parameters of emotional and cultural identification and family heritage. As a matter of individual discretion, this definition follows the contemporary convention within the new minority rights regime to emphasis the right of individuals to ascribe themselves whatever nationality they choose without discrimination – the assumption being that nationality signifiers such as belief, language, culture and place are present. In order to assess part of the content of nationality the census asked a second question:

What language do you speak normally at home? (*W jakim języku (językach) rozmawia Pan(i) najczęściej w domu?*)

The census form allowed the population to detail the language or languages they spoke at home. 97.8% (37,405,300) of respondents spoke Polish at home. 96.5% spoke only Polish at home (36,894,400). In total 87 languages other than Polish were recorded. In addition, the census results noted that many respondents marked what was deemed by the census collators as dialects in this section. Unfor-

tunately figures for the breakdown of 'dialects' is not yet available, nor is the criteria for determining what may be a dialect rather than a language. This data could well be important in any description of the Belarusian minority who, according to recent surveys (Sadowski, A 1995, Fleming, M. 2003:137) frequently describe themselves as using a place centred language / dialect.

The data produced reveal that the most popular non-Polish language spoken at home is German, with 204,600 people speaking this language, followed by English with 89,900 people. In total some 563,000 people (1.47%) speak a language other than Polish at home, of whom 511,000 also speak Polish. Only 52,500 (0.14%) declared that they only speak a non-Polish language at home.. Clearly, the census is unable to advise us how well people speak the languages they declare that they speak at home, nor whether these declarations are actually true. But in a sense the actual veracity of the figures may be less important than the situation as a whole that they describe. Indeed, it is worth recalling the 1926 League of Nations investigation into the language spoken at home in Silesia that reported that many of the declarations were false. The rationale behind the false declarations was to secure schooling in German – knowledge of which, it was thought, opened up more opportunities than just Polish. (Rose, J.W. 1936:214)

In 2002, as in 1921 and 1931, pressures and tensions exist which may encourage certain responses and inhibit others. Indeed, 2.03% of respondents (774,900 people) did not answer the nationality question, and it can be assumed that most of these were of non-Polish nationality. Adding those who did not declare their nationality with those who declared themselves to be non-Polish would sum to 3.26% of Poland's population - a number that is congruent with pre-census estimates of the national minority population. It is therefore imperative to triangulate the census data with other data in order to establish its meaning.

Belarusian responses

In the 2002 census 48,700 people declared their nationality as Belarusian compared with the Polish government estimated size of the Belarusian minority of between 200,000 and 300,000. Nevertheless, Belarusian activists expressed delight that so many people had actually declared Belarusian as their nationality.[6] Eugeniusz Wappa a Belarusian activist of the Belarusian Union based in Białystok

[6] Conversations with various Belarusian activists during the Belarusian Trilog conference, Krynki, July 2003.

commented that 'The number of 50,000 Belarusians is a very good result given the conditions in which we live and the situation in which the census was taken. It should also be taken into account that [Poland's] other minorities in contrast to us, have strong support in their [cultural] fatherlands. We think that this result testifies to the fact that the real number of Belarusians living in Poland amounts to 100,000-150,000.'[7] The activists were right to be pleased.

Since 1989, the Belarusian minority has failed to achieve voice within and without democratic fora. As Rabagliati (2001) illustrates Belarusian activists have been unable to translate the freedom to articulate Belarusian identity as a force to secure electoral mandates, or to raise funds which would help develop their communities. Indeed, in Białystok, Belarusian and Orthodox councillors have found themselves marginalised by the post-Solidarity majority. Antipathy towards minority voice within the Podlaskie voivodship – where the Belarusian live – is well documented (Czykwin 2000, Rabagliati, 2001, Fleming 2003, Franklin 2001, 2002).

Indeed since the fall of communism the Belarusian minority has suffered marginalisation. In Bielsk Podlaskie, in 1990 the local Solidarity won a clear majority in the council and then proceeded to sack those with Belarusian-sounding names on the grounds that in the United States a new administration brings in a new team (Czykwin, E.1997:67). Furthermore in a session of council on 8th October, the local Solidarity (KO "S") queried the existence of the minority, arguing that the Belarusians were native Poles, but converted under compulsion to the Orthodox Church following the partitions.[8]

Within the regional parliament, post-Solidarity parties have held a consistent majority and have lacked the inclination to respond to the concerns of the regions minority populations. Indeed the AWS in 1999 voted against a proposal to set up a Sejmik commission for National, Ethnic and Religious Minorities.[9]

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[7] RFE/RL Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine Report Vol. 5, No. 24, 25 June 2003. Wappa's estimate may actually be too conservative. Jan Syczewski, the chairman of the Belarusian Social-Cultural Association, reported prior to the census that, 'We have conducted a poll in a school in which we knew all students were of Belarusian origin. The results of the poll showed that only one-fourth of the students declared their Belarusian roots. If the general census shows that there is no Belarusian minority in Poland, will it really be so?' Given that a Belarusian school environment is probably more safe and receptive for self-declaration as Belarusian than the wider society, then even if we just extrapolate on the basis of Syczewski's figures we can argue that there are around 200,000 Belarusian in Poland. This figure sits fairly well with other estimates. See RFE/RL Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine Report Vol. 4, No. 9, 5 March 2002

[8] This belief underpinned the policy of the Archbishop Szumecki in his dealings with the 'Orthodox'. This was clearly demonstrated by his involvement in the creation of 'Jedność' (Unity) for the 1994 local election, which promulgated a hostile attitude towards the 'Orthodox'.

[9] See "Sygnały do Białorusinów" in Przegląd Prawosławny February 1999. Also see Fleming, M. 2003: 325.

Another major problem facing the Belarusian minority are the negative connotations that are associated with Belarusians. Their culture is conceived as low and unhistoric, they as backward, and their language is understood by many of them and others as 'simple', 'ordinary', 'common' or 'local' (Czykwin, E. 1998: 175). The combination of these prejudices has led a leading sociologist, Elżbieta Czykwin, studying the Belarusian minority to describe them as a stigmatised group. And this stigmatisation has real consequences.[10]

In total 39,900 people in Podlaskie declared that they speak Belarusian at home;[11] most of these also spoke Polish. A further 18,000 failed to complete the language section of the census. Adding these figures together gives internal consistency with the nationality results. But like the results of the nationality question the language data should be considered as undercounting Belarusian speakers. Nevertheless, the number of people who declared that they speak Belarusian at home is surprisingly high given the status inequality between Polish and Belarusian, and the negative connotations associated with Belarusian. This inequality has fostered assimilation to the wider Polish society, including conversion to Roman Catholicism and has also legitimated the marginalisation of the views of the Belarusian minority.

The most salient example of this is illustrated by the continuing conflict over the Białowieża forest, within and around which most Belarusians live. Local residents argued, correctly, that the extension of the national park would threaten their livelihoods and their standard of living. This view was dismissed by backers of the park extension and by the vice-marshal in Białystok as being incorrect and 'a misunderstanding' respectively. It took a major anti-extension demonstration in Białowieża in March 2000 for the Belarusian perspective to be given a long overdue hearing – four years after the size of the park was doubled.[12] Interestingly, the main antagonist to the views of the Belarusian / local residents perspective was not

[10] The general Polish stereotype of the Belarusian minority is actually quite positive, largely due to the association of Belarusians with the rural idyll and general quietism. (See CBOS reports 1994 and 1999 for details) But as Czykwin, E. (2000) and Mironowicz, E. (1991) demonstrate the data from the opinion polls is somewhat misleading. Firstly it reflects the views of Poles as a whole, and does not adequately reflect perceptions in the Podlaskie voivodship where the Belarusians live. In short the CBOS opinion polls reflect an abstract idea of Belarusians, whereas Czykwin and Mironowicz record the actions and perceptions of those who interact with Belarusians – mainly in Podlaskie.

[11] In Podlaskie 11,900 people (1%) spoke only (a) non-Polish language(s) at home. The breakdown of these returns is not yet available.

[12] The Białowieża forest conflict has been analysed in depth by Franklin, S. 2001 and 2002. With specific reference to the Belarusian minority see Fleming 2002.

the local Polish population; in southern Podlaskie the Belarusian minority is numerically dominate, and with the exception of Hajnówka town runs many councils (on an SLD platform), nor was it the regional or central administration, but rather international wildlife NGOs trading on the rhetoric of environmental crisis to legitimate the exclusion of local voice.[13]

A further factor inhibiting Belarusians declaring Belarusian as their nationality is the fact that in some sense the negative stereotype of Belarusians being backward contains some truth. Since the end of communism, the Belarusian heartlands in southern Podlaskie have been in economic crisis. Agriculture is failing, forest based industries are threatened, and key transport links have been withdrawn. The regional development plan assigns the area a future based on agro-tourism, while more substantial investments are made further north. Indeed, at best the agro-tourist plan is optimistic, given the limited number of tourist who venture beyond the core village of Białowieża which is home to the bison reserve, and by the fact that tourist numbers are unstable.[14]

The crisis in southern Podlaskie is evident in the regional statistical yearbooks. Villages in the region have skewed population structures with disproportionate numbers of the old (in 1999 22.93% in the Hajnówka powiat were of a post-productive age compared with 14.5% for Poland as a whole in some villages this figure reaches 35%) and males, as young people especially women migrate to centres of assimilation such as Białystok or Warsaw. Since the late 1960s the number of children being taught the Belarusian language has declined precipitously –most markedly during the 1970s, but steadily during the 1980s and 1990s, from 12,504 during 1967/8 to a mere 3,596 in 1993/4. According to the Ministry of the Interior and Administration in 2003 3,664 pupils were taught Belarusian in 40 public schools.[15] In addition, 70% of students at the Belarusian high school in Hajnówka are the sons and daughters of workers and peasants - those groups most at risk from contemporary economic 'restructuring' and most exposed to economic 'forced' migration, and ultimately assimilation.[16]

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[13] This claim has been vigorously denied by supporters of the extension of the national park in Białowieża. See www.tol.cz 26th November 2002 and the following weeks letters page for my response.

[14] See Podlaskie statistical yearbooks 1975-date for the raw data. Franklin 2001 & 2002 analyses the tourist figures.

[15] Seen http://www.mswia.gov.pl/eng_mn_narod_l_list.html.

[16] See Iwaniuk, A. & Sakowski, B. (ed) (2000) Liceum Białoruskie w Hajnówce Liceum Ogólnokształące z NJB w Hajnówce, Hajnówka.

Poverty is a major contributing factor to identity flight and assimilation. There is no instrumental benefit in declaring oneself to be Belarusian. As a consequence many Belarusians declare themselves to be Polish. This partly accounts for the high proportion of people stating Polish as their nationality in the Podlaskie voivodship – 93.9%. (55,200 (4.6%) declared themselves to be non-Polish) Furthermore, members of the older generation describe themselves as 'tutejszy' (from here). Czykwin (1998:176) argues that 'tutejszy' 'is often a deliberate substitute for a declared national identity'. As suggested above, there are perfectly good reasons for making such a substitution. However, it can be inferred from the high number of declarations of Polish nationality that many people (Belarusians) who would normally describe themselves as 'tutejszy' elected to declare Polish nationality. This decision is probably due to either a desire to be inconspicuous or due to a conflating of nationality with citizenship (Belarusian citizenship is not aspired to).

Given that within Podlaskie only 18,100 people (1.5% of the population) failed to answer the nationality question (and these can be assumed to be amongst the non-Polish national minorities), then it is apparent that a sizeable proportion –between 60 and 70% - of Belarusians declared themselves to be Polish. Nevertheless, the scale of this 'assimilation' is somewhat lower than what prior research would suggest given the perilous economic, cultural and social situation the Belarusian minority finds itself in.

This leads to the very real problem of accounting for such a *high* number of people declaring themselves to be Belarusian. In order to resolve this issue it is necessary to understand who exactly is declaring themselves to be Belarusian. At the time of writing it is not possible to interrogate the census returns of self declared Belarusians, but research conducted during 1999-2000 suggests that those who describe themselves as Belarusian are disproportionately professionals such as teachers, university professors, lawyers and are therefore highly educated (Fleming 2003:142). To this must be added university graduates, who given the massive expansion of Polish higher education during the course of the 1990s have increased in number, and may have come to value their Belarusian identity. However, this profile cannot account for the almost 50,000 people declaring themselves to be Belarusian. It is for this reason that the Belarusian activists were so pleased and surprised. Until the census results are fully accessible any further comments on the 50,000 would be mere speculation. But what it does suggest is that the Belarusian national idea has progressed beyond the minority's educated elite, contrary to expectations, but to whom and how, at this stage remain open questions.

Unequal citizens

The new minority rights regime is an attempt to ensure that members of national minority communities enjoy substantive equality with the majority. However, in order to benefit from the new post-communist minority legislation, whether national or international, minorities must be able to articulate their concerns at the appropriate level. They must be partners in the construction of knowledge about themselves. Clearly this goes beyond combating negative stereotypes and includes full participation in the decisions that affect them. This, of course, is immensely difficult to achieve, but it is clear that little progress has be made by the Belarusian minority.

The Belarusians have been subjected to what Kymlicka (2000:13) terms 'hegemonic control', whereby they are inhibited from 'participation in decisions and processes that determine their action and the conditions of their actions'. Negative stereotypes dovetail with economic marginalisation, and systemic cultural denigration. The Belarusians have seen the places they live appropriated and represented by international and Polish environmental NGOS as 'the last primeval forest in Europe', a verdant, depopulated area and a place of environmental crisis. But as Sack (1984:19) points out such representations are 'the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area'. Indeed, it would seem that the Belarusians must reclaim the production of knowledge about their space if they are to participate in the decisions that affect them.

Another aspect of the hegemonic control to which the Belarusians are subjected to is the characterisation of their speech as backward. While 39,000 people did declare Belarusian as the language they spoke at home, using previous government and non-government estimates we can claim that over 100,000 people failed to do so, and preferred to declare Polish. The association of Belarusian with backwardness and the idiocy of rural life militates against Belarusian self assertion and development. Yet as Young (2000:39) points out, 'none of us should be excluded or marginalised in situations of political discussion because we fail to express ourselves according to culturally specific norms of tone, grammar and diction'. The lack of respect extended towards Belarusian; manifested through negative stereotypes, foster quietism and assimilation.

Without meaningful support from their 'kin-state' (Belarus) which is widely seen as backward and authoritarian, the state's basic nation building programme disproportionately affects the weak Belarusian minority. This is despite the fact that the state does support cultural and educational activities of the minority. It is

through the promotion of 'diffusion of a single societal culture' Kymlicka (2001: 26), the privileged status of the Polish language and the curriculum of the education system (Taylor 1997:34) that state policy, in this case, undermines a minority population. This problem is exacerbated by the widespread negative stereotype of Belarusians as backward and operates to inhibit Belarusian participation within the life of the wider community.

Conclusion

The 2002 census returns told two different stories about the Belarusian minority in Poland. On the one hand, less than 50,000 people declared themselves to be Belarusian – a figure which is significantly below all previous population estimates whether from the government, Belarusian activists or from the academic community. Such a low figure is evidence of the longstanding tendency towards assimilation and acculturation that is encouraged by political and economic exclusion and negative stereotypes which continue to operate despite the advent of the new minority rights regime. On the other hand the fact that just less than 50,000 people declared themselves to be Belarusian is, paradoxically, encouraging as it suggests that the Belarusian idea has been adopted / maintained by people outside the intellectual elite despite the harsh conditions of post-communism. (Most commentators thought that the results would be a lot worse). There is therefore an urgent need to identify those social groups beyond the known academic / graduate circles who have come / continue to identify themselves as Belarusian. This requires a detailed analysis of the census data when smaller aggregated information is released.[17]

The value of the census data in regards to minorities rests upon recognising that the 'snapshot' of spring 2002 does not actually provide an empirical account of minorities in Poland and certainly not of the Belarusian population, rather it is an indirect measure of underlying social pressures affecting minority populations. It can therefore provide a good benchmark from which to develop policies that aim to deliver the full benefits of the new minority rights regime to minority members and communities. It is therefore imperative that the census data is triangulated with other population estimates and sociological data.[18]

[17] Such an analysis would investigate those who declared themselves to be Belarusian according to age, sex, class and location. Ideally such research would be supplemented by semi-structured interviews with a representative sample of 'Belarusians'.

For the government, the census figures relating to the Belarusian population should be apprehended as evidence of the failure to fully implement the new national minority rights regime as expressed in the CoE's Framework Convention to which Poland is party to. There is no escaping the fact that up to 150,000 people chose not to declare themselves as Belarusian. The census returns should encourage the State to '*undertake to adopt, where necessary, adequate measures in order to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality between persons belonging to a national minority and those belonging to the majority. In this respect, {it} shall take due account of the specific conditions of the persons belonging to national minorities.*'[19]

STRESZCZENIE

Referat jest analizą wyników polskiego spisu ludności z 2002 roku i koncentruje się na białoruskiej mniejszości narodowej, zamieszkującej województwo podlaskie. Sprowadza się do stwierdzenia, iż dane te powinny być rozważane w szerszym kontekście z uwzględnieniem zjawisk socjologicznych. Wyrywkowe ujęcie z wiosny 2002 r. tak naprawdę nie oddaje bezspornego, empirycznego obrazu żadnej z mniejszości w Polsce, a białoruskiej w szczególności. Uzyskane dane powinno się raczej traktować jako pośredni pomiar tkwiących u podłoża nacisków społecznych, które wpływają na ludność mniejszościową. Referat stanowi próbę analizy tych czynników, które wpływają na ludność białoruską i wyjaśnia, jak dane spisu powinny być rozumiane. Spis może stanowić jedynie punkt odniesienia, na podstawie którego można rozwinąć zasady postępowania, które zapewniłyby pełne korzyści nowego regulaminu praw mniejszości członkom i społecznościom mniejszościowym.

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[18] Such an approach would enable sound policies to be developed to respond to the most surprising, and for the Polish government disturbing, result of the 2002 census; the declaration by 173200 people that they were Silesian. This result, if taken literally makes the Silesians the largest national minority in Poland. As yet Silesian is not recognised by the government as a nationality. Some commentators such as Ewa Simonides have argued that this result is 'a protest against the lack of interest in Silesia on the part of the government, against unemployment and the closure of coal mines', while others see the Silesian declaration as an actual manifestation of a Silesian identity. See RFE/RL Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine Report Vol. 5, No. 24, 25 June 2003

[19] Article 4.2 Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995)

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Jan Maksymiuk
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An Unclaimed Creative Potential or the Belarusians in the Bialystok Region as a Trilingual People

1. Four important conclusions from the 2002 census in Poland

In the mid-2002 Poland held a national census, which for the first time in the country's post-war history included a question about ethnicity (*narodowość*) of respondents. On the nationwide scale the Belarusian ethnicity was declared by 48,700 people, including 46,400 in Podlasie Province (95 percent of Poland's Belarusians). The number of "officially attested" Belarusians in Poland is significantly lower than the optimistic estimates voiced by activists of Poland's Belarusian minority at various public forums in the 1980s and 1990s (from 150,000-250,000), but notably higher than the most pessimistic predictions made by the very same activ-

ists privately, in their own minority circle (10,000-20,000). However, regardless of all these "statistical discrepancies," when we compare the situation of Polish Belarusians with other ethnic and linguistic minorities in Europe, we can see that Poland's Belarusians live a normal "minority life" and continue to work — with many failures but also not without significant successes — against their assimilation by the Polish majority. The Belarusians in Poland, even if their actual number is below 50,000, are far away not only from the "ethnic death throes," but also from the symptoms of "ethnic degeneration" that could spell a beginning of their descent into oblivion. It is the first essential conclusion from the 2002 census.

When analysing the census results broken down by gminas (Poland's basic administrative units) of Podlasie Province, we obtain the following important information: 37,000 Belarusians (nearly 80 percent of their total number in the province) belong to the so-called subgroup of Podlasian Belarusians (*padlashy* in the Belarusian language), who live in the centre and south of Podlasie Province. In their everyday life *padlashy* use a language that is markedly different from the Belarusian literary language and its dialectal variants used by *litsviny*, that is, Belarusians living in the northern part of Podlasie Province. However, the language of *padlashy*, which is much closer to the Ukrainian than the Belarusian literary standard in terms of its phonetic and morphologic characteristics, has not become a decisive factor for the *padlashy*'s ethnic self-determination, despite efforts of the Union of Ukrainians of Podlasie, which made this language a pivotal argument in advancing its Ukrainianisation mission. The result of a 20-year-long Ukrainianisation process in Podlasie — 1,400 people who declared Ukrainian ethnicity in the census (2.8 percent of the number of Podlasie's Belarusians) — gives us the right to assert that the problem of Ukrainianisation will not have any significant influence on the further development of the Belarusian ethnic consciousness in the Bialystok region. It is the second essential conclusion from the 2002 census.

An analysis of the dynamics of the Polonisation of Belarusians in the Bialystok region — which is primarily possible thanks to estimates of the Belarusian-Orthodox community made by the communist authorities in 1945-46 — unambiguously shows that *litsviny* are assimilated by the Polish ethnic milieu two or three times faster than *padlashy*. This observation leads us to the third conclusion saying that the future of the Belarusian minority in Poland will be increasingly shaped by its *padlashy* demographic component, which is territorially centred in a quadrilateral with its vertices in Zabludow in the north, Hajnowka in the east, Bielsk in the west, and Czeremcha in the south. Perhaps it is not accidental that in the middle of this quadrilateral we have the Czyże gmina, where 82 percent of its inhabitants

claimed Belarusian ethnicity (which is the highest ratio of registered Belarusians among all gminas in Podlasie Province). Even if the brain of the Belarusian ethnos in Podlasie Province is still placed in the provincial capital, Bialystok (the territory of *litsviny*), its vascular, respiratory, and motoric systems are certainly located between the rivers of Narew and Bug, in the habitat of *padlashy*. In other words, preserving the Belarusian ethnic identity of *padlashy* in Hajnowka and Bielsk Districts of Podlasie Province is tantamount to ensuring the survival of the Belarusian minority in Poland as a whole.

The fourth conclusion is connected with the 2002 census' question about the language (languages) that people commonly use at home. Belarusian as a language of domestic communication was declared by 39,900 people in Podlasie Province (82 percent of the total number of Belarusians in the province). This means that approximately 30,000 Belarusians belonging to the *padlashy* group officially identified their domestic language as Belarusian. From a "political" or an "emotional" point of view, this was a fully justifiable step. However, linguists and some others may have some justifiable arguments against such an identification, as well. The point is that in reality the Belarusians in the Bialystok region are a trilingual community — apart from Polish and Belarusian (or its dialectal variants), the overwhelming majority of them also speak a third language (or its local dialect), which has so far not been given any generally accepted name. This actual trilingualism of Belarusians in the Bialystok region was not registered by the 2002 census (at least, no such census data have been made public).

Our further considerations will be devoted to this third language of those Polish Belarusians who belong to the group of *padlashy*. Since this vernacular has no generally accepted name among its users, we will tentatively call it *Svoja mova* (literally: one's own language) or *Svoja* for short, proceeding from the fact that when you ask *padlashy* what language they speak at home, the most frequent answer will be this: *We speak our own language* (*po-našomu* or *po-svojomu*).

2. What is the purpose of this text?

This text is primarily an announcement of the recently initiated attempt to create a written, literary variant (variants) of *Svoja* and introduce it (them) into a wider use. At the same time, it is also an appeal to join this attempt to all those who see the need for such an accomplishment. This text substantiates, in social and cultural aspects, the need for the creation of a literary standard of *Svoja* and maps out tasks and priorities for what needs to be done in this regard. In other words, this

text proposes some guidelines that in the future could be included in a programme for supporting and developing *Svoja* by a wider segment of society.

3. *Svoja* exists almost exclusively as a spoken language

So far, nobody in the Belarusian minority in Poland has analysed the reasons why *Svoja* -- the mother tongue of the overwhelming majority of Polish Belarusians — has been remaining in the "rural underground," being no more than an unpromising set of "unwritable" and "unlettered" local dialects that are doomed to perish in the period of urbanization and rapid development of the global communication sphere. We do not aspire in this text to identify all or even the main reasons for such a situation but we will try to make some suppositions.

Half a century ago, when the Belarusian minority in Poland set up the Belarusian Social and Cultural Association (BHKT) under circumstances of the post-Stalin political thaw, there could be not talk about taking into account the trilingual idiosyncrasy of Belarusians in the Bialystok region. The then authorities would have not allowed the *padlashy* to promote their own language even if there had been a distinct demand from their side. But such a demand was not voiced at that time.

The political and psychological situation among Polish Belarusians changed in the early 1980s, when students of Belarusian ethnic origin in Poland organized the Belarusian Association of Students (BAS), which was lead primarily by *padlashy* activists. That period provided a good opportunity to "rehabilitate" *Svoja* and elevate its status to that of another written language of Polish Belarusians and, in this way, to overcome the psychological alienation of a significant part of Belarusian students who perceived the Belarusian literary language as something strange or not completely their own. However, it proved impossible to implement such a hypothetical plan with regard to *Svoja* because of an Ukrainianisation action undertaken by a group of BAS activists who wanted to redefine their identity as Ukrainian and split the dynamic movement of young Belarusians from within. Attempts to disorganise the movement of Belarusian students in Poland continued for some two or three years in the first half of the 1980s, until the BAS eventually got rid of Ukrainophile activists and broke social contacts with them. But the "Ukrainian syndrome" paralysed the "strategic thinking" in the Belarusian movement at that time to such a degree that nobody raised the issue of *Svoja* in a public

forum in the subsequent 20 years. It was apparently believed that any initiative in this direction will only contribute to the Ukrainianisation of *padlashy*. As testified by the 2002 census, such an apprehension was very exaggerated, if not groundless altogether.

However, there have been attempts to publish texts in *Svoja* in the Bialystok region in the past century, even if on a statistically insignificant scale. In the 1970s, the Belarusian-language weekly "Niva" in Bialystok published a number of poems in *Svoja* by Zosia Sačko. Subsequently the Belarusian Literary Association Biełavieža published Sačko's three books of poems in *Svoja*: *Pošuki* (1982), *Nad dniom pochilana* (1991), *Ščе odna vesna* (1995). In 1981 "Niva" published a long poem by Ira Borovik, *Čas, kotory umiraje*. And in 2002 Biełavieža published a book of poems by Viktar Stachviuk, *Bahrovy cień*. Although not abundant in number, the poetical accomplishments of Sačko, Borovik, and Stachviuk clearly stand out in comparison with other authors in the Bialystok region, thus directly giving evidence to potentially large creative capabilities of the *padlashy* in their mother tongue. We will note here parenthetically that the *padlashy* have copiously proved their creativity primarily in the Belarusian language (the names of Nadzieja Artymovič, Jan Čykvin, and Viktar Šved are the most representative in this context).

There is also a noteworthy publishing initiative by Doroteusz Fionik from Bielsk, who has published the periodical "Bielski hostineć" for the past seven years. "Bielski hostineć" publishes texts in three languages — Polish, Belarusian, and *Svoja* — and includes, among other materials, reminiscences of residents of Bielsk District written in *Svoja*. The periodical has no literary ambitions, therefore it does not raise the issue of a literary standard (standards) for *Svoja*.

4. What can and must be done for *Svoja*?

Belarusians in the Bialystok region need to clearly realize that if the *padlashy* lose their own language, one will be able to say that the Belarusian ethnic minority in Poland has been completely assimilated by Poles. It is possible that the assimilation of such a small ethnic community as Belarusians in the Bialystok region is historically unavoidable. However, we should not be indifferent to whether the history for Polish Belarusians will end after 50 or 100 years from now. By giving *Svoja* the status of a "public" language in the printed and electronic media available for the Belarusian minority in Poland, we will considerably slow down their assimilation. Simultaneously we can open unforeseen possibilities of artistic self-

fulfilment for those potential authors among the *padlashy* who feel themselves "uncomfortable" in Belarusian or Polish. At the same time, we can also relieve the *padlashy* of the feeling of linguistic 'inferiority" and "second-rateness" in comparison with their Belarusian compatriots, *litsviny*, who were historically lucky to have developed a full-fledged literary language.

In theory, the simplest way to begin the "rehabilitation" of *Svoja* is to start using it in the Belarusian-language media in which *padlashy* account for no less than 50 percent of their workforce. I mean primarily "Niva," "Czasopis," and "Pravincyja" as well as Belarusian-language broadcasts of Polish Radio and Polish Television in Bialystok. The printed media should publish both reader letters and editorials as well as stimulate and encourage writing original literary pieces in *Svoja*. Radio and television journalists in Bialystok should air more frequently interviews with local residents in *Svoja*.

At present the Belarusian-language journalists in Podlasie should not be particularly concerned about the standardization of *Svoja*. It is well known that the central and southern Bialystok region comprises a mosaic of local dialects that hypothetically can, but do not have to, serve as the basis for working out a single (or several) standard variant (variants) of *Svoja*. During the first stage of the building of *Svoja* the principal task should be to examine "public demand" and "public supply" in connection with the switchover of *Svoja* to a written-language status. In other words, the primary concern should be focused on creating a "corps of texts" in *Svoja* local dialects, as extensive as possible, in order to use it in the future as the basis for compiling *Svoja* dictionaries and grammars.

The dialects of *Svoja* can be classified and identified according to different phonetic and morphological features. Belarusian linguist Khvedar Klimchuk, a specialist in the East Slavonic dialects of the Bialystok region in particular and of the Western Palesse of the Republic of Belarus in general, proposed a very elegant classification in this regard. According to Klimchuk, dialects of *Svoja* in the Bialystok region can be divided into three (or even four) groups, depending on how the consonants *d* and *t* behave before the etymologic *e* and *i*. Thus, in the first group of *Svoja* dialects we have *deń, teper, choditi (choďit'i)*; in the second — *deń, teper, chodyty*; in the third — *deń, teper, chodzici*.

From a purely theoretical point of view, we can assume that on the path toward a single, unified literary variant of *Svoja*, it will be necessary to pass through an interim stage, in which three literary subvariants may be standardised to reflect the three above-mentioned groups of local dialects. Such a situation for less known "micro-languages" is a rule rather than an exception. In Switzerland some 40,000

people declare the Swiss Rheto-Romansh language (*Rumantsch*) as their native tongue. Rumantsch exists in five dialectal variants (each of them has a normalized written form) and as a supraregional Rheto-Romansh language (*Romantsch grischun*), which was artificially synthesized in 1982 on the basis of the five above-mentioned dialects. All these tongues in general and each of them in particular are referred to with the same name — *Rumantsch*. On the other hand, Rusyns (who are more known in Poland as Lemkos), which have been working to create a Rusyn language since 15 years, have not yet agreed on a single supraregional variant and continue to work simultaneously on four varieties that are characteristic for the regions of their residence in Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine, and Serbia.

5. What will the magazine "Pravincyja" be doing for *Svoja*?

The literary magazine "Pravincyja" in Bialystok, which has usurped the title of a trailblazer in the purposeful effort to bring to life one more East Slavonic literary language — *Svoja* — will soon publish translations of contemporary Danish and Swiss authors into *Svoja*, thus inaugurating the attempt to expand the vocabulary and syntax of this language to such an extent when it becomes able to serve well not only communication requirements of Belarusians in the Bialystok region but also the satisfaction of the aesthetic needs that they have as either readers or authors.

Proceeding from the observation that the circle of active users of the Cyrillic script among Belarusians in the Bialystok region is unavoidably shrinking, the editors of "Pravincyja" has adapted the Latin alphabet for reproducing the sounds of *Svoja* in writing. From a purely practical point of view, using the Latin script for writing in *Svoja* seems to be much more promising that adapting the Cyrillic alphabet for this purpose. But the editors of "Pravincyja" are not going to demand a change of the script from those authors who will supply texts in *Svoja* written in the "traditional" Cyrillic form.

РЭЗЮМЭ

Аўтар аналізуе перапіс насельніцтва ў падляскім ваяводзтве Польшчы ў рамках нацыянальнага перапісу 2002 г. і прыходзіць да высновы, што каля 80 працэнтаў зь ліку 46400 асобаў, якія запісаліся беларусамі ў ваяводзтве, належаць да гэтак званых *падляшоў*. Аўтар аргумэнтуе, што далейшую пэрспэктыву выжываньня беларускай нацыянальнай меншасьці ў Польшчы будуць вызначаць перш за ўсё *падляшы*, якія ў сямейным жыцьці паслугоўваюцца мовай адрознай як ад польскага так і беларускага літаратурных стандартаў. Каб захаваць беларускую нацыянальную тоеснасьць у Польшчы як мага даўжэй, аўтар прапануе ўзьвесьці мову падляшоў — *сваю мову* — у ранг пісьмовай, побач зь беларускай і польскай. Аўтар лічыць, што спроба стварэньня пісьмовага варыянту (або пісьмовых варыянтаў) *сваёй мовы* павінна пачацца з сродкаў масавай інфармацыі, якія абслугоўваюць беларускую меншасьць у Польшчы. Аўтар таксама паведамляе аб спробе стварэньня паўнавартаснага літаратурнага варыянту *сваёй мовы*, якую нядаўна распачаў літаратурна-мастацкі часопіс „Правінцыя” ў Беластоку.

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Ivan Burlyka
Іван Бурлыка

Do modern Belarusians care about the belarusian literature?

This is one of those questions that are of importance for any educated person who cast in his lot with this country, its cultural heritage or who is simply indifferent to everything what is going on in one of the corners of the European civilization.To more efficiently answer this question it is worth (like in case of the Belarusian language) referring to the issue of categorization of the Belarusian population in order to specify the groups of people who could potentially read works of Belarusian authors in original as well as to analyze on how deep the roots of this tradition are. At the *Trialog-2003* meeting that attempt of mine resulted in specification of the four major layers of the Belarusian population as of their attitude towards the Belarusian language.[1] To be more precise, **Group A** unites Belarusians

[1] Ivan Burlyka. *Do Belarusians speak Belarusian in the street?* Annus Albaruthenicus. – Villa Sokrates. – Krynki 2004, p. 103-108.

who can speak literary Belarusian and do it in their everyday life; they comprise about 5 per cent of the total population of the country and include creative intelligentsia and other intellectuals; also, this group contains about 35 per cent of the rural and provincial population); **Group B** is formed by the citizens who *want to speak Belarusian but think that they cannot do it well* as they posses the hypertrophied complex of "linguistic inferiority"; they comprise the majority of urban dwellers); **Group C** unites all those who can speak Belarusian but do not want to as they consider Russian to be more functional and beautiful (they comprise 20 per cent and according to their background these are the former rural young people who do everything possible to forget about their provincial roots but in reality they did not achieve more than only mastered their "trasianka") and **Group D** is the one, representatives of which do not want to have anything in common with the native language of the country they are residing in and who "permit" themselves to deal only with definite elements of the Belarusian culture, i.e. ethnography, folklore etc. (they comprise about 10 per cent of the population). Thus, generally speaking, representatives of *Group A, B and C* (and they comprise about 90 per cent of the citizens of Belarus) have the sufficient linguistic potential to be able to deal with the Belarusian literary word. And only representatives of *Group D* treat Belarusian literature and many other aspects of national life as alien and which are not worth their attention. To sum it up, nine out of ten Belarusians could absorb wisdom from the masterpieces of our Belarusian literary patriarchy.

Now, let us take a closer look at what the real situation in the field of Belarusian reading is. It has been evaluated on the basis of my visit with the Hrodna Yauhim Karski Regional Library. This is the place where they have accumulated the bulk of works of the Belarusian authors.

It is of interest to specify that out of 303 000 inhabitants (as of 1997 census of the population) only 2 490 of them became the readers of the library. In 2003, for example, they came to the library and borrowed books 7 933 times, i.e. each of the officially registered readers visited the library loan department approximately three times a year. At the same time, this very department serves about 300 readers daily. Total, in 2003 they loaned 42 557 books; 2 723 of them were in Belarusian. Within the first half of 2004 they loaned total 56 000 books and 5 500 of them were the Belarusian ones; that comprised some ten per cent of the total amount of the read materials.

The loan department readers tend to comprise the below three main categories, i.e. *schoolchildren* (about 8 per cent*), students of higher and specialized secondary institutions* (some 60 per cent) and *regular adult citizens* of the city (about 32 per

cent). Major attention of the readers of the first and the second category is paid primarily to the works by the writers whose names have been included into the list of the curriculum works and are studied at schools and universities, (i.e. they *must* be read by the young people) and to the materials, belonging to various fields of their specialized studies (i.e. economics, law, education, psychology, pedagogy etc.). And only representatives of the third category can let themselves enjoy reading just for the sake of reading. These readers tend to borrow about one third of the total number of books and read them in Belarusian. Very few of them prefer to read works by the Belarusian writers and poets in their translated versions. The highest level of authority is enjoyed by Vasil' Bykau, Uladzimir Karatkevich, Ivan Chyhrynau, Sviatlana Aleksievich.

One of my questions was also associated with the rate of interest of the readers to the Russian literary heritage. I wondered how many citizens of Hrodna enjoyed reading and re-reading the works by Gogol, Pushkin, Turgenev and such. I was shocked to have learned that not a single soul (among the officially registered readers) had borrowed the above works within the recent couple of years. At the same time, a detective story became the most popular genre among them. According to the library assistants, "the nowadays readers use their one eye to look through the book, the second one to watch TV while their thoughts would simultaneously be rushing from one domestic problem to another". It means that any other serious information but for the one, dealing with *who, where, when and why killed another one*, can not be digested by an average reader today. However, there is the only (!) adult reader in the library whose hobby is to re-read works by the Russian classical authors…

In this respect Belarusian literature has some vivid advantages as compared to the modern Russian one, i.e. it is broader in the range of topics, covered by it as well as it contains a more important and deeper social content.

It should also be mentioned that some of the most active readers of the Belarusian prose works, whom I talked to, tend to complain about the "artificial" Belarusian which is applied by the modern Belarusian writers. This is the reason why the readers highly appreciate the original, distinctive language and the manner of writing of such writers as Sakrat Yanovich, Viačaslau Adamchyk etc.

There is one more department at the regional library that unites the fans of the Belarusian literary word, i.e. the department of Regional Literature. Out of 7 134 books, loaned to its readers within the first half of 2005, 4 500 of them were in Belarusian. On of the sections of the department, which gathered works by the regional writers (including the ones from the Belastochchyna), also won great

popularity among the readers. By the way, the works by Sakrat Yanovich, although having not been yet included into the school and university curriculum as the obligatory ones, are frequently read by both adult and young people of the city. Besides, *Annus Albaruthenicus* has been also recognized here as a very informative and useful source of unique information and, therefore, is read on a frequent basis.

The above analysis would be not complete in case we would say nothing about the most numerous Belarusian "readers", no matter whether they originate from the rural or urban areas. These are the people who prefer to read nothing. Only small percentage of them subscribes to the newspapers or occasionally buys and reads them. They read but do not believe in what they learn from the printed materials. Generally speaking, the value of the official Belarusian newspapers today is defined by the fact whether they have the weekly TV-guide enclosed or not. Actually, the latter covers the bulk of the newspaper reading space.

At the end of the interview I cautiously enquired about the prospects and the future of the Belarusian literature. The replies were not so pessimistic, but, at the same time, it could be better if they would sound more optimistic as well. Almost each of the library workers (with a trace of nostalgia) remembered about the 1990s when the majority of the citizens of the city were extremely interested in everything what was published in Belarus at that time…

As for the question whether modern Belarusians care about their national literature or not, the answer to it can be very simple: it depends upon what kind of Belarusians we are speaking about. Belarusians, like any other nation in the world, are different. There are numerous families that have huge home libraries containing Belarusian works which they read and loan to their friends. As for the youth, they claim to have no time to cope even with the amount of obligatory materials to read; the adult population finds time to preferably read their professional materials or paperback bestsellers.

To conclude, I wonder whether one could find many regular Americans who would rush to the library to learn more about life of characters of the novels by Mark Twain, Jack London or representatives of color and feministic American literature?…

Іван Бурлыка *– гарадзенскі навуковец – аналізуе чытацкую рэакцыю на публічныя кнігазборы ў Гародні. Зьвяртае ўвагу рост цікавасьці да беларускай літаратуры як карэннай. Адносіны дарослых чытачоў да расейскай і іншых замежных літаратураў не выходзяць за рамкі інтэлектуальнага хобі, інцыдэнтальнасці.*

Barbara Törnquist-Plewa

Language and Belarusian Nation-Building in the Light of Modern Theories on Nationalism

The subject of this paper is a historical analysis of the Belarusian nation-building process with some emphasis put on the role played by language as a marker for delimitation and as a national symbol used for political mobilisation. The purpose of this analysis is to seek explanations for the weakness of the Belarusian national identity today by referring to the modern theories on nationalism.

Nation-building can be studied with the help of various theoretical approaches of which the currently dominating are the so-called constructionist/instrumentalist approach (Anderson 1983, Gellner 1983, Hobsbawm 1990) and the postmodernist one that treats nationalism as a discourse (Brubaker 1996). However, all these approaches do not satisfactorily explain people´s intense emotional engagement in national questions. Therefore we could see in the 1990s the emergence of the theories trying to add an important socio-psychological dimension to the analysis of nationalism. One of these is William Bloom´s identification theory (see Bloom

1990) that I decided to use in the following analysis of the nation-building in Belarus.

Bloom claims that every individual possesses an inherent drive to seek, enhance and protect identity. In modern times national identification has become the one most frequently sought. When a group identifies with the same national idea, i.e. internalises the same national identity, they will tend to act together to protect and enhance the shared identity. This will to act on the behalf of the shared national identity is called by Bloom ”national identity dynamic”. The identification theory postulates at least three preconditions which have to be simultaneously fulfilled in order for a group´s national identification to succeed and generate the ”national identity dynamic”. Firstly, a situation must occur in which the existing identity of the individuals in the group is judged unsatisfactory by at least part of its members. Secondly, a strong leading élite must emerge from within the group, it has to communicate to the group a sense of the identity crisis and offer as a solution a national ideology, which will serve as a springboard for the emancipation of the group. Thirdly, those symbolic resources that the élite uses in the construction of the national identity (for delimiting and integrating the community) must be connected to the experience of the group. The symbols must be perceived as appropriate, i.e. representative of a system of attitudes and behaviour which in the life of the group give a feeling of psychological security.

How were these preconditions fulfilled in the case of Belarusians?

Up to the 19th century it was not possible to speak of a *Belarusian* national identity. Until this time the term *Belarusian* had a sub-ethnic, primarily geographical, meaning. On the other hand, during the pre-modern era the people on the Belarusian territory had a sense of an *ethnic* identity as a part of the community of so called ”ruskije”, which comprised ancestors to modern Belarusians, Ukrainians and Russians. The most important markers of this identity were the Orthodox religion, a sense of shared origin in the old *Rus´* (the Kiev realm), a collective name ”ruskije” (from ”Rus”) and a shared written language: Church Slavonic. However, the politically active part of the ”ruskije” in Belarus, the gentry, exposed a dual identity. In *an ethnic* sense they identified as ”rusikije” (in latin ”Rutheni”) and in a *political* sense as Lithuanians or later most frequently as Poles (*natio Polonica*) since they belonged to the Polish-Lithuanian state.

The roots of modern Belarusian nationalism can be found first in the identity crisis which the Ruthenian gentry experienced after the fall of the Polish-Lithuanian state. Following the defeats of the Polish uprisings against Russian rule (1830 and 1863), and the ensuing Russian campaigns against Polish culture, part of the

Ruthenian gentry started to view their Polishness as a burden. Some (especially those stripped of their title and privileges) converted to the Orthodox faith, (Vakar, 1956, p.74) while others, under the influence of Romanticism and the ”demonstration effect” of the new ethno-nationalist ideologies of neighbouring peoples, chose to formulate their own Belarusian national ideology.

The end of the 19th century saw the beginning of small-scale political nationalist agitation. At first, the national élite consisted mainly of Catholics (frequently former Greek Catholics, forced to abandon their faith by Russian authorities). They had a strong sense of their separate identity vis-a-vis the Russians. Later a small group of Orthodox Belarusians joined the movement, having rejected Russian state-nationalism as undemocratic and turning to Belarusian nationalism, which appeared emancipating by contrast (Radzik 1995). Thus, at the turn of the century, there emerged in Belarus an intelligentsia élite who attempted to communicate to the masses ideas about their economic and political deprivation, and the need to oppose this by means of a national ideology. However, this nationally aware élite was very weak. It was small, divided and without social prestige. Moreover, the communication of this élite with the masses, that according to Karl Deutch (1953) is so important for the spread of national ideas, was hampered. The communication was hampered both institutionally – due to the prohibition by the Tsarist regime of publications in Belarusian and dissemination of Belarusian national propaganda - and structurally – due to the illiteracy and isolation of the peasants caused by the late modernisation of the Belarusian territory (Guthier 1977, cf. Gellner 1983). Another researcher on the nationalism questions, Miroslaw Hroch (1985) has shown that in the situation of late modernisation the Churches can play an important role in the “nationalisation” of the masses. However, in contrast to many Eastern European ethno-nations, described by Hroch, the Churches in Belarus did not function as a communication channel between this population and the Belarusian national élite. Instead, the Orthodox priests used their authority to promote Russian national identity, while Catholic priests usually supported the Polish one (Radzik 1991).

As a result of these factors the diffusion of the national ideology was very difficult and it first achieved a modicum of success during and after the First World War, when the world of the Belarusian peasants was shattered by political and social transformations, including the partition of Belarusian territory between Poland and the Soviet Union (Pawluczuk 1972). During the 1920s the Belarusian peasant population became literate. For the first time, they gained access to Belarusian national high culture, with its own standardised Belarusian language

(Bieder 1991, p.408, Wexler 1974, p.227-250). This happened first and foremost in the 1920s in the Soviet Union, during the so called "korenizatsja" period that in the case of Belarussia meant "Belarusification" combined with the spread of the Communist ideals. However, these favourable conditions for the Belarusian peasants´ identification with the Belarusian nation lasted only for about a decade. The Belarusians´ progress towards a modern nation was interrupted as early as the 1930s, when Stalin started a campaign against so-called "bourgeoisie nationalism". The spelling reform from 1933 was conceived as a method to bring the Belarusian language near the Russian and reflected the Russsifying tendencies in the society (Wexler 1974, p.270-275, McMillin 1980). During Stalin´s purges the greater part of the Belarusian national élite was liquidated. The few national activists who survived felt compelled to collaborate with the Germans during the Second World War (Turonek, 1993). Accused of supporting the Nazis, they were compromised and the Belarusian national ideology together with them. After the Second World War, when the Belarusians went through modernisation on a mass scale, they found themselves *without* a national élite capable of conveying national symbols and mobilising around them. The second precondition needed according to Bloom (1990) for the successful identification of a population with the nation was thus not fulfilled in Belarus.

There is also reason to doubt whether the third precondition for the national identification - the use of the "appropriate" (in Bloom´s terms) symbols - was fulfilled during the Belarusian nation-building process.

When a cultural and political élite constructs a national identity, it chooses identity markers, symbols, etc. Under the influence of the "demonstration effect" of other East European nationalisms, the Belarusian national movement chose language as a national symbol. A symbol can be effective when it concerns a people´s experience of their situation. However, the Belarussian language was never really perceived of as a sharply delimiting marker between Belarusians and the neighbouring people. The Belarusians lived in an area where continuum of Slavic dialects was spoken. In such territories, it is hard to draw distinctions between different languages. For many years, the Belarusian peasants had considered that they did not speak a particular language but merely used some variety of Russian or Polish (see Wasilewski 1925, Rieger 1995). In order to be used as a national marker and symbol, Belarusian needed to be standardised, codified and differentiated from Russian and Polish. It is a very difficult task to establish a new literary language in a territory where two other closely related literary languages already fulfil a range of functions. The Belarusian élite, small and divided between Catho-

lics and Orthodox (for example on the issue of the alphabet), was hardly capable of promoting literary Belarusian. During the whole of the modern era until now, with only a short break of one decade - the Belarusification of the 1920s - Belarusian developed in the shadow of either Polish or Russian. The use of Belarusian was almost always functionally limited. It had the lowest possible social status. For generation after generation, Belarusians internalised a negative idea of their mother tongue as an underdeveloped language, which stood between them and the modern world, a dialect associated with villages (Pičeta 1991). Under such circumstances, Belarusian could not be perceived of as a confidence-boosting security-creating symbol of the kind that, according to Bloom´s theory, is necessary in order to facilitate the identification with one´s own group. Consequently, the third precondition described by Bloom as necessary for the creation of ”national identity dynamic” has not been fulfilled in Belarusian case. The linguistc-ethnic construction of nation undertaken by the Belarusian élite has never been accomplished and the Belarusian national identity has remained weak.

In the 20th century the Belarusians were formally granted the status of a separate nation with, as its external symbol, their own Soviet Republic. At the same time, however, the central authorities did everything in their power to hinder the development of Belarusian nationalism and they were not interested to develop a viable national Belarusian high culture with which all the inhabitants of the republic could identify. Instead, identification with the Soviet state was promoted (the identity of ”sovjetskij čelovek”) and Belarusians were exposed to the intensive influence of Russian high culture (Bankowski-Zullich 1995, p.321), which was conceived to be a bearer of Soviet identity. The result of this process is that Belarusian high culture today is weak. It is called national on the level of discourse, but on the level of practice it functions among the majority of Belarusians as a kind of regional culture or ethnic at best (Proharava 1993, Sajevič 1993). Generally, Belarusian society today is culturally and linguistically bivalent (with Russian and Belarusian) or sometimes even polyvalent. Cultural valence means that they not only are competent in more than one culture, but actually can identify emotionally with more than one culture (Kloskowska 1993, p.11). The Belarusians are carriers of two (sometimes even more) cultures, a situation not unusual for so-called ”transitional borderland”, from which Belarus grew (Törnquist-Plewa 1998). There is, however, an imbalance in the Belarusian-Russian cultural bivalence (Gustavsson 1995, p.54). A small part of the intelligentsia are the carriers of the Belarusian national high culture and also the Russian high culture, while the people are carriers of the Russian high culture and the Belarusian folk culture. Accordingly, only the

small national élite views Belarusian culture and language as a national heritage which must be cultivated and transmitted, while large masses of the people consider everything Belarusian in terms of local culture, and do not politicise it. Until the fall of the Soviet Union this ethnic and regional Belorusian identity could exist together with political identification with the Soviet state. However, in 1991 the situation changed radically. With the emergence of an independent Belarus and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the double Soviet-Belarusian identification lost its validity and many Belarusians experienced confusion (Proharava 1993, p.149-154). One could even speak in Bloom´s terms about an ”identity crisis” among Belarusians.

The Belarusian declaration of independence in 1991 was not the result of the people´s determined battle, but a consequence of political circumstances favourable to the Belarusian national idea. Nevertheless, the small nationally conscious élite gathered around BNF (Belarusian National Front) wanted to use the birth of the independent Belarusian state for a national mass mobilisation, and give the new state a national character. They hoped to reformulate the Belarusian identity and give it new political shape. With this goal in mind, the national élite returned to their ancestors' strategy of constructing the Belarusian nation as an ethno-linguistic community. Between 1991 and 1995 the Belarusian élite made a tremendous effort to make language the symbol of Belarusian national identity. Under their pressure the parliament of 1991 gave Belarusian a privileged status as the state language. The regulations spoke of a ten-year period for gradual change from Russian to Belarusian in schools and other state institutions. The national élite wanted to carry through an intensive Belarusification. They pressed for quick change to Belarusian in schools and the media (for statistics describing changes see Lyc 1996, Gustavsson 1995). They suggested a language reform in order to purify Belarusian of Russian influences. However, a large part of Belarusians was critical towards this language planning and towards the Belarusification policy in general (Radkevič 1996, Miklaševski 1995). Many Belarusians (including teachers required to teach in Belarusian) had considerable difficulties using the Belarusian literary language. Therefore they preferred to use Russian in official contexts while speaking ”trašanka” (a mixture of Belarusian and Russian) in private. However, the most important reason for the critique must be seen in the fact that people living in Belarus do not experience the connection between language and national identity. About 20% of the people who call themselves ethnic Belorusians declared at that time that Russian was their mother tongue (Eberhardt 1995). But even they who declared Belarusian to be their mother tongue were in practise bilingual or multi-

lingual. The situation in Belarus demonstrates clearly that the concept of ”mother tongue” (like the concept of ”nation”) is not natural and self-evident, but fluid and context-related. Members of national and ethnic minorities in Belarus (about 22% of the inhabitants) are mostly linguistically Russified. The Polish minority (about 417.000 people) constitutes the exception, but they do not declare Polish to be their mother tongue, only Belarusian. In the Polesie region there is also a regional group claiming that their mother tongue is their dialect, which they call Polesian and try to codify it (Dulicenko 1995). Under these circumstances the Belarusian language could not function as a base for Belarusian national identity and an appropriate symbol for political mobilisation. This became clear in the referendum of 1995, initiated by the Belarusian president Lukašenka. In the referendum 83,3% of the Belarusians voted to grant Russian a status equal to that of Belarusian. In this way they gave a political expression to their de facto cultural bivalence and bilingualism (Törnquist-Plewa 1997, p-93-94)

The referendum results shows that the ethno-linguistic concept of a Belarusian nation is anacronistic and not viable. Using this symbol the Belarusian elité failed to reformulate the Soviet-Belorussian identity into a national Belarusian identity. The political initiative went to pro-Russian, anti-democratic president Lukašenka, who offered during the 1990-s another solution to the Belarusian identity crisis: the return to Russian as a second state language and political union with Russia. This identity project (i.e. double citizenship) is in fact a remade version of the Soviet-Belorussian identity. At the same time it is in line with the older Belarusian tradition of double and complementary political identifications. This may contribute to its attraction. However, the struggle for the formation and reformulation of Belarusian identity is not yet finished. National identities in Belarus are still fluid and negotiable. The failure of linguistic Belarusification and the signed, but not carried out, agreement to create a union of Russia and Belarus should not be interpreted as the death warrant of Belarusian national identity. The small Belarusian national élite still have a chance to gain support from people if they can show a better solution to the Belarusian identity crisis than Lukašenka does. In order to mobilise the masses politically around the Belarusian national idea, its ideologists must find a symbol which can fulfil a delimiting and cohesive function in Belarusian society. Such a symbol in the Belarusian context should not exclude (as the Belarusian language did) but instead allow multiculturalism, bilingualism and even binational identification. An important symbolic resource for many nation-builders in the world has always been a state. The Belarusians managed to get their own state and it could serve as a symbol for mass identification if it were perceived as protector

and cultural and material benefactor. This means that the Belarusian national élite should use the state as a national symbol. However in order to do it they have to fight for democratic reforms in the country and create a political programme to convince Belarusians that they gain from safeguarding the state's independence. They should also promote the kind of "national narrative" which binds Belarus more to Europe than to Russia. It goes without saying that the European institutions' support for a democratic Belarusian national project is crucial for its success. However, the way to such development in Belarus is still long.

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STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł zawiera próbę analizy białoruskiego procesu narodowotwórczego. Szczególną uwagę poświęca autorka roli języka jako wyznacznika tożsamosci i narodowego symbolu. Celem analizy jest poszukiwanie przyczyn słabości dzisiejszej tożsamości narodowej Białorusinów w oparciu o kilka współczesnych teorii o tworzeniu się narodów. Autorka odwołuje się do teorii konstrukcjonistów Deutcha, Gellnera i Hrocha, ale bazuje głównie swoją argumentację na socjopsychologicznej teorii identyfikacji Blooma (z 1990 roku). Według Blooma, proces narodowotwórczy może zakończyć się sukcesem tzn. internalizacją określonej narodowej tożsamości na skalę masową i gotowością jej obrony, jeżeli zostaną spełnione co najmniej trzy warunki: po pierwsze, musi powstać sytuacja, w której dotychczasowa identyfikacja grupowa nie zadowala przynajmniej części grupy; po drugie, z tejże grupy musi wyłonić się silna elita, która sformułuje ideę nowej tożsamości i będzie w stanie komunikować tą ideę pozostałym członkom grupy. Po trzecie, elita, konstruując ideę narodową, wybierze takie symbole i wyznaczniki tożsamości, które będą współgrać z doświaczeniami grupy i zaspokajać jej psychiczne potrzeby – dawać poczucie bezpieczeństwa, dumy itp.

Historia tworzenia się nowoczesnego narodu białoruskiego pokazuje, że pierwszy warunek Blooma – kryzys dotychczasowej tożsamości i potrzeba stworzenia nowej – został spełniony pod koniec XIX wieku. Wielostopniowa tożsamość rusińsko-polsko-litewska na terytorium Białorusi utraciła siłę atrakcji i została zastąpiona przez integralne idee narodowe polskie, rosyjskie, litewskie i białoruskie. Natomiast, jeśli chodzi o dwa pozostałe warunki, opisane przez Blooma, autorka artykułu argumentuje, że nie zostały one spełnione na Białorusi. Elita białoruska była niemalże przez cały okres nowoczesnej białoruskiej historii słaba, podzielona i co jakiś czas niszczona. Jej komunikacja z masami uniemożliwiona była strukturalnie (późny proces modernizacyjny, brak narodowego kościoła) i instytucjonalnie (rusyfikacja). Szczególnej krytyce poddaje autorka fakt, że elita białoruska uczyniła język białoruski podstawowym symbolem narodowym. Symbol ten nie spełniał w kontekście białoruskim (wielojęzyczność o charakterze genetycznym) wymogów określonych w teorii Blooma. Tę samą strategię (kampanię białorusyfikacji) wybrała białoruska elita narodowa po upadku Związku Radzieckiego, co zakończyło się jej klęską polityczną w połowie lat 1990-tych. Autorka artykułu postuluje konieczność szukania przez elitę białoruską nowych symboli narodowych i sugeruje, że suwerenne państwo białoruskie mogłoby się stać takim symbolem.

Barbara Törnquist-Plewa

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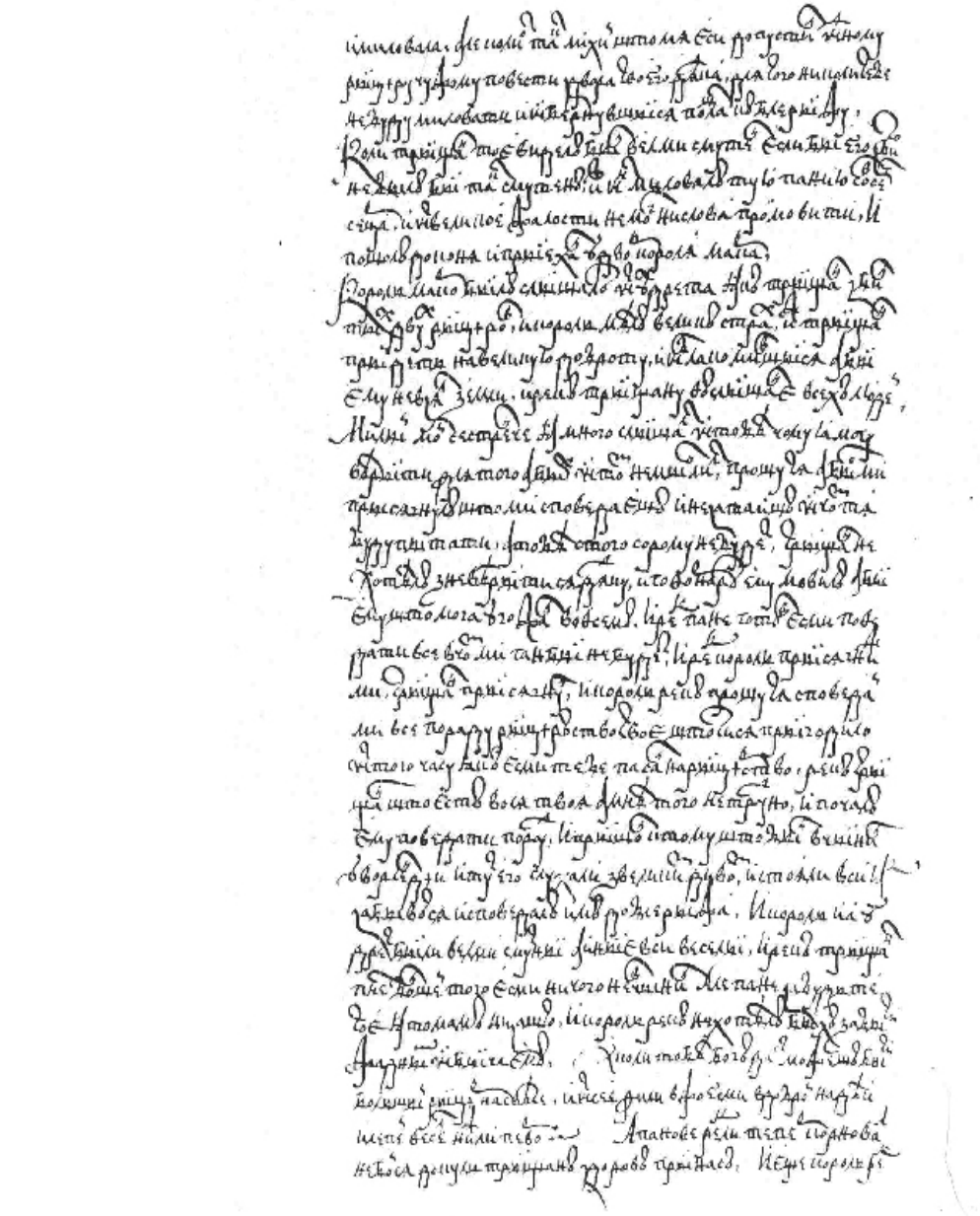
Zoltán András

Az ófehérorosz Trisztán és Izolda-legenda dél-európai összefüggései

Az ófehérorosz nyelvi és irodalmi emlékek tanulmányozása során megpróbáltam feltárni azok magyar vonatkozásait. Ez irányú kutatásaimat természetes módon kezdtem Oláh Miklós *Athilá*jának ófehérorosz fordításával. E vizsgálódások filológiai eredményeiről e hasábokon is beszámoltam,[1] s időközben sikerült e mű XVI. századi lengyel és ófehérorosz fordításának új filológiai kiadását is megjelentetni.[2] A fenti kutatások alapján megállapítható, hogy az ófehérorosz nyelv és kultúra nyitott volt a magyar elemek befogadására. Ez a történelmi és

[1] Zoltán András, A régi magyar–fehérorosz nyelvi és kulturális érintkezések történetéből: Annus Albaruthenicus 2003 – Год Беларускі 2003. Рэдактар Сакрат Яновіч. Krynki: Villa Sokrates, 2003, 201–223; Zoltán András, Szent Orsolya legendája Kelet-Európában: Annus Albaruthenicus 2004 — Год Беларускі 2004. Рэдактар Сакрат Яновіч. Krynki: Villa Sokrates, 2004, 181–195.

[2] Zoltán András, Oláh Miklós *Athila* című munkájának XVI. századi lengyel és fehérorosz fordítása — «Athila» М. Олаха в польском и белорусском переводах XVI века. Nyíregyháza, 2004 (= Dimensiones Culturales et Urbariales Regni Hungariae 6).



Az ófehérorosz kézirat egy lapja

Zoltán András *urodził się w 1949 r. Doktor habilitowany, docent Uniwersytetu Loránda Eötvösa w Budapeszcie. Studiował rusycystykę i polonistykę w Budapeszcie, studia doktoranckie skończył w Moskwie. W szeregu studiów oraz w monografii Из истории русской лексики (Budapeszt, 1987) zajmował się wpływem starobiałoruskiego języka kancelaryjnego Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego na moskiewski język kancelaryjny w XV–XVI w. Pracę habilitacyjną (2001) i kilka artykułów ostatnich lat poświęcił badaniom nad starobiałoruskim przekładem Athili M. Oláha. Organizował w Budapeszcie dwie międzynarodowe konferencje naukowe poświęcone językom WKL (1998, 2000). Zajmuje się też leksykologią i frazeologią historyczną oraz etymologią języków słowiańskich, a także słowiańsko-węgierskimi kontaktami językowymi. Jest współautorem i redaktorem kilku prac zbiorowych oraz redaktorem serii Studia Russica (Budapeszt). Był uczestnikiem II (1995) i III (2000) Międzynarodowego Zjazdu Białorutenistów, jest członkiem Komitetu Międzynarodowej Asocjacji Białorutenistów. Przez szereg lat (1991-2002) kierował Katedrą Filologii Wschodniosłowiańskiej i Bałtyckiej Uniwersytetu Loránda Eötvösa w Budapeszcie; od 2003 r. kieruje Katedrą Ukrainistyki tegoż uniwersytetu.*

Зольтан Ондраш *– нар. у 1949 г. Дацэнт. Вывучаў русістыку і паляністыку ў Будапэшце; дактарызаваўся ў Маскве. Дасьледваў м.ін. уплыў старабеларускай канцылярскай мовы ВКЛ на маскоўскую канцылярскую мову ў XV-XVI ст.ст. У апошнія гады дасьледваў старабеларускі пераклад „Атылі” Міклаша Оляха. Арганізоўваў у Будапэшце міжнародныя навуковыя канфэрэнцыі, прысьвечаныя мовам ВКЛ, (1998, 2000). Займаецца гістарычнай лексікалёгіяй ды фразэалёгіяй, этымалёгіяй славянскіх моваў, як і славяна-вугорскімі моўнымі кантактамі. (E-mail: zoltan@ludens.elte.hu)*

Piatro Vasiuchenka
Пятро Васючэнка

The outlines of artistic world of Sakrat Yanovich: chronotope, irony, symbol

In my report at the international conference in June of 1994 I dealt with analysis of creative work of Sakrat Yanovich. One of the conclusions I made spoke in favor of the necessity to conduct scientific identification of the Belarusian literature abroad.

Terra incognita, or an unidentified literary space – that was the image, which was created in the eyes of the mother country not only by literary activities among Belarusians, residing in the United States, but even by the writers of the Belastochchyna, i.e. such a cultural region, which is geographically so close to Belarus and so far away from it. As Maksim Bahdanovich put it – „because the borders are around and the fences are everywhere".

In my viewpoint, familiarization, mutual cognition, identification, classification, comparison as well as filling into the overall context were to become the initial steps in restoration of integrity of the Belarusian literature, scattered all over the world „cultural islands" and diasporas.

Unknown becomes clearer when compared with something that we know pretty well. This is the very identification technique that I selected to evaluate creative work of Sakrat Yanovich, whom I initially treated as the newly discovered object

of my study. I realized his selfhood through comparison with the literary workers who stood close to him and not so much.

As any other prominent artist, Sakrat Yanovich can be treated from the point of view of broad and local perspective. When I speak about the broad context and mean the sphere of literary apprenticeship with its rapt attention of an author and his typology, I attribute to this category the names of Isaac Babel, Kanstantsin Paustowski, Ernest Hemingway, Fiodor Dostoyewski, Maksim Haretski, Kuz'ma Chorny, Ivan Melezh, Mihas' Straltsou, Vasil' Bykau and others.

The context tends to be getting local and rich of content as well as to be suitable for comparative evaluation in case it gets limited down to the frames of novelism, which is not only the sign of the genre, but also aesthetics of Sakrat Yanovich. Novelism serves as an integral part of artistic thinking of the master.

Not only miniatures and short stories, but also large novels by Sakrat Yanovich (i.e. *Samasei, Siarebrany Yazdok (A Silver Horseman), Stsiana (The Wall)*) are of a novelistic and fragmentary nature; they have been written in the spirit of lyrical prose. This very aspect brings his creative work close to the experience of Yanka Bryl', whose hard attempts to write large prose works ended up in creation of *Ptushki i hniozdy (Birds and their Nests),* a novelistic narrative as well as some other shorter and a bit longer novels.

The poetic language of miniatures and short stories by Sakrat Yanovich, „brilliance and odor of a fresh and new word"[1] (U. Rubanau) is close to the stylistics of works by Bryl', especially the collections of stories named *Zhmenia sonechnykh promniau (Handful of Sunrays)*. „Roughness, which makes any prose material and substantial as well as deprives it from being crystal clear and cacochymical"[2], draws the parallel with the novelistic („cornflower") period in creative work of a young Kuz'ma Chorny.

Posture and the interrelations between the author and his „I-hero" precondition definite similarity to the impressions of M. Haretski and Zmitrok Biadulia. Witticism and tenacity of observation remind us about the sketches by Aliaksei Karpiuk and Fiodar Yankouski.

Disposition of the writer towards the ironical and self-ironical artistic thinking enables us to compare his prose with creative works of some Belarusian „ironists" (i.e. Uladzimir Arlou, A. Astashonak, Leanid Dran'ko-Maisiuk, V. Mudrou) in order to at least emphasize esthetical originality of Sakrat Yanovich.

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[1] Yanovich S. *Samasei.* Mn., 1992. S. 3.
[2] Same, S. 4.

Nowadays, when geopolitical and cultural background changed, artistic context of Sakrat Yanovich was enriched thanks to the efforts of literary critics (i.e. Yan Chykvin, V. Varashylski, Ya. Maksimiuk, M. Tychyna, U. Konan, mysterious D. Steven and the author of this article) who keep studying his literary heritage in a consistent and thoughtful way, and not limit their evaluation down to the stage of identification. Some sort of transnational team of Sakratologists has been created and their interests involve hermeneutics, poetics, esthetics as well as sociology of creative work of the writer, whose personality has been also enriched within the course of his creative success, changes in the directions of his literary search as well as his qualitative growth.

My personal experience, obtained in the field of evaluation of literary realities, tells me that grandeur of an artist tends to *pro rata* depend upon richness and diversity of the **chronotope**, created by him, which moves forward, develops and exists independently of the will of the demiurge. This is the reason why I continue to study the creative personality of Sakrat Yanovich through the artistic world, created by him, using sophisticated and movable co-ordinates.

Spatial way of thinking of the Belarusian authors has been traditionally intensified by complexity of geopolitical situation which their motherland would happen to find itself in. The historical habit of the Belarusians, i.e. to loose and to find their motherland again, worked. The image of a Motherland would always coincide with the archetype of a Home, which served as an essential element of any creative work, as their national literature would always be created in „Homes", i.e. cells, castles, palaces, estates and cottages. The Belarusian model of the world is known for its centripetency. Creative energy would always concentrate around the image of a Home or a Town (Vilnia, Polatsk), a settlement, a village or an estate/homestead. It was natural that the very center was not equal to the real spacious object but looked as the imaginary one. That was the way how Maksim Bahdanovich and U. Zhylka imagined their own Vilnia, i.e. the „Kryvitskaya Mecca", while V. Lastouski and A. Salavei dreamed about their literary Kryviya and Polatsak.

The spacious world of Sakrat Yanovich is simultaneously both traditional and paradoxical. His traditional nature lies primarily in the fact that „Sakrat Yanovich preserves outgoing rural world and a definite type of the Belarusian mentality. Nostalgic praise of the original patriarchal mode of life of small settlements makes Yanovich the integral part of the literary tradition, initiated by Dunin-Martsinkevich, and which is still current in Belarus nowadays"[3] (Yan Chykvin).

[3] Krynitsa. (A Spring) 1998. # 2 (39). S. 3.

The author, who was born in the settlement of Krynki, moved to Belastok, a larger and nationally conscious area, which was getting more and more subjected to Polonization processes and was loosing its Belarusian coloring. However, later on he came back to Krynki which had already lost its previous identity. Therefore, the double image of Krynki, i.e. reality and phantom, place of birth of the writer and the point of his return, serve as the center of the author's chronotope.

The reason for the author's return to Krynki is paradoxical in a typical Sokrat's way: „ My present return to Krynki, which has been totally polonized, reminds me of pursuit of the former Belastok, which does not exist anymore as it has already swelled into a metropolis. And, by the way, in Krynki I feel myself like being an alien among the native people".[4]

The writer, who once in his youth dreamed „a crystal clear dream about Belarus", who was cherishing a hope about the Church of Belarusian Spirit and the Altar of Native Word, happened to live in the environment of Belarusians, who have already been turned into the „nationless pagans". Misunderstanding between the crowd and the prophet is the literary phenomenon, interpretation and comprehension of which was initiated by the great Yanka Kupala. Sakrat Yanovich feels misunderstanding between himself and the crowd on the level of everyday life, but he transfers it into the literary environment.

The author associates the process of denationalization of the population with the overall course of dehumanization as a whole. According to the point of view of the author, Belarusians did not survive the „revolution of urbanism" and therefore turned into the artificial, „parquet" people. Literary critics would more than once observe the motive of the author's some sort of dislike towards his literary characters.

Artistic world of Krynki is inhabited by the marginal characters like Banaventur, Biadotsik, Petryk, Mardatsik and even more horrible ones who act as the real two-legged monsters. It enabled Steven D., a literary critic, to conclude that „One can hardly find among Yanovich's literary characters a more or less pleasant personality with whom you would not be scared to come across in a dark corner of the street".[5]

The same literary critic points out that the conflict axis of works by Sakrat Yanovich rests between the notions of life and death. **The symbol of death**, which is lingering, as a chronic disorder, or the symbol of life, leading to the inevitable

[4] Same, S. 4.
[5] Steven D. Chronicle of a long death // Nasha Niva. 1994. # 5. S. 6.

death, serves as the central artifact of Sakrat Yanovich. The title of collection of his works (*The Continuing Death of Krynki)* speaks in favor of this assumption. Marginal nature of national life, decay of the rural way of life and misanthropy comprise the set of signs which create the negative background for such type of existence, the latter being characteristic for Krynki, its dwellers as well as other literary characters of Sakrat Yanovich.

One can hardly compare the author's pessimism and scepsis with his air of welcoming, which was always typical for the circle of nationally involved creative workers, activists of revival process, which Sakrat Yanovich belongs to. However, it is worth mentioning, that each of those activists managed to have found compensatory resources that helped them to bring their chronotope back to harmony. Maksim Bahdanovich, for example, would overcome his ailment by means of reference to Madonna and hedonistic poetry while Yanka Kupala used to search for the artistic compensation in motives, associated with the flight, separation from earth; Yakub Kolas, in his turn, submerged into the profundity of the earthly existence and that added to his harmony as well.

This is actually the way our national Renaissance looks like. It comprises marginal and real, miserable and vital. Decadence, in combination with Renaissance, tends to form the Belarusian RenaiDecadence.

The artistic catharsis in prose works by Sakrat Yanovich is achieved through application of **irony**.

Irony in Sakrat Yanovich's works serves as his world outlook, and not as a trope or evaluation and emotional moment. Irony of such value was characteristic for the times of Erasmus of Rotterdam and the twentieth century. That was the time of reevaluation and extermination of the former values, downfall of smaller nations and decline of the great ones, total scepsis, disillusionment and a „miserable hope" (V. Bykau).

Overcoming is known to be one of the major potential of irony, the overcoming of imaginary authority and vague illusions. This property, however, hides in itself the danger of destruction (self-overcoming), which has been proven by corresponding examples from the world and Belarusian literature.

As for Yanovich himself, irony (and especially self-irony) plays positive and creative role for him. In one of his interviews he mentions about unfortunate peoples, which fail to possess self-irony in their nature (he did not mean Belarusians).

At the time when literacy was aware of only objective irony, the „irony of life", the existence itself looked terribly ironic. The literary personage from the *King*

Oedipus by Sophocles was the first one to experience that terror. Later on, when the writers learned how to mock at life and death, there began the epoch of overcoming the horrors by means of application of irony.

The fear of death (Tanatas) gets overcome by „black" (morbid) humor for the first time in the history of literature in the fifth act of *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare where his personage speculates about the trip of the king down the intestine of a beggar. Black irony can be traced in symbolic drama works by L. Andreyeu, S. Pshybysheuski and in the final act of *Advechnaya Pesnia* (The Eternal Song) by Yanka Kupala when the Shadow of a Peasant (Muzhik) uses the paradoxical and ironical form to compare the fear of existence and non-existence:

Hey, you, the grave, open up again:
The people and the their world look scarier than you do.[6]

Obscure irony does not make the works of Sakrat Yanovich sound gloomy. The air of his first sketch, *Fest* (A Festival), is saturated with bright and ironical sorrow in spite of the horror of the events that took place (i.e. death of a mother and a child).

„Handzia was lucky to meat such a death: she was dying as quietly as she lived…It is good to die in such a cottage."[7] – this is the way in which (in one of the latest novels) the author describes the course of woman's death. Again, this description is performed in light colors and with ironical sadness.

The way the characters of the below novels (i.e. *„Concise biography of Ania", „Further life of Man'ka and her death", „Wedding Party on the Second Christmas Day"* (when a bridegroom hung himself on a wedding towel on the day of his marriage because his father-in-law grudged and did not give him his marriage portion; everything turns out to be a dream), *„Dreadful End of Anton")* die is also ironically funny.

In works by Sakrat Yanovich the fear of life is overcome in a more difficult way. To explain why, we need to refer to his collection of stories named *The Continuing Death of Krynki.*

The course of human life is incommensurably short as compared to the eternity of death. A short splash of life can be compared to a second, which has been stolen from eternity. Or as a fragment that was lubberly excised from eternity and it was

[6] Yanka Kupala. Complete Selection of Works in 9 Volumes. Volume 7. Mn., 2001. S. 33.
[7] Sakrat Yanovich. *Samasei.* S. 307.

just for a second, when it jerked, moved and imitated life. Or, vice versa, death can be treated as a transitional episode within the course of eternal life and movement …

The concept of fragmentariness of existence has been revealed in a rough and detailed way in the novel *Hatred of a Young Prisoner*. It is described in it how the bomb explosion tore an arm from the man's body. An arm with an ax, clutched in it, flew for ten miles away and landed down right into the shepherd's bag. It took quite a bit of time for a frightened shepherd to finally resolve to throw the arm away from the bag.

Creative work of Sakrat Yanovich is known for its specific unexpected switches to other subjects and surprises. It is quite possible that the next unexpected turn in his literary carrier will deal with overcoming his own irony, the latter being replaced by some other quality. The signs of such a turning point can be already traced in his book *Bialorus, Bialorus.* The author's irony gets transformed into a paradoxical, and full of warmth and scepsis feeling towards Belarusians, into the system of funny sophism, which *that ancient* Socrates was so fond of …

It is sufficient to get rid of that gap between existence and non-existence and to conceive them as the whole, as the result of it, the living space, within which the irony could continue its existence, will disappear. That would mean, in its turn, the new turning point in world outlook of the writer and coming of the new Sakrat Yanovich, who has not been yet identified.

A genius author is not the one who can depict or record his times; he is a personality who tends to overcome his time as well as to overcome himself along with it.

Translated by ***Ivan Burlyka***

Пятро Васючэнка *– навуковы супрацоўнік Інстытуту Літаратуры Беларускай Акадэміі Навук. Займаецца літаратурнай крытыкай. Пісьменьнік. У артыкуле разглядае некаторыя асаблівасьці пісьменства Сакрата Яновіча, у шырокім літаратурным кантэксьце. Цікавіцца паэтыкай іроніі, частай у кароткіх формах аўтара. Зьвяртае ўвагу на высокую мастацкасьць слова, майстэрскую ашчаднасьць моўнага выразу ў прозе Яновіча.*

Leon Tarasewicz
Лёнік Тарасэвіч

The province is not to blame!

Witold Bereś: Sometimes you reminisce how, in the 80s, when you traveled with your friends in the express train 'Pogoń' from Bialystok to Warsaw, and talked in Belarusian, the compartment got empty at one moment. Has the attitude of Poles toward Belarusian changed in the Bialystok region recently?

Leon Tarasewicz: Frankly speaking, this situation happened only once. It was 1984 and I was just finishing my studies. And the lady who remained in the compartment said that we do not behave in a cultural way. So I asked her if we started talking in English would this be cultural enough for her. That situation resulted from isolation of Poland, it was an effect of the communist propaganda, and, finally, of inferiority complex spread in Bialystok. A conversation in Belarusian in public place was a kind of manifestation. Today I see in Białystok young people who have already traveled in the world, they speak three languages and nobody gets particularly astonished at that. But it also concerns an elite, a relatively small group.

Bereś: 1989 came and Belarusians got involved in all the changes, too. The writer Sokrat Janowicz, and you… It seemed that nobody would be teaching no-

body, but already then the Białystok KIK [Catholic Intelligentsia Club] blocked the Belarusian candidate for the 'Solidarity' list. Later AWS came into power and in the Bialystok region the Orthodox people were removed from managerial posts. Józef Mozolewski commented at that time: "We wish Poles abroad that they got as much from their authorities as the Polish government offers to the Belarusian population here". Like in that old joke: "And they beat up Blacks at your country!" Is this the specificity of the Bialystok region, or are things wrong in the Polish state?

Tarasewicz: Definitely it look bad here, in the Białystok region. And 1989 is an important date, a symbol, but, as regards Polish intelligentsia, this date might as well not exist at all. As if somebody assumed that this country after 1989 will not develop intellectually. Money was limited for science, arts and culture. Economy moved a bit, but nobody noticed that a business producing e.g. cars has to invest in new technologies and patents. Nobody noticed and the FSO got finished. And if we don't like something in Poland today, it is because we did not have sufficient human resources to carry out changes after 1989. There wasn't enough intelligentsia. And nobody wanted to invest in this social group.

Bereś: Did it look any differently among the Belarusians?

Tarasewicz: No, why? The Belarusian community in the Białystok region is affected by the same processes. If in Poland the SLD dominates, then we have a parallel organization called the Belarusian Social and Cultural Organization. You have Leszek Miller, we have Jan Syczewski; You had the Democratic Union, and we had Belarusian Democratic Union. You have Adam Michnik and Jacek Kuroń, and we have Sokrat Janowicz. Among us, the same as among you, the Belarusian activists started thinking about and securing positions, influences, political relations, money…

Bereś: But the situation of Belarusians is worse in the sense that they had problems with state administration. This is for this reason that you refused to accept the city mayor's award.

Tarasewicz: I did not accept it then I wouldn't today. The local newspaper, *Kurier Poranny*, did not consider it worthwhile to print at least my symbolical reservation about the text which offensively represented the Festival of Young Belarusian Culture "Basowiszcza". But it is not only this. I just don't want to function as a cover-up for the atmosphere of distrust toward Belarusians and the Orthodox which the authorities are trying to build up in this region. And since I can remember, the local authorities have been trying to do all to restore the ND atmosphere here.

The Belarusian language has not been introduced to the schools of the Bialystok region as an equal language, not to mention history of Belarus. But it was Belarus which fought Moscow much more than the Poles. In the Białystok public radio you can listen to Belarusian songs only in the ethnic program, but never between songs in English and Italian. Paranoid situations occur – an editor having a folk music program played Belarusian music and was called by his superior, because Belarusian music has a separate slot!

Bereś: Don't we exaggerate a bit? Do you think that nationalist atmosphere is indeed that strong?

Tarasewicz: Not long ago I went to a Białystok tailor to have my trousers fitted. It turned out he came from vicinity of Jedwabne. And for 20 minutes I had to listen to such a monologue that my only dream was to leave as soon as possible. I understood that there are still people who would allow another Jedwabne to happen. Some are always ready to admit that Jews are to blame for whatever, and others, especially here, in the Bialystok region, that this is due to Belarusians, those morons.

It is as in the book by Jan Stanisław Bystroń from 1934, "About supersitions and prejudice" – it's all black behind the hill, and there in Mazowsze children are born covered in hair and have three eyes each.

Bereś: Do you think that political elites are to blame in this respect, too?

Tarasewicz: Of course, they bear major responsibility for it. We can say today that it was the fault of the Democratic Union that they did not extend a welcoming hand to those Belarusians who wanted to be their partners. "*Salidarnaść chocza mieć panskuju Polszczu*" – as my mother used to say. Hence the failure of Solidarity in these areas after 1989. When people here were offered only Pi$sudski and the Catholic Church, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz turned out to be the only alternative. It was the only "pan" who came and shook hands with them.

Could art possibly work for promoting tolerance and multiculturalism?

It could. But how, if the state revoked any responsibility for culture and dumped it on the shoulders of local authorities? And it is even worse in territories where old phobias are still looming large (the Opole, Białystok, Przemyśl regions. There the atmosphere can be getting close to nationalist hysteria.

And let's remember what took place in the Warsaw Zachęta with Anda Rottenberg, and how Dorota Nieznalska's exhibition was attacked in Gdansk. What's is happening today in Białystok? Katarzyna Korzeniewska's works toured the whole of Europe, only here is she charged with pornography! Frequently, the state apparatus defends Catholicism allegedly threatened by art. But so it happens that it does

not defend the rights of even one non-believer, that it does not prosecute MPs who destroy an object of art because they claim it is anti-Pope, or an actor who comes the national gallery and smashes art with a saber.

People, who during the Solidarity revolution waved flags with 'liberty' written on them, including freedom of art today – while we, Belarusians, wanted to have the right for at least normal broadcasting of our songs on the public radio and not within the time meant for Belarusian cultural ghetto – became people hating art. They became censors!

To all instances of different thinking they have just one answer: it is not in accordance with Christian values. And it would seem that one cannot impose one's values on all the others, because this is precisely in opposition to Christian values. That it would much more Christian to develop a wise catechization… In the meantime the teachers of religion are busy delineating the frames which would contain the art.

Bereś: Can this be in any way changed?

Tarasewicz: My whole life is an example of changes. Just the fact that as early as in 1990 the Belarusians were able to establish the local government in Gródek, where in 20 seats we held 17 representatives, and this had an immediate effect in the city's cultural development. Later just from the grassroots level, without any support from the central administration, we created a bilingual newspaper which got lots of awards and it was massively quote even abroad.

Bereś: Maybe we should convince the Polish state that it can benefit from multiculturalism?

Tarasewicz: It's too late now. The Polish state has already lost the chance. The authorities are still blocking many things – it is enough to mention Agnieszka Arnold's film about "Bury", the commander of the NSZ [National Armed Forces] guerilla unit, who right after the war murdered Belarusians and burned villages in the Białystok region. But we have to admit honestly that while you and other Poles are ashamed by views held by a part of the Polish society, I also have to be ashamed by things occurring in the Belarusian community. And the activity of Syczewski from SLD, who's a keen admirer of Lukaszenka, it not the only example here.

But it is too late also for one more reason – we are about to enter the EU. And the borders do not matter that much any longer. We can organize festival of Belarusian folk culture, but anyway the best Belarusian folk bands perform in the Netherlands or in Germany. I had an exhibition recently in Reims, now in Milan. In just a moment the Polish and Belarusian culture will share the same situation.

The irony lies in the fact that European cultural policy is focused on regionalism, and Belarusians might as well benefit from this tendency.

The Union makes us aware of one more thing: we can build our culture through the provinces. Well, basing on the center, but still within the province. But do I have here in Waliły seek support in Warsaw? Recently in the ZOO Railway Station in Berlin I remembered a situation from years before. There was a time when I used to get off the train in Warsaw Central, just like I do now in Berlin. I wanted to see exhibitions, see people. And it was so elevating! Today I get off in Berlin and want to see exhibitions I cannot see in Warsaw. Slowly we are facing a situation that we have a capital city in the center of the country which is not at all an intellectual center.

In Europe nothing will be operated from the center, as it still is frequently here. The future belongs to such organizations as Pogranicze – the Borderland Foundation. In small Sejny four people can do an amazing thing together! Or Andrzej Stasiuk for that matter, who lives in Czarne and takes part in cultural life more intensively than many people in large urban centers.

Not mentioning the fact that renting an apartment is cheaper today in Berlin than in Warsaw.

Moreover, the first time that the tar road was being made from Bia$ystok to Bobrowniki on the border, through my home town Waliły, was just now, for the EU money.

Bereś: But as of now not much liveliness can be observed in the provinces**.**

Tarasewicz: The province is not to blame! It will be the same in a small town in the Bialystok region as in small San Antonio in Argentine, where I was in 1990. National traits do not determine anything, rather cultural isolation caused by economic conditions. In the Bialystok region, where I was raised, no Bialorusian elite remained. When I was a little boy I always wondered why every intellectual is a Pole.

Many years later I was translating "Memories of Gródek Jews" and it turned out that in this town before the war they studied Kant and Schopenhauer. That there was an Orthodox church in Gródek since 1498, five synagogues were built in time, and a Catholic church was built only in 1937. So, when I am reading today about Maciej Stryjkowski, a historian and a graphic, who was invited in the second half of 16th c. to Choroszcza to the land of Nowogródek voyvode Aleksander Chodkiewicz and who, on the basis of Belarusian chronicles from the Gródek treasury wrote the "Polish Chronicle", then I feel my heart beat faster. It turns out, after all, that Ruthenian archives are indispensable for the history of Poland and Lithuania!

And I am still building up new pieces to my history. Not long ago I found an uncle in Petersburg, a rector of the Academy of Economy who, in 1942 left for Russia. And it is only today that we are able to complete our fragmented but shared history. Maybe a regular generation of Belarusian intelligentsia will have a chance to emerge at last, and they will be as important as Bronisław Taraszkiewicz before the war. [ed.: A linguist, in 1918 published the first handbook of Belarusian grammar, later an MP in the Parliament of II Republic, next an activist of the Communist Party of Western Belarus, in 1928 sentenced to 12 year imprisonment; in 1933 he left for USSR in effect of prisoners exchange. In 1937 arrested and shot in USSR]

Imprisoned in Poland he translated, from memory, the *Iliad* and *Pan Tadeusz* into Belarusian.

Bereś: Do you believe that soon there won't be a question who is a Belarusian and who is a Pole, but to what degree one is a European?

Tarasewicz: It is so already. When I am listening to Radio Maryja warning that Europe will take advantage of us, I start laughing, because so far there are not too many western Europeans coming here. Instead, I can see that emigration is a more probable tendency. After the 80s, when people were leaving, earning money and coming back. But this is nothing unusual. We always try to find a place for ourselves where the conditions are better and some money can be earned.

In the first years of 16th c. Franciszek Skaryna went to study in Padova, where also Jan Kochanowski and Mikołaj Rej would go. And later he turned up in Kraków, in order to print the Bible in Belarusian and to attempt revive his homeland in Połock. But nobody wanted him there, and so he remained suspended between the courts of Prague and Denmark.

Today Roman Polański makes important films which are of an immense value to us, but not all of them are shot in Poland. Romek Opałka occupies an important position in art, but lives in France. Krzysio Wodiczko… And so on. We are not impoverished by the fact that they create somewhere else, but by the fact that we do not know how to make use of their art here.

And here I cannot get rid of one doubt: a country which claims to be free would be able to grant permission for a statue commemorating innocent Belarusian wagon drivers murdered by nationalist guerillas in 1946. A country, which is free, would not stubbornly organize festival of patriotic music and borderland culture in territories where other nations live. A country, which is free, does not get annoyed when somebody says 'Heimat', and understands that the expression "kresowy" [trans.: pertaining to interwar borderland multinational territories in the

east] may hurt many of its citizens of other than Polish nationality, that for Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Lithuanians it can stand for treating their land as a kind of a colony.

So, how is it with Poland's freedom?

(„Gazeta Wyborcza", 9-07-2003)
Translated by ***Dorota Kołodziejczyk***

РЭЗЮМЭ

Інтэрв'ю ўзяў выдатны польскі крытык Вітальд Бэрэсь. Апублікаванае на старонках найвялікай польскай газэты, знаёміць чытача не толькі з Лёнікам Тарасэвічам як выдатным мастаком – беларускай нацыянальнасьці, моцна заслужаным для культуры Польшчы.

Бэрэсь пранікнёна перадае погляды Тарасэвіча на сьвет, Эўропу і мейсца Польшчы ў ёй, а таксама на ролю мастацтва Беларусаў ды іх элітаў у інтэлектуальнай гісторыі кантынэнту. Асаблівую ўвагу зьвяртае на польска-беларускія суадносіны даўней і цяпер, даходзячы да не заусёды аптымістычных высноваў. Вельмі спадзяецца Тарасэвіч на дабрадзейны ўплыў заходняй культуры, адд пакаленьняў дэмакратычнай у адчуваньні традыцыйна запозьненага ўсходу Эўропы. Выяўляе ён спадзеў дадатна паўплываць сваім мастацтвам на культурную ўражлівасьць ды мэнталітэт родных Беларусаў.

Лёнік Тарасэвіч *– нар. у 1957 г., ст. Валілы Падляшскага ваяводзтва, Польшча. Скончыў Акадэмію Мастацтваў у Варшаве (1984). З 1996 г. Выкладае ў ёй. Дзейнічаў у Беларускім Абьеднаньні Студэнтаў, затым у палітычнай партыі Беларускае Дэмакратычнае Згуртаваньне. Творчыя выставы ў Польшчы, ЗША, Англіі, Швэцыі, Нямеччыне, Італіі, Францыі, і іншых краінах Эўропы, Азыі, Лацінскай Амэрыкі. Ляўрэат шматлікіх мастацкіх узнагарод, польскіх і замежных. Спонсар музычных фэстываяў Маладой Беларусі і гміннай прэсы ў родным Гарадку.*

Sokrat Janowicz
Сакрат Яновіч

The Belarusian will emerge in time

Kurier Poranny: Does a nation have its own character?

Sokrat Janowicz: Each and every one! Because each nation means a different fate. The nation is formed not by God, and by poets, but by the fate. A separate fate constitutes a separate nation. There is a Swiss nation – they speak four languages, but the nation is one, because they were united by one fate, by the same piece of bread. People are divided not by chauvinists, but by bread. Here in Białystok I look at Polish chauvinists, who look at me with hatred, with calm (they're stupid, but this cannot be helped), because I know that these are not them who divide us, but our common bread, common poverty or passion (rozkosz). America does not speak its own language, and there are separate nations there, because they have separate fates. And this is the fate which created them, not the language. Language and culture emerge under the influence of fate.

[KP] And all the stereotypes, like that all Belarusians are passive, yielding, are they at all true?

[SJ] This readiness to yield stems from the fact that their fate was different from the fate of other European nations. Which means that in comparison to Poles, Ukrainians, Russians or Baltic nations we, Belarusians, were the poorest, the weakest in material terms. Jacek Kuroń once stressed that we never conquered

anybody in our history, never annexed and assimilated anybody, never linked any territories to outs, on the contrary, we were constantly annexed. My grandfather from Krynki, who was an undisputable illiterate, spoke fluently five languages: he courted his wife in Belarusian, if there was a need to deal with the authorities he spoke in Russian, if he needed to go to the master – landowner, or the priest, he could use his Polish (my grandfather understood that God spoke only Polish), if he needed more work and an opportunity turned out at the local factory, he went to talk with a German or a Jew, in their languages.

[KP] You said recently that those yielding Belarusians are a nation of conspirators which started the tradition of terrorism. What does it mean?

[SJ] This terrorism and conspiracy were meant to be ironic. But for the sake of remembering: January Uprising, Kastus Kalinowski, the dictator, fights with the Russian occupier, and organizes brigades of dagger-killers. Hryniewicki, who set up a Belarusian party, was publishing an underground newspaper. The Poles don't mention several other important details about this man – the same Hryniewicki murdered the tsar Alexander II. Belarusians are poor people of a peasant mentality, and each peasant conspires, waits in hiding, and pretends to be nobility. A paradox: each peasant hates the nobleman and at the same time wants to be the nobleman.

[KP] The Belarusian oppositionists in Bialystok have good relations with the Chechens who arrived here. Is because it is more on their way with some nations, and with others less so?

[SJ] When I am in Gdansk and a man introduces himself as a Kashubian, I will leave all the Poles around and talk to him, because this Kaszubian is in the same situation as I am. I will talk with a Black person more cordially than with an Englishman. I repeat this always: it is the community that counts, the shared or similar fate. The Chechens are a small community in Białystok and my chivalric code of behavior forces me to contact the weaker first and foremost. A gentleman keeps side with the conquered and the unhappy, he will shake hands with the beggar, but not always with a factory owner. I know all of this, because I am also treated in a bit worse way, not with premeditation, on purpose, but inadvertently. My son said that with minority is like with a cow and a frog. A cow will stamp on a frog not even knowing about it and it means nothing for a cow while for a frog it is, well, a tragedy.

[KP] Do you observe any change in the way the Belarusians are perceived in the West?

[SJ] An average person in the south does not realize even now that Poland is an independent country. A couple of years ago I was talking to a dock worker in London. I attracted his attention because here is a man, who is white, but somewhat sad (because we're recognized by sad eyes, there everybody smiles). I was trying to explain to him that Poland is independent, that it has its own capital city. And he went on 'yeah, yeah', just like the Scots have their Edinburgh, but everything is decided up there in Moscow for you. They do not understand what independence means in a political sense, because they never had to fight for it. He never heard anything about Belarusians, literally nothing. Later he started associating things and asked if it is not Lukashenka by any chance, because he had read something in the papers. People always pay attention to criminals, never to normal modest people. It's just a different world there. Once Prof. Daniel Beauvois wrote to me: 'I am fed up being a Pole in France, because as a French I am constantly fighting to have the Polish language taught in Lotaryngia, and the Poles don't want it'. It's the same with the Belarusians here. Poles in France or Germany behave in an exactly the same way as Belarusians here. Their thinking is based on the bread category, why should they bother about nationhood. A Belarusian here will be an earnest Pole; he'll go to Germany and become an earnest German.

[KP] So, how is it now with the Belarusian sense of nationality abroad, I mean in the Republic of Belarus?

[SJ] They are Soviets, a part of the USSR. They never get in touch with the West. They come to Poland to buy things. Their fate and ours are two completely different matters.

[KP] Do you mean these are two completely different nations?

[SJ] So it seems. A Polish Belarusian nation will emerge in time. It already has a separate literature, in contrast to the Soviet Belarusian literature. And there the nation is practically Russian-language. Here we'll have a Polish-Belarusian nation, very dynamic and mostly based on intelligentsia. During PRL [People's Republic of Poland] the Belarusians were moving to the city, a major exodus occurred, as the life in the countryside was very harsh. Now in the countryside the Belarusian farmer won't speak Belarusian, because he is ashamed of being a peasant, his children live now in the city. If you hear the Belarusian language somewhere, it means it is a doctor, lawyer, or another intellectual who does not have an inferiority complex. In Belarus an intellectual is nobody, a university professor means absolutely nothing. A locksmith enjoys a much bigger respect. It's pure sovietism, power of the people. Belarusians there hate the Belarusian language because they associate

it with poverty, stink and dirt. They want to forget this language as soon as possible. Here the status of intelligentsia is different, and it saves the day.

[KP] And how will the story with Aleksander Lukashenka, the president of Belarus, end? Let's try to imagine the future a bit.

[SJ] Lukashenka's position within next decade is unbeatable. He will be finished when people notice finally that everybody around the Republic is having a better life than they. And then they will be really angry. And now they believe in whatever Lukashenka is telling them: 'In Poland unemployment runs rampant and people are dying of hunger'. Those who regularly travel to Poland to smuggle merchandise, and this is some 400 000 people, know that things are different, but the Belarusian people do not believe them: 'You're siding with the Poles and telling fairy tales'.

[KP] Podlasie will become an enclave where the Belarusian language and culture may survive?

[SJ] Not only may, but it surely will. In the Republic of Belarus the Belarusian language exists somewhere on the radio and television. But this is the language of profession, spoken for money. Even if a journalist speaks on air in Belarusian, he will switch to Russian when having beer with his buddies. An official starts his speech in Belarusian and finishes in Russian. The Belarusian language remains only as the language of liturgy, of a ritual, there. Here a Polish chauvinist does not like when they speak Belarusian, but he is well-behaved just enough not to start a fight. While at the Soviets' one can really get beaten for speaking in Belarusian. Once, in a bookshop with a Belarusian literature, I asked the shop-assistant in Belarusian about a book. And she answered: 'Can't you speak in a human tongue?'

[KP] Is there anything changing for the better between Belarusians and Poles here in Podlasie?

[SJ] Yes, it is. Cemeteries help us a lot. The old are passing away to a better world, a new generation comes which does not have all these painful memories and stigmata. Young people even ask me to speak to them in Belarusian because it sounds so interesting. I am not afraid to speak to them in Belarusian, as I am sometimes to my peers, because somebody might shout: 'This is Poland here!'. Cemeteries will do all the good work for us, there is no need to rush.

[KP] Thank you for the interview.

(„Kurier Poranny", 10-08-2003)

Translated by ***Dorota Kołodziejczyk***

Arnold McMillin

Anatol Sys – a soul in torment

Aleś Harun famously underlined the poetic nature of Belarus in a memorable line, 'sam narod – piaśniar' (the people themselves are a bard), but himself also exemplified a melancholy feature of the history of Belarusian poetry – the unnaturally short lives of some of its best practitioners. Amongst other prime examples may be mentioned Harun's contemporaries Maksim Bahdanovič and Siarhiej Pałujan, as well as, in more recent years, Symon Błatun, Leanid Jakubovič and Anatol Sierbantovič; most recently was the tragic case of Dzianis Khvastovskii.[1] But there is a distinction between death from disease, accident or war, and the loss of a poet through self-destruction, as seems to have been the case with Anatol Sys, a victim of alcohol addiction. It is greatly to be hoped that, by some miracle, this outstandingly gifted poet, still in the prime of life, has not burned himself out by a ruinous lifestyle. For Sys is a captivating poet of varying moods, forms and themes, a fine craftsman with a rare gift for expressing deep thoughts and emotions in an unpretentious, sometimes deliberately repetitive way. A truly patriotic poet, whose poems are deeply embedded in the cultural and spiritual past of his coun-

try, he expresses most vividly his hopes and, particularly, despair in view of what seems to him a catastrophic decline in his beloved native culture. He is one of the strongest voices in contemporary Belarusian poetry.

Anatol Sys was born on 26 October 1959 in the village of Haroškaŭ in the Rečyca district of Homiel region. In 1977 he entered the Historical – Philosophical Faculty of Homiel State University, graduating in 1982. After military service in the Red Army, he worked for the Vietka local newspaper and later as senior technician in Belarusian Television. His poetic début came with some verses for the youth magazine *Maładość* in 1986 and since then he has published three slim but very impressive volumes of poetry: *Ahmień* (The hearth, 1988), *Pan Les* (Lord Forest, 1989), and, most recently, *Vieršy* (Verses, 2002).[2] After *Pan Les*, however, Sys abandoned paid work and many fear that now he appears to have ceased writing. A founder member, with Adam Hłobus (b. 1958), of the *Tutejšyja* (Locals) group of young writers in 1987, Sys led a boisterous life filled with scandals which at first were mostly forgiven, thanks to his charismatic character and immense poetic gifts, but which later became routine and unacceptable. It is his poetry, rather than the aberrations of his life, which form the principal subject of what follows.

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Anatol Sys's poetry is derived from and connected with his native culture in many different ways: through Belarusian mythology; through links with writers of the past and present, including many echoes and transformations of well-known earlier poems; through concern for the language, expressed more indirectly than in some 20th-century poetry; and, not least, in his despair at the destruction of national identity and consciousness by the 'vandals' who can only be resisted by the sacred flame of poetry.

The flame is, of course, mythological in itself, and in the untitled poem, 'My – čarada samotnych ptachaŭ...' (We are a flight of lonely birds), Sys uses characteristic bird imagery in a poem of great oratorical power, not least in the line which divides the poem's two parts, highlighting Belarus's national colours:

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[1] On Khvostovskii see Žybul 2003.
The equivalent to these short-lived talents for English readers is Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770) who took his own life at the age of seventeen.

[2] The latter book, incorporating many poems from the earlier two, was, in fact, published with the help of one of his many admirers, Valancina Jakimovič.

Мы – чарада самотных птахаў,
над намі зорныя крыжы,
за намі вісельні ды плахі
ды ўслед шурпатыя глыжы,
за намі веды валунамі
грымяць этапамі бацькоў,
няма жывой душы за намі,
нат з плах залевы змылі кроў.

Чырвоны Зніч над Белай Вежай.

Гудзе ў здагадках стольны Менск,
а мы ў нябёсах крэслім межы –
вяртаем Вільню, Пскоў, Смаленск...
Мы – чарада самотных птахаў
у атачэнні груганоў,
Дняпро нясе ад Маці-Плахі
ў чужое мора нашу кроў.[3]

This poem contains not only a central mythological or folkloric element, but is, in fact, emblematic of much of Sys's poems on national themes, from the dream of returning the ancient boundaries of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to the association of present-day Belarus with an execution block surrounded by rapacious ravens where knowledge and, by extension, culture lies in the past, and where the lonely birds, frequently associated by Sys with poetry, are fleeing from clods of frozen earth being thrown at them. Blood, incidentally, figures alarmingly frequently in Sys's verse, highlighted ironically in 'Kryžavali krumkača' (They were crucifying a raven) where ravens and swans are crucified by a 'learned executioner' because both have black blood and so it would be 'a sin not to crucify them' (Sys 2002, 49).

[3] 'We are flights of lonely birds, / above us the starry crosses, / behind us are scaffolds and execution blocks / and at us are cast clods of frozen earth, / behind us knowledge like boulders / thunders with the ages of our ancestors, / there is no living ground beneath us, / the downpours have washed the blood even from the execution blocks. // A Red Sacred Flame above the White Tower. // The capital Miensk hums with speculation / but we in the heavens mark the boundaries / – we take back Vilna, Pskov, Smolensk... / We are a flight of lonely birds / surrounded by ravens, / the river Dnieper bears from Mother-Execution Block / our blood to an alien sea': Anatol Sys, *Vieršy*, Miensk, Mastackaja Litaratura, 2002 (hereafter Sys 2002), 129.

Returning to folkloric elements, they are widespread: implied in the poems which gave their names to Sys's first books, 'Ahmień' and 'Panski Les', they are prominent in poems like 'Božavoŭk' (The wolf god), 'Čornaja hadziuka, biełaja zmiaja' (Black grass-snake, white serpent), 'Pastuchi' (Shepherds), and 'U čarocie ptuška načavała' (The bird spent a night in the reeds), the latter ending with the all-too-plausible statement that his mother would not let him into the house for the night. Finally, 'Nieapalenaja kupina' (The fire-resistant icon) also brings folk belief right into the practicalities of life, as does, on the same theme, 'Zamova ad pažaru' (A spell against fire) from the 'Alaiza' narrative poem (cycle of poems might be a more accurate description). Folkloric verses like 'Źmiainy car' (The Serpent-King, 1910) and 'Stracim-lebiedź' (The doomed swan, 1916) echo the titles of well-known poems by Bahdanovič,[4] and 'Biełaruś maja, maja mahiła...' is resonant with one of the best-loved poems in Belarusian literature, 'O Biełaruś, maja šypšyna...' (O Belarus, my briar-rose..., 1925) by Uładzimir Duboŭka. These three poems are, however, very different from their referents. 'Źmiainy car' was one of the verses based on Belarusian mythology in Bahdanovič's early cycle, 'U začarovanym carstvie' (In an enchanted kingdom, 1910); Sys's poem has four quatrains each hailing the authority of the Serpent-King, who will show the way across a mossy marsh, protecting his marvellous author (Bahdanovič) from rapacious foreigners; the poem is a present to the earlier poet. Bahdanovič's 'Stracim-lebiedź' is a tragic bird that flies independently from Noah's ark, but is finally weighed down by smaller birds which sit on him, and dies leaving no descendants. Just how Sys's poem relates to Niaklajeŭ is not entirely clear: the latter once foolishly declared himself 'the best poet' but 'fashions naive verses' which are for Sys inspirational, like the first cranes of spring. He must fly without looking back (presumably from his expatriate life in Finland) (Skobła 2003, 747).

The relationship of Duboŭka's inspirational poem to Sys's cry of despair is clearer: Duboŭka calls on the symbolic briar-rose to overcome the weeds which seek to choke it, to resist boldly the hardships brought by (Belarus's) enemies. In Sys's poem the patriotism is no less, but for him Belarus is already a grave:

[4] 'Stracim-lebiedź' is dedicated to Uładzimir Niaklajeŭ, 'my first and last love': Michaś Skobła (ed.), *Krasa i siła*, Miensk, Limaryjus, 2003 (hereafter Skobła 2003), 747.

Беларусь мая, мая магіла...

І калі вясёлкай над труной
вып'е кроў да кроплі з маіх жылаў,
Беларусь, накрый мяне зямлёй.
Не, счакай, яшчэ аддам я вочы
сваёй здані,
каб мая душа
не зблудзіла на чужыну ўночы,
каб між намі не лягла мяжа.

Беларусь мая, мая магіла,
з бел-чырвона-белага радна
ці кашулю мне на смерць пашыла?
Беларусь мая, мая магіла,
ты ж адна ў мяне, як ёсць адна.[5]

Sys's vision is indeed a bleak one. In 'Łastaŭka' (The swallow) he laments that the bird has for a long time not visited his native parts (the villages Niehlubka and Motal are mentioned), that it has not witnessed death, but that this will soon change, as we read in the eloquent final lines:

дык пабачыш, якая смерць...
Снег з Расейшчыны, дождж з Паляччыны –
будзе целу й душы балець,

ластаўка.[6]

The image of hell recurs in a variety of poems from 'Cnatlivy kniaź' (Chaste prince), where Bahdanovič seems to be the eponymous hero, to 'Raj' (Heaven) in

[5] 'My Belarus, my grave... // And when like a rainbow over the coffin / my blood will be drunk up to the last drop in my veins, / Belarus, cover me with earth. / No, wait, I shall give my eyes / to my ghost, / so that my soul / may not wander into foreign parts at night, / that there should not be a boundary between us. // My Belarus, my grave, / from the white-red-white sackcloth / have you sewn me a shirt for my death? / My Belarus, my grave, / you are all I have, absolutely all': Sys 2002, 127.

[6] 'and you will see what death is like... / Snow from the Russian lands, rains from the Polish – / it will be painful for your body and soul, // swallow: Sys 2002, 124.

which an old woman dreams of joining her dead husband, having 'lived in hell long enough'. The poet finds life in spiritually impoverished Belarus a cause for despair, as is reflected in one of his most powerful verses:

Беларусі

Хто з пяром, хто з паходняй, хто з посахам
свет знайшоў,
а я – з гострым нажом,
о сівая мая, о боская,
згвалтаваная, мая босая,
мая голая пад дажджом.

А ты думала, а ты й думай так,
што твой родны сын не зладзей,
таму й носіць нож, бо робіць мастак
скрыпкі знатныя для людзей.

О сівая мая, о боская,
хаця сэрца сніць гостры нож,
ад цябе адной не адрокся я –
у нагах тваіх – медны грош,

але прыйдзе ноч дужа зорная,
тваёй спраўджанай слязой,
а мая душа будзе чорная,
небяспечная, як лязо.

Яе ўгледзіш ты,
я цябе прашу,
я па-воўчаму буду выць:

[7] 'To Belarus // Some with a pen, some with a torch, some with a staff / found the world, / and I found it with a sharp knife, / O my grey one, O divine one, / my barefoot raped one, / bare beneath the rain. // And you thought, and go on thinking so, / that your own son was not a villain, / that he carried a knife, for an artist makes / wonderful violins for people. // O my grey one, O divine one, / although my heart dreams of a sharp knife, / you alone have I not abandoned – / at your feet I am a copper coin, // but there will come a thickly starry night, / with your righteous tear, / and my soul will be black, / dangerous as a blade. // You will notice it, / I shall beg you, / and I shall howl like a wolf: / do not approach my soul at night, / for then I shall no longer live': Sys 2002, 130-31.

не ідзі ўначы па маю душу,
бо тагды і мне больш не жыць.[7]

Death never seems far away in Sys's verse, whether he is going to die dramatically, pathetically, or like a dog, as in 'Jak toj sabaka' (Like that dog) which ends with the words, 'Ja pahibiel čuju'.[8] The image of the full moon as a skull is found in many poems including 'Moj Dniapro try tysiačy hadoŭ...' (My Dnieper for three thousand years...) and 'Biełaruskija Ikary' (Belarusian Icaruses). Excessive drinking and its consequences are mentioned, often obliquely, in various contexts, not least that of the poet's family of which he writes with apparently more sincerity than actual regret. One graphic verse is very open about the problem:

На твары шчацінне, як пожня жытнёвая,
вочы – праталіны мутнай вады...
– Мілы сынок мой, пачні жыццё новае,
грэх блазнаваць у Хрыстовы гады.

– Мама, я рады б –
як пчолы на ліпень,
музы лятуць на хмяльнога мяне.
Жыць без паэзіі? Гэта ж пагібель!
Жыць без віна? Гэта ж смерць удвайне.

Хто ж вінаваты, што аж з нараджэння
з мёдам смакчу я з цябе малако?
Ведаю, сохне паціху карэнне,
хоць і жывеш над Вялікай Ракой.

Ну і няхай музам колкая пожня,
горкія вусны мне, дык няхай.
Мама, такога народзіць не кожная,
мама,
не перажывай![9]

[8] 'I feel my end coming': Sys 2002, 130.
[9] 'Stubble on my face like a reaped field of corn, / my eyes like pools of thawed murky water... / – My dear little son, begin a new life, / it is a sin to play the fool with the years Christ has given. // – Mother, I would be glad

Drinking brings Sys loneliness and loss of his friends; his Fatherland, so vital in his sober consciousness, becomes a fatherland of alcohol[10] where day and night are interchangeable. A somewhat rambling, yet powerful poem, 'Samotny' (Lonely), ends when the poet stifles his loneliness with his own blood, thus escaping night and witnessing the return of (illusory?) day. The following lines from the middle of this poem reflect the dire consequences of his addiction:

Я хаваў ад іх сляпыя вочы,
налівалі, і я піў віно,
сам жа, як злачынца,
ўсё адно
я чакаў сваёй самотнай ночы.
Я змярцвеў,
хоць чуў вакол прадмовы
пра каханне, адраджэнне, мову,
тосты за Радзіму...
Ўсё адно
за самоту піў сваё віно.

Так спазнаў яшчэ адну Радзіму.

Цяжка ўспомніць – ноч была ці дзень, --
бо здушыла горла, як камень,
мне віно,
і верш мой занямеў.[11]

– like bees in July, / so the muses come to me when I am drunk. / To live without poetry? That is certain ruin! / To live without drink? That is doubly death. // Who then is to blame that, from my very birth, / I suck milk from you together with mead? / I know that my roots will quietly die, / even though you live near the Great River. // Well then let my muses be in a prickly stubble field, / let also my lips be bitter. // Mother, not every woman can give birth to such a one, / mother, do not fret!': Sys 2002, 141-42.

[10] Sys usually refers to alcohol as *vino* (literally, wine). Here and elsewhere *vino* is translated as alcohol, drink, or, where appropriate, omitted. The only exceptions are where the poet specifically refers to wine, for instance, red wine.

[11] 'I hid my blind eyes from them, / they poured and I drank. / I myself though, like a criminal, / all the same / waited for my lonely night. / I became dead to the world, / although all around I could hear speeches / about love, rebirth, the language, / toasts to the Fatherland... / all the same / I drank to loneliness. // Thus I found another Fatherland. // It is hard to recall whether it was night or day, / for drink / crushed my throat like a stone, / and my poetry became dumb': Sys 2002, 120.

The rhyme of 'ŭsio adno' (it is all the same) and 'vino' (drink) is a particularly chilling one. In 'Maja chata biez siabroŭ – nie chata' (My home without friends is not a home), he writes of being abandoned by his friends, although he believes it is not drink but his poetry that is to blame:

бо паэзія у гэтым вінавата,
так што ні пры чым зялёны змій.[12]

In another simple but effective poem, however, he asks to be kept away from a poet who has been invited to his house where happiness has turned into sadness:

Пад вакном журба збірае мяту,
а расціла
                радасць
                яе тут.

Калі Бог пашле паэта ў хату –
пасадзіце на чырвоны кут.

З абраза святою павуцінай
павучок, як Дух, чало кране...
За паэтам я зайду ў хаціну –
не пускайце да яго мяне.[13]

In one particularly searing verse, 'Pierad boham' (Before God), the only solution to the poet's appalling situation of 'devilish circles', attempted self-mutilation and suicide, and the 'stinking chapel' of his home, appears to be Woman, 'the mother of all sinners'. This powerful poem will end this brief review of his alcoholic despair, before turning to more cheerful or, at least, stable aspects of Sys's life and poetry:

[12] 'for poetry is to blame for this / since the green bottle [lit. serpent] has nothing to do with it': Sys 2002, 138.
[13] 'Under the window grief picks mint, / but joy grew it here. // When God sends a poet into a house, / place him in the icon corner. // From the icon in a holy spider's web / a little spider, like the Spirit, touches his brow... / After the poet, I go into the house – do not let me approach him': Sys 2002, 84. In the poem 'Pad biarozaju kości, a ŭ kronie hniazdo ptuška mościć...' (Beneath a birch tree are bones, and in the crown a bird is making a nest...) there is peace, apart from the mockery of people, as the poet lies resting in a graveyard: Sys 2002, 10.

Перад Богам

Я думаў,
вершы мае відушчыя,
аж пакуль не аслепнуў сам
ад маланкі, самім жа пушчанай,
я гарэў, як бязбожны храм,
сам сабе я ў ім здаўся богам,
адпускаў сам сабе грахі –
грызла ганак, вяла дарога
зноў на д'яблавы кругі,
ад яго я вяртаўся ў поўсці
і калі цалаваў свой крыж,
ён адбіткам жахлівым помсціў,
бы люстэрка ці д'яблаў віж,
і тагды я складаў малітву,
можа, ў соты свой самасуд,
той малітвай, нібыта брытвай,
сашкрабаў у адчаі бруд,
і ў адчаі я рэзаў вочы,
і жахаўся крыві сваёй,
і жагнаўся – набожна, тройчы, –
і агідны жывёльны лой
з гострай брытвы маёй малітвы,
быццам гной, патыхаў маной.

Я пакінуў свой храм смярдзючы,
азірнуўся на купалы,
а святыя ў маіх анучах
неслі кроў маю на сталы,
а я, голы, як здань, бяскроўны,
у чыесьці ступаў сляды,
перад Богам жывёле роўны,
нёс грахі свае на клады,
і глыбела за мной сцяжына,
і ступала ў мае сляды

маці грэшных усіх – Жанчына –
з поўнай чарай жывой вады.[14]

Not all Sys's family relations are depicted in his verse as chaos or crisis. 'Dzied pierad śmierciu' (Grandpa near death), for instance, is a touching depiction of the old man and his heritage, with the words of his son, Sys's father, as a simple epigraph and first line: 'Jon svaje nohi dažyŭ...' (He wore his legs out...). On his own father the poet writes with feeling and admiration in 'Baćka tak i nie śsivieŭ...' (Father simply did not grow grey...), and, looking back to hard times, in a powerful poem, 'Hałodny hod' (A hungry year). In the same vein is the prose poem 'Brukavanka' (The paved road), in which Sys sets out without purpose but finds himself in his native parts and by the paved road sees graves, amongst which, 'like a candle, like a silver birch tree', stood his father's grave. In another far from self-pitying poem, 'Heta pamiataje tolki maci...' (Only mother remembers this...), it is his mother who recalls his childhood enthusiasms, and shares the memory of his particular humiliation when being mocked by the village people. In fact, many poems reflect Sys's love towards his father and mother, another good example being 'A ja pomniu, jak mianie chryścili...' (But I remember how they christened me...). Several charming poems recall his childhood, of which perhaps the most interesting is the prose poem 'Nizka abarankaŭ' (A string of biscuits), subtitled 'a true story that happened to me', which describes how the boy takes literally the instruction not to ignore the unfortunate, and arrives home without the things he had planned to bring. Also may be mentioned an early string of poems entitled 'Voču malenstva' (The eyes of youth), as well as 'Pieśnia pra syna' and 'Pieśni pra syna'.

***

Anatol Sys has a vivid imagination and a rich command of register and voice that finds notable expression in a series of monologues (*manałohi*). This genre was

[14] 'Before God // I thought, / my verses can see / until I myself am blinded / by lightning which I myself have unleashed, / I burnt, like a godless temple, / I seemed to myself like a god in it, / I absolved my own sins – / I was drawn across the porch, the road led / again into devilish circles, / from it I returned in a fleece / and when I kissed my cross, / it revenged itself with a fearful fragment, / like a mirror or a devils' gaze, / and then I composed a prayer, / perhaps my hundredth act of self-condemnation, / with that prayer, like a razor, / I despairingly scratched off the filth, / and in despair I cut my eyes, / and was fearful of my own blood, / and crossed myself – piously, three times, – / and the disgusting animal fat / from the sharp razor of my prayer, / like rotten matter, smelled foully of lies. // I left my stinking chapel, / looked around at the cupolas, / but the saints in my toot cloths, / bore my blood to tables, / and I, naked, bloodless as a ghost, / trod in someone's steps, / the equal of an animal before God, / bore my sins to the cemetery, / and behind me the path grew deeper, / and there trod in my steps / the mother of all sinners – Woman – / with a full cup of living water': Sys 2002, 118-19.

practiced by, amongst others, the dazzling Russian poet Andrei Voznesenskii, to whom several Belarusian poets responded enthusiastically, most remarkably Ryhor Baradulin in his own glittering poem of the mid-1970s, 'Andreju Vaznasienskamu' (To Andrei Voznesenskii). But whilst the Russian's half dozen or so monologues tend to be very generic (a beatnik, a biologist, an actor, a future reader of poetry, for example) and rarely devoted to individuals (exceptions being the eighteenth-century explorer Nikolai Rezanov and, most famously, Marilyn Monroe), Sys's monologues are mainly delivered by celebrated figures from Belarus's past and, to a lesser degree, present. They are people whose aspirations and interests the poet clearly shares. There are about a dozen, of which the first is 'Manałoh Źmiciera Žyłunoviča', a simple poem of four quatrains, reflecting the disappointment of this writer and communist activist, better known by his pen name of Ciška Hartny. The Belarusian people are like dunes in a storm, with winds blowing constantly, from West and East, black and red, hiding the sun and the icon, but teaching people to seek money and (spurious) honours. The poem begins with a vivid image for the idealistic Žyłunovič and the same image introduces the last stanza:

Як пазашлюбны плод,
свае хаваю думы:
чаму ж ты, мой народ,
падатлівы, як гума?[15]

Two suicides – the already mentioned Siarhiej Pałujan and an actor, Ramuald Žakoŭski – attract Sys's sympathy and attention, as does the short lived West Belarusian poet, Uładzimir Žyłka. Most inspirational of all these early flowers of Belarusian culture is Aleś Harun. The first and last stanzas of his monologue express vividly the aspirations of a poet with whom Sys clearly empathizes, using the image of heated stones (perhaps at some level reminiscent of Pushkin's celebrated 'Prorok' [The Prophet, 1826]) to express the poet's desire to arouse and inspire his fellow-countrymen:

[15] 'Like the fruit of an extra-marital relationship, / I preserve my thoughts: / but why are you, my people, / as pliant as gum?': Sys 2002, 102. This image is picked out by Hanna Kiślicyna, one of the few scholars to attempt an analysis of Sys's achievement, as 'aesthetically ugly': Kiślicyna 2003, 58. Reaction to poetic diction is, of course, particularly subjective, as the unending disagreements about the last line of Boris Pasternak's poem 'Gamlet' (Hamlet, 1946) show.

Маналог Алеся Гаруна

Гараць камяні ў маім вогнішчы,
расцвеленыя агнём,
нібы ваўчаняты ў логвішчы
сонечным прамянём.

(.....)

Дай Бог, каб маё каменне
Жар-птахам дайсці змагло
да тысячных пакаленняў
і сэрцы іх апякло.[16]

It may be noted at this point that Harun also appears unexpectedly in the last two lines of Sys's poem 'Sabaka' (Dog), with the kind of quasi-banal final rhyme to which the poet is clearly attracted:

І ўночы жудасна хтось выў –
Алесь Гарун сабакам быў.[17]

Another passionate monologue is that of Karuś Kahaniec (Sys incorrectly gives the pen-name of this writer and artist, Kazimir Kastravicki, as Karuś Kahaniec, a curious slip). In this poem Kahaniec is made to link the Belarusian language, which is preserved as a weapon and carried on the people's back, to the Belarusian God. The latter is not an alien and cruel God, a waxen idol, but, like the language, part of the people's body:

ЁН
БОГ НАШ
І БОГ АДЗІН.[18]

---

[6] 'Monologue of Aleś Harun // Stones burn in my bonfire, / stimulated by the flames. / like wolf cubs in their lair / warmed by the sun's rays. [...] // Pray God that my stones / may reach like a firebird / to thousands of future generations / and set their hearts on fire': Sys 2002, 64-65.
[17] 'And in the night someone wailed fearfully -- / Aleś Harun was a dog': Sys 2002, 69.
[18] 'HE / IS OUR GOD / AND OUR ONLY GOD': Sys 2002, 125.

Perhaps less interesting are the monologues of an unfrocked priest and of an apostate. 'Manałoh Jazepa Drazdoviča', however, enables Sys to introduce through this artist, best known for his paintings on mythological subjects, some of the true symbols of an independent Belarus, such as the Pahonia[19] and the bison. The latter's threatened extinction deeply disquiets true Belarusians, as may be seen from the following lines from the middle and end of this poem:

Жалобны рэквіем зубрыны
на мой
народ
наводзіць шлях.
(.....)

там крыўская Пагоня скача,
і німб над ёй, як зорны шлях.[20]

An aspect of Belarus's medieval history is brought out in 'Manałoh Apanasa Filipoviča' (Monologue of Afanasii Filipovich) in which the troubled and turbulent seventeenth-century priest recalls his lack of good fortune (*dola*) in Belarus. As may be apparent from the poems mentioned so far, Sys is deeply aware of the Belarusian historical heritage, feeling keenly its periods of hope and despair, through his chosen spokespersons. Another example is a poem that refers to the greatest literary historian of all, 'Nastupniku Uładzimira Karatkieviča' (To the descendent of Uładzimir Karatkievič), ending with the following appropriately Romantic stanza:

І свіцяцца скрозь цемру руны,
Ён ідзе,
пакуль вы спіцё,
і на спадчынных гуслях струны
Чуюць сэрца Яго біццё.[21]

---

[19] On the Pahonia, see, for instance, Sys's vivid poem 'Pieśnia pra ŭvaskrašeńnie vieršnika' (Song of the resurrection of the rider).

[20] 'The mournful requiem of the bisons / brings sadness to my people... [...] / there the Kryvian Pahonia gallops, / and a cloud above it is like the Milky Way': Sys 2002, 51.

[21] 'And the runes shine through the darkness, / He goes along, / while you sleep, / and on the hereditary gusli the strings / hear the beating of His heart': Sys 2002, 131.

Somewhat different is 'Manałoh "Tutejšaha" (Monologue of 'a local person') in which the speaker implores 'Lucyjan', the last hope, to maintain the traditions embodied for Sys by Janka Kupała.[22] There is a memorable rhyme in the middle of the poem, where the stanza also shows Sys's fondness for repetition:

Ты адзін, ты адзін, ты адзін,
ты застаўся адзін на славяншчыне,
і Радзіма твая, паглядзі,–
русакосая янычаршчына,[23]

The poem's last six lines become quite frenziedly assertive:

бо цяпер ты адзін народ,
быццам храм на шляху вандалаў.

ДЫ ПАКУЛЬ ТЫ ЯШЧЭ ЖЫВЕШ,
ЗАПАЛІ ПРАД КУПАЛАМ СВЕЧКУ,
ПРАЧЫТАЙ І СПАЛІ МОЙ ВЕРШ,
А ВАНДАЛАМ СКАЖЫ,
Я ВЕЧНЫ![24]

***

The poetry of Anatol Sys as a whole is redolent of Belarusian literature and culture. Whilst it would be an absurd exaggeration to say that his *oeuvre* could serve as a guide to the national heritage, nonetheless knowledge of the latter is essential to understand much of his verse. In that sense Sys is a deeply national and (if the word has any meaning) nationalistic poet. His anti-Russian feelings are no secret and have already been seen, for example in 'Łastaŭka' where the Russian snow has

[22] The poem is dedicated to Maksim Tank, and 'Lucyjan' refers to the freethinking medieval artist who is the eponymous hero of Tank's well-known poem 'Lucyjan Tapola' (1946).
[23] 'You are alone, you are alone, you are alone, / you have remained alone in the Slav lands / and your Fatherland, look, -- / is a territory ruled over by janissaries with light brown plaits': Sys 2002, 71.
[24] 'for now you are alone, my people, / like a church in the path of vandals. // AND WHILST YOU ARE STILL ALIVE, / LIGHT A CANDLE BEFORE KUPAŁA, / READ AND BURN MY POEM, / AND SAY TO THE VANDALS, I AM ETERNAL!': Sys 2002, 72.

helped to make his country a grave.[25] In 'Budźma!' (Let us!), a poem about sharing, Sys creates strong images in the last two stanzas to explain what he does not want (Belarus) to share:

Мы не будзем дзяліць палын,
і за долю, як за дзяўчыну,
нам не трэба чужы калым
і жаніх з касымі вачыма.

Мы не будзем дзяліць любоў,
калі ж будзем, дык толькі гора,
яно здарыцца можа, бо
вакол нас і садом, і гамора.[26]

Comparable ideas are reflected in, amongst other places, his poem 'Dziki miod' (Wild Honey) in which Sys recalls his father escaping from the Russian bear with a pot of honey, something that affects the poet himself every time he himself goes to the forest, deciding finally to dig up a machine gun 'kab chadzić śmieła ŭ baćkavaj puščy' (in order to be able to walk boldly in the pushcha of my father – Sys 2002, 132). Not all Sys's patriotism is so violent, but the relationship between Belarus and Russia is crystal clear to him. He is, moreover, convinced that it is even more important to be a Belarusian than a poet:

Паэтам можаш ты не быць,
а беларусам абавязаны,
расейцаў можаш не любіць,
а можаш быць у іх блазанам.

Калі ж паэтам хочаш быць,
у скронь пацалаваным духам,

[25] More prosaically, a startling incident was when he accosted as a 'Russian bear' the relatively mild mannered Russian foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev, during the latter's visit to Miensk: See Skobła 2003, 741. Comparable drunken escapades by Sys have been described more than once.

[26] 'We shall not share wormwood, / and for good fortune, as for a girl, / we do not need alien bride money / and a groom with slanting eyes. // We shall not share love, / but if we shall share, then only grief, / it may happen, for / around us is Sodom, and Gomorrah': Sys 2002, 144.

дык, Божа дбаў цябе забыць,
чыя ў вачах Купалы скруха.[27]

More interesting than Sys's anti-Russian outpourings, understandable though they may be for a poet of his disposition, are the many poems that promote in one way or another Belarusian literature past and present. One of the earliest figures to be celebrated is Paŭluk Bahrym, who is featured in the poem 'Kali lublu' (When I love) as an example of a completely self-made poet. Most works, however, display a strong attraction to contemporary poets and writers, such as Aleś Razanaŭ, expressed in, amongst other works, 'Hlina' (Clay) which begins with the touchingly simple line, 'Dziakuj, Aleś, što ty jość' (Thank you, Aleś, for being who you are – Sys 2002, 151), and in 'Adviečnym šlacham' (On an eternal path), a straightforward yet affecting reflection on the continuity of life. Uładzimir Niaklajeŭ has already been mentioned in connection with Sys's extravagant dedication to him, although specific intertextual references to his verse are not as evident as those to Razanaŭ. Danuta Bičel-Zahnietava, one of the most promising young poets of the 1960s, is acclaimed for her close links to the fatherland, although a Belarusian poet's fate is likely to end in a crown of thorns and crucifixion, as the first four and the last five lines of 'Danuta Bičel-Zahnietava' show vividly:

Бязродная песня паэтава,
што птах са сляпымі вачыма.

Данута Бічель-Загнетава –
якая паэтка айчынная!
(.....)
Вось коціцца кола з цярновых лісцяў,
каляных, суздром засохлых,
ты ўстала, ты ведаеш:
трэба выйсці
насустрач сваёй Галгофе.[28]

[27] 'You may be not a poet, / but you are obliged to be a Belarusian, / you may not like Russians, / but you can be taken by them for a fool. // But if you want to be a poet, / kissed on the temples by the spirit, / God forbid that you forget / whose sadness is in Kupała's eyes': Sys 2002, 141.

[28] 'A stateless poet's song / is like a bird with blind eyes. // Danuta Bičel-Zahnietava – / what a true poet of the Fatherland! [...] // Look how a crown of thorn leaves is rolled together / hard, completely dried out, / you rise, you know that / you must go out / to meet your Golgotha': Sys 2002, 52.

In connection with the above, it may be noted that, not only bird imagery, but also the metaphorical use of a crown of thorns are *topoi* found throughout Sys's poetry.

A very particular poem is 'Pračytaŭšy vierš Pimiena Pančanki "Raźvitańnie"' (On reading Pimien Pančanka's poem 'Parting'), written after Sys and several other young writers had visited Pančanka in hospital in 1988, as a response to the older poet's farewell verse. Clearly Sys believes himself to be a natural successor of him, and yet the visit came soon before his own terrible decline.[29] His poem 'Hlina' to Razanaŭ shows a similar faith in his own great significance, as does a verse dedicated to Anatol Viarcinski, 'Try mazali ŭ mianie' (I have three calluses) which, turn out to be on his tongue, his heart and his hand, far the most dangerous being the first which expresses itself through his outbursts and through his poetry. It ends, somewhat strangely, as follows:

Што да бяды, жуды, нуды,
дык – гэта ў вершах.
Хаця... ў паэзіі у кожнага свой слуп.
Я ўсім кажу, што я паэт найпершы,
калі ж папраўдзе: першы жыццялюб![30]

Another distinctive poem centred on the literary heritage is 'Cnatlivy kniaź' (Honourable prince): Maksim Bahdanovič is Sys's eponymous prince of things Belarusian who descends from heaven to hell, bringing a garland to the coffin of a suicide.[31] The poem ends with favourable winds helping geese to bring his radiant spirit on their wings from Ialta (where he had died of consumption). There seems to be a great gap between such touching poems and those in which Sys writes about his own talent, sufferings, or addiction.

Amongst other Belarusian writers to whom poems are dedicated may be mentioned, in alphabetical order, the scholar and poet turned monk, Aleh Biembiel (also known as Źnič), Halina Bułyka, the religiously inclined poet Hanna Kanapielka, Aleh Minkin, a poet and publisher who took Russian citizenship, the prose writer Jarasłaŭ Parchuta, and the writer and poet Aleś Naŭrocki.

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[29] For a description of the visit to Pančanka and Sys's attitude to him see Aleś Arkuš, 'Viartańnie ŭ "Tutejšyja"', *Kałośsie*, 9, 2001, 115-27 (hereafter Arkuš 2001), 126-27.

[30] 'What misfortune, horror, poverty, and it is in poems. / Although... in poetry everyone has their pillar of support. / I tell everyone I am the first poet, / when in reality I am the first lover of life!': Sys 2002, 136.

An unusual way in which Sys pays tribute to other writers is by using individual lines from their works, with footnoted acknowledgment. Amongst examples of this there is the line from Lorca in 'Błudny syn', 'vyšyj mianie na padušcy svajoj...' (sew me on your pillow...), and there is more sewing (a *topos* in Sys's own poetry) in a line from Afanasii Filipovič at the beginning of 'Serca' (Heart), 'Mnie na sercy zołatam vyšyvali kraty...' (They sewed in gold prison bars on my heart...); in the second part of 'Serca' Sys quotes from the poet Mikoła Kuprejeŭ, 'O kab serca žuraŭlinaje...' (O, that the heart of a crane...); and, finally, the Belarusian title of J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), appears twice in a context that may exist in the Belarusian translation (*Nad prorvaj ŭ życie*), but which does not conform to the original text, in 'Nie chadzicie za mnoj...' (Do not follow me...) and 'Zabojstva ŭ N'ju-Jorku' (Murder in New York).

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Apart from some startling uses of capital letters, so far in this article little has been seen of anything unusual in the formal aspects of Sys's verses, although they in fact possess several strongly distinctive features. The poems have been described as fuelled by alcohol, and several people recall Sys's mastery of incantatory, hyper-rhetorical reading, somewhat like a shaman.[32] Although apparently not conceived specifically as performance poetry, the rhetorical nature of some of his work may be indicated by the abundance of exclamation marks, capitals and, especially, the ubiquitous repetition, not quite to the frenetic extent found in some recent films by Kira Muratova,[33] but nonetheless in sufficient quantity as to be a distinctive feature of Sys's work.[34] An extreme example is the following poem from *Pan Les*, 'Pole pole ŭ nimbach słaniečnikaŭ słaniečnikaŭ...' (Field field in clouds of sunflowers sunflowers...):

Поле поле ў німбах сланечнікаў сланечнікаў
жоўты жоўты вецер пчолаў лашчыць лашчыць

[31] *Vianok* (A garland, 1913) was the title of Bahdanovič's only lifetime collection of verse. It is not clear whether Sys's poem envisages his predecessor bringing a garland of cornflowers (Belarus's national flower) to the grave of the suicide Siarhiej Pałtaran or to the grave of Belarus itself.

[32] On the effect of alcohol on Sys's readings see Adam Hłobus, 'Natatki pra tutejšaha paeta', *Hołas Radzimy*, 25 April 2001 p. 7.

[33] Such films, for example, include *Astenicheskii sindrom* (1989), *Chuvstvitel'nyi militsioner* (1992) and *Chekhovskie motivy* (2002).

[34] In addition to poems already mentioned in this connection, see, for example, 'Nadta chočacca ŭ vyraj...' (Too anxious to migrate...), a work rather in folk style, typically for Sys, addressed to a bird.

страшна страшна страшна вее вее вее
жоўтым жоўтым жоўтым ветрам ветрам ветрам
ходзіць ходзіць ходзіць полем вечнасць
вечнасць пчолы пчолы пчолы джаляць маці маці
ў вочы вочы вочы
па шчоках сцякаюць слёзы слёзы слёзы слёзы
слёзы слёзы слёзы слёзы слёзы слёзы
слёзы слёзы [35]

There are many and varied examples of anaphora, be it of letters, words, or opening (or closing) lines of successive stanzas. In an untitled poem, 'Sivyja pčoły...' (Grey bees...), for instance, the first three lines are alternated at the beginning of the three stanzas:

Сівыя пчолы,
сівыя птушкі,
сівыя людзі[36]

In the third stanza people come first, and the poem ends with a characteristic line, 'vinom i ślazoju prošłaść pamianuŭšy' (recalling the past with a drink and a tear). A curious example of repetition is that two discrete poems – one about death, the other about birth (namely, the pregnancy of the poet Raisa Baravikova) – begin with the same line: 'Kali kraty raspiłavać...' (When the prison bars are filed open...').[37]

'Radzima' (Fatherland). is an interesting and almost emblematic poem, full of Sys's favourite themes, where the anaphoric word is 'Ja' (I) and the last word of each line becomes the main word in the next. Here Sys's patriotism and abiding concern with himself come together fully in a way that is a little reminiscent of

[35] 'field field in clouds of sunflowers sunflowers / a yellow yellow wind caresses caresses the bees / there blows blows blows terribly terribly terribly / a yellow yellow yellow wind wind wind / eternity eternity walks walks walks over the field / the bees bees bees sting my mother mother / in her eyes eyes eyes / down her cheeks run tears tears tears tears / tears tears tears tears tears tears / tears tears': Sys 2002, 6. Also on the subject of his mother's death, but in more straightforward form is 'Radzima pačynajecca z žančyny...' (The Fatherland begins with a woman...).

[36] 'grey bees / grey birds / grey people': Sys 2002, 33.

[37] It may be hoped that Baravikova's pregnancy is quite unlike the allegorical one imagined by Sys in 'Los šlachi vybiraje...' (Fate chooses its paths...) where the result is that the spirit becomes an outcast: Sys 2002, 132.

Voznesenskii's effulgent showpiece, 'Goiia' (Goya, 1959), although in the latter poem the narrative voice is, of course, Goya, so that the sense of the poet's self-absorption is at one remove:

Радзіма

Я – зямля, на якой растуць дрэвы.
Я – дрэва, на якое не садзяцца птахі.
Я – птах, якога не сочаць нават паляўнічыя.
Я – паляўнічы, у якога вечна галодныя сабакі.
Я – сабака, якога не баяцца зладзеі.
Я – злодзей, якога не гоняць з вогнішча.
Я – вогнішча, якое не сцеражэцца леяў.
Я – лея, якой не шкада вандроўнікаў.
Я – вандроўнік, якому ўсё адно, куды вядзе дарога.
Я – дарога, якая не сніць ройсты.
Я – ройста, на якой валацуга бязмысны.
Я – валацуга, які страціў радзіму.
Я – радзіма...
Я – радзіма?
Паляўнічы, сабака, бадзяга, злодзей...[38]

Another poem exemplifying a different aspect of Sys's endemic repetition, this time of the first half of the verse in the second half, is 'Paet' (The poet), which, having begun with the unexceptionable line 'Paet – boskaja ptuška' (The poet is a divine bird), ends (in the middle and at the actual end) with:

як свечка, як з воску я.
Я? я, я, я![39]

[38] 'Fatherland // I am the earth, on which trees do not grow. / I am a tree on which birds do not perch. / I am a bird that even hunters do not stalk. / I am a hunter whose dogs are always hungry. / I am a dog that is not feared by robbers. / I am a robber who is not chased away from the bonfire. / I am a bonfire that is not careful with riding breeches' leather pads. / I am a leather pad that has no pity on travellers. / I am a traveller who does not care where the road goes. / I am a road that is not dreamt of by signposts. / I am a signpost at which a tramp has no direction. / I am a tramp that has lost his fatherland. / I am the fatherland... / I – the fatherland? / A hunter, dog, wanderer, robber...': Sys 2002, 15-16.

[39] 'I am like a candle, as if from wax. / I? I, I, I!': Sys 2002, 137.

Sys also enjoys unusual placing of the words on the page, as, for instance, in the first four lines of 'I vysiekli vinahradniki' (And they cut down the vineyards):

І вы	клалі	душы
секлі	вогнішчы	грэлі
вінаграднікі,	сярод поля,	безаглядныя.

Вы не прыйдзеце сюды болей.[40]

Another example of Sys in playful rather than rhetorical mode is the following reflection on prosody from the third part of his longer poem, 'Ałaiza':

Неба? –
блакіт вачэй.
Першы харэй мой: ма-ма!
я
м
б
па шчацэ цячэ: сля-за
каляная.[41]

Finally, it may be mentioned that a right-angled triangle is the form of a poem that begins with 'Ja' (I) and ends with 'Jahamość' (Your worship), in which the poet asks to be taken as he is, linking the divine spark with champagne bubbles (Sys 2002, 128). These examples of the ludic aspects of Sys's work are adduced here to counter the general view from the days of the 'Tutejšyja' group that Sys represented instinctive rhetoric and patriotism whilst his co-leader Adam Hłobus stood for (post-)modernism and internationalism.[42]

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Anatol Sys, as a highly gifted but troubled poet, is at times painfully aware of his country's past and present. In the former it tends to be the bleaker periods of

[40] 'And you put your hearts into / cutting bonfires were heated / by vineyards, in the middle of fields, regardless. // You will not come here any more': Sys 2002, 101.

[41] 'The sky? – / the blue of eyes. / My first trochee: ma-ma! / i / a / m / b / down my cheek rolls a / hardened tear': Sys 2002, 106-07.

[42] See, for instance: Adam Hłobus, 'Hutarka pra spadčynaść, prozu, "tutejšych" i erotyku', *Hołas Radzimy*,

history that attract him, with no sign of the looking back to the 'golden age' of Skaryna, found in so much metropolitan and expatriate poetry. 'Vilnia, 1864 hod' (Vilna 1864), for instance, brings birds to the scaffold after the repression of the anti-Russian uprising. Nearer to the present, there is no issue that agitates nationally aware Belarusians more than the graves at Kurapaty. 'Zamova ad Kurapat' (A spell against Kurapaty) is full of resonance and sound play, but a more important poem in this connection is undoubtedly the already mentioned 'Biełaruskija Ikary', a poem which vividly illustrates Sys's love of repetition as well as his indignation at a national scandal and his gratitude to the man who first revealed it, Zianon Paźniak:

Беларускія Ікары

Срэбны прах, балючы прах на скрылцах,
з ранай у патыліцы зямля,
да людзей баіцца адпусціцца,
да людзей баіцца адпусціцца,
да людзей баіцца адпусціцца
курапацкіх ластавак сям'я.

Прывіды пакут зямных – Ікары,
прытуліўшы да грудзей начніц,
зазіраюць ластаўкам у твары,
зазіраюць ластаўкам у твары,
зазіраюць ластаўкам у твары
цемраю прастрэленых вачніц.

Быццам дзве жабрачныя далоні –
неба і зямля, жыццё і скон,
а над Светам белы чэрап поўні,
а над Светам белы чэрап поўні,

25 April 2001, p. 7. Here Hłobus describes himself and his group in the organization as 'more intelligent and urban' whilst Sys's followers were more *narodny* (nationally-minded, popular); another obvious distinction was Sys's provincial background against that of the more 'sophisticated' metropolitan writers. For a more objective view of this division see Arkuš 2001. In fact the less contentious and more important distinction was that Sys was in charge of poetry, and Hłobus prose.

а над Светам белы чэрап поўні
куляй звоніць – ноч гучыць, як звон:

"Ёсць Ікары, ёсць і ў вас сталіца,
там Тыран накрыў для вас сталы!.."
А з нябёсаў голас: "Лепш разбіцца..."
А з нябёсаў голас: "Лепш разбіцца..."
А з нябёсаў голас: "Лепш разбіцца
аб бетон Урадавай скалы!"

Срэбны прах, Купалаў прах на скронях,
б'юць падковы ў чэрап, як у звон,
топчуць цела чалавека-коні,
топчуць цела чалавека-коні,
топчуць цела чалавека-коні,
з куляй у патыліцы – Зянон...[43]

The most significant event of recent Belarusian history, the Chernobyl disaster, inspires Sys to a powerfully imaginative and bitter poem, 'Čornaja byl' (A black event), to add to the host of anguished poetic and prose reactions to this tragedy, which will be considered elsewhere.

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What of the present as reflected in Sys's poetry? As we have seen, he considers being a true Belarusian more important than being a poet, but in fact the themes of

[43] 'Belarusian Icaruses // Silver dust, painful dust on their wings, / the earth with a wound in the back of the neck, / fearing to descend to people, / fearing to descend to people, / fearing to descend to people / are a family of Kurapaty swallows. // Ghosts of earthly torments, the Icaruses, / huddling against the breasts of nightjars, / they gaze into the faces of the swallows, / gaze into the faces of the swallows, / gaze into the faces of the swallows / their eye sockets shot through by the darkness. // Like two begging palms – / heaven and earth, life and death, / and above the Earth the white skull of the full moon, / and above the Earth the white skull of the full moon, / And above the Earth the white skull of the full moon / rings with a bullet – the night sounds like the ringing of a bell: // "There are Icaruses, you too have a capital city, / a Tyrant there has laid tables for you!.." / And from the heavens a voice: "It is better to smash yourselves..." / And from the heavens a voice: "It is better to smash yourselves..." / And from the heavens a voice: "It is better to smash yourselves / against the concrete of the Government cliff!" // Silver dust, Kupała's dust on their temples, / horseshoes beat against a skull as if it were a bell, / they trample the body of the man-steed, / they trample the body of the man-steed, / they trample the body of the man-steed, / with a bullet in the back of the neck – Zianon...': Sys 2002, 121-22.

Belarus, of poetry, and of Sys as creative artist are closely intertwined in his work. It is clear that, despite his manifest enthusiasm for certain contemporary poets and writers, he holds most Belarusian literature and, indeed, many aspects of Belarusian life in very low esteem indeed. Self-interest is ubiquitous, as we see in 'Pacir' (The false bottom) which ends with the following memorable quatrain:

і сталі дружна, шчыра, шчыльна,
як на касьбе ці на сяўбе,
паэт сказаў: п'ем за Айчыну!
І кожны выпіў – за сябе...[44]

For all writers the basic problem is lack of freedom, whether they acknowledge it or not. Sys takes a new approach to the old theme of birds as symbols of freedom, when he describes cranes, which figure so prominently in his poetry, as without pity for Belarus, singing a polonaise, symbol of a freer country. The characteristically inventive final rhyme is particularly damning:

Журавы спяваюць паланез і іх
не шкада над беднай Беларуссю

я паэт прыгоннай паэзіі
і такім да смерці застануся

журавам не трэба ў зорнае жніво
з поўняй на гарбу ляцець на паншчыну
колькі б нас пасля Купалы ні жыло –
плюнеш – не паэты – самазваншчына.[45]

References to God and religion are quite extensive in Sys's poetry, although he believes that he lives in a 'crazy age' and 'geese fly from godless lands to land on a cross's sharp point' ('U Safii kryž čyrvony – In the cathedral of Sofiia there is

[44] 'and they set about it amicably, sincerely, intimately, / as at scything or sowing, / the poet said: 'let us drink to the Fatherland! / And everyone drank – to themselves...': Sys 2002, 59.

[45] 'The cranes sing a polonaise and they / do not pity poor Belarus // I am a poet of serf poetry / and that how I shall be until my death // the cranes do not need to go to the starry harvest / and with the full moon on their backs fly to serfdom / however many of us there has been since Kupała / you can spit, they are not poets but a crowd of impostors': Sys 2002, 74.

a red cross: Sys 2002, 126). At other times, for example, in 'Pieśnia pra kachańnie' he describes his religious feelings in quasi-erotic terms, as in the following stanza from the middle of the poem:

Бачыш сам: пусты ложак.
Надакучыла мне
спаць з Табой, любы Божа.
У мане, у віне.[46]

The last three stanzas, after Sys has begged for divine forgiveness and declared that he writes as he sins, end ecstatically:

Даруй , любы мой Божа,
што вярэджу душу,
што абраў бездарожжа,
як грашу, так пішу.

А папраўдзе: як дзеці,
мае вершы растуць,
няма сілы памерці,
бо яны не даюць,

таму нам не каляны
ложак шлюбны – як пух!
Мой Мужчына каханы,
Айцец, Сын, Святы Дух![47]

At the very least, Sys regards his death philosophically and his birth as having a strong religious dimension, although in one short untitled poem, 'Pamreš syty ci

[46] 'You see for yourself: my bed is empty. / I got bored with / sleeping with you, dear God. / in deceit and drink': Sys 2002, 139.

[47] 'Forgive me, my dear God, / that I am damaging my soul, / that I have chosen to leave the path, / as I sin, so I write. // But in truth, like children, / my poems grow, / I have no strength to die, / for they will not let me, // therefore the marriage bed / is not hard but like down! / My beloved Man, / Father, Son and Holy Ghost!': Sys 2002, 139-40. For an example of a poem where the Deity is referred to without the emphasis of exclamation marks or extra capital letters, see 'Ruža' (The rose) where God is invited to look into the poet's eyes to see his 'love and sadness': Sys 2002, 73-74.

hałodny...' (Whether you die full or hungry...), the divine spark of inspiration is rendered concrete in the contrast between the cold dust of death and the hot ash of birth. After an utterly prosaic opening it ends with a paean of thanks:

Памрэш сыты ці галодны,
а якая розніца.
Попел цёплы. Прах халодны –
што з яго народзіцца?

Але я вось нарадзіўся,
маці кажа: З прысаку.
Быццам Бог перахрысціўся
за зямную іскарку.

Дзякуй маці!
Дзякуй Богу!
Дзякуй, свет дзівосны!
Дзякуй, хросная – дарога!
Дзякуй, посах – хросны![48]

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Anatol Sys is an uncomfortable, depressing and extremely powerful poet. Whether he is writing about his childhood, his country's mythology and history, its present predicament under the rule of Pharisees with the concomitant threat of Russian domination; whether he writes about other poets or the state of Belarusian poetry as a whole, or, indeed, himself and his convictions, with the ever-present alcoholism as a leitmotiv – whatever he writes about, he conveys a sense of total conviction, simply, inventively and with passion. The meaning of his poetry is not hidden or mysterious as it sometimes may be in Razanaŭ, nor is its form as extravagantly virtuosic in imagery or sound and word play, as Baradulin's,[49] although his

[48] 'Whether you die full or hungry, / what is the difference. / The ash is warm, the dust cold – / what can be born of it? // But this is the way I was born, / my mother says, from hot ash. / As if God had crossed himself / for a little earthly spark. // Thanks to my mother! / Thank God! / Thank you, wondrous world! / Thank you, way – of the cross! / Thank you, staff [of the cross]': Sys 2002, 143.

[49] Sys's alliteration, for instance, is usually unobtrusive, although he makes effective and simple use of sibilants in a short poem recommending his poems as cradle songs: 'Zakałyšy dzicia maimi vieršami...' (Rock the child to sleep with my verses...).

call for patriotic feeling and national memory is also very strong. Sys has a distinct and resonant voice, full of blood, tears, and a keen sense of guilt, defiance and mortality. The following untitled poem from *Pan Les* reflects in deceptively simple but passionate terms many of the poet's beliefs and fears:

– З чаго пачаць?
Пачну з Радзімы.
Так абавязаны пачаць.
– Але ў яе ты не адзіны,
навошта пра любоў крычаць?

– Няхай, няхай я паўтаруся
ў любові тысячу разоў,
затое шчыра ў ёй клянуся,
без фальшу, без падробных слоў.

– Што ж, пачынай.
Сам выбраў долю...
й нядоля знойдзецца сама.
Перад табою поле бою –
тут не адзін паэт сканаў.[50]

Returning to where this article began, Belarus can ill afford to lose its leading poets and writers, and it must be hoped that Sys, an addictive as well as addicted poet, can miraculously recover. He himself holds out such a prospect in 'Reabilitacyja' (Rehabilitation):

Рэабілітацыя

чорныя
чорныя

[50] '— Where shall I begin?.. / I shall begin with the Fatherland. / I am obliged to begin thus. / – But you are not alone, why should you shout about your love? // – Let me, let me repeat myself / a thousand times about my love, / but I swear it sincerely, / without falsity, without counterfeit words. // – Alright then, begin. You have chosen your fate, / and a bad fate will find itself. / Before you lies a field of battle – / here more than one poet has perished': Sys 2002, 84.

як з каміноў
сумныя
сумныя
як з таго свету
сорак гадоў – без'языкіх званоў –
стогнам вярнулі натхненне паэту[51]

In a country which has suffered more than its share of tragedy and has had many valid reasons to groan, all who love Belarusian poetry must long to hear a different kind of groan, the groan of Sys's returning inspiration.

РЭЗЮМЭ

У гэтым артыкуле разглядаецца трагічна кароткі паэтычны шлях Анатоля Сыса, некалі аднаго з вядучых маладых пісьменьнікаў групы „Тутэйшыя". Сыс жыве, але цяжкі алькагалізм не дае яму пісаць.

Сыс – адзін з найбольш значных беларускіх паэтаў свайго пакаленьня, магічны паэт з амаль шаманскай інтанацыяй, часамі нагадваючай Андрэя Вазьнясеньскага. Сыс – знакаміты рамесьнік верша, і хоць ягоная тэхнікапростая і непрэтэнцыёзная, яго вершы выдатна вырозьніваюцца мацатою разнастайных паўтораў. У творах Сыса аднаўляюцца шматлікія вобразы нацыянальных герояў, і ў яго ашаламляльных маналёгах зьдзіўляе незвычайная здольнасьць аднаўляць чужыя галасы. Яго адчайнае мілаваньне Беларусі заўсёды прысутнае і ў іншых тэмах – рэлігійнай, алькагольнай; сьмерці і жыцьця ў цяперашняй Беларусі, што – на думку Сыса – апусьцілася да самога маральнага дна.

Сыс – трагічна цяжкі, але вельмі магутны паэт, творчасьць якога заслугоўвае найвялікай увагі.

***Arnold McMillin**, Professor of Russian Literature at London University, is the author of many articles and several books about Belarusian literature. The two most recent of the latter have been translated into Belarusian: 'Belarusian Literature of the 1950s and 1960s', Köln,1999 ['Biełaruskaja litaratura ŭ 50-60-ja hady XX stahodździa', Miensk 2001], and 'Belarusian Literature of the Diaspora', Birmingham, 2002 ['Biełaruskaja litaratura dyjaspary', Miensk, 2004].*

[51] 'Rehabilitation // black / black / as a fireplace / sad / sad as from the other world / forty years – bells without their clappers – / groaning they have returned his inspiration to the poet': Sys 2002, 128.

Ales Rasanau
Алесь Разанаў

EROBERER

Eroberer

I

Sie gehen über fremde Erde.

Jeder Schritt ist Zerstörung der unsichtbaren Grenze, die sie hält in ihren eigenen Gestalten, in ihren Namen, in ihrem Leben.

Sie gehen heraus aus sich: Das Fell der alten Verbote wird umgewendet.

Auf sie gerichtet ist die scharfe Linse des Himmels.

Die Mitte der Welt rückt fort mit ihnen zusammen.

Die Erde brennt hinter ihnen.

Ihnen ist keine Rückkehr gegeben.

II

Sie blicken wachsam geradeaus.
Rot leuchten die ziegelgedeckten Häuserdächer.
Golden strahlen die Kreuze der Gotteshäuser.
Das Pflaster schimmert, gewaschen vom Regen.

Die Dominikanerstraße,
die Hebräerstraße,
die Töpfergasse ...
Wo verbirgt sich das Leben hier?
Wo verbirgt sich der Tod?

Eine unsichtbare Kraft krümmt die Koordinaten des Raums.
Die Uhr am Turm zeigt unerkannte Zeit.
Die Worte lernen neu ausgesprochen zu werden, die Zahlen neu gezählt ...

Das Leben spielt mit ihnen Tod, der Tod Leben.

III

Wie junge Götter sprießt ihr aus den urzeitlichen Fluren der Erde, und die Erde wird euer.

Euch ist alles erlaubt: Ihr übernehmt jedes Gericht in die eigene Hand, und die Wahrheit tritt auf eure Seite.

„Gott erwählt den, der fähig ist, sich selbst zu wählen“, redet ihr tagaus, tagein der Wirklichkeit vor,
und ebenso versucht sie, euch einzureden, der Gott, den ihr habt, sei tot,
der Gott, den ihr habt, sei der Tod.

IV

Gleich wandernden Orten geht ihr aus einer Sprache in die andere hinüber, aus einem Ereignis in das andere, aus einem Inhalt in den anderen.

Aus der einen Hälfte des Raums trennt ihr die Täler und Inseln heraus und fügt sie der anderen ein, aber der Erde ist es ohnehin gleich, wer sie pflügt, sie besät, wer sich in sie legt.

Etwas in der Realität und in euren Taten widerspricht euch und sperrt sich, und wahrscheinlich wählt ihr gerade deshalb das, was euch widerspricht und sich sperrt, zu eurer untrüglichen Orientierung, und die Kraft, die euch überall kennzeichnet, sie verwirklicht und ruft herbei, was sich nicht verwirklichen, nicht eintreten soll.

Die Anzeichen beginnen ihr Wahrsagen, und die Eroberungen nehmen euch in ihre Haft, und das Ergebnis begreift nicht, was es erworben hat.

V

Wie trockenes Laub fallen von euch eure Namen ab.
Es ist niemand da, den ihr heimrufen könnt, und euer Heim ist weder dort noch hier.
In das Gewohnte dringt das Ereignis, und die Welt erkennt ihre namenlosen Träume von einem anderen Schicksal in euch und gibt euch ihre Schätze, ihr aber gebt der Welt mehr, als sie aufnehmen kann.

Die Nacht weicht euch aus, und der Tag macht euch Platz, und ihr seid es, denen die Blicke ihre ungewöhnlichen Blumen schenken.

VI

Warum ist der Mensch lebendig, wenn er lebendig ist, und warum ist er tot, wenn er tot ist? –

Ein irdisches Geschick verspricht dem andern ein Treffen, aber es will und will nicht gelingen.

Und ihr geht zwischen den Toten und den Lebenden und widersprecht dem Offenkundigen, da ihr starrsinnig behauptet, der Mensch sei tot etwas anderes als tot, und lebendig etwas anderes als das, was lebt.

VII

„Was darf der Mensch, wenn es keinen Gott gibt, und was darf er, wenn es ihn gibt“, fragt bald der, bald jener Gedanke, aber ihr seid und bleibt außerhalb des Gedankens, und euer Weg ist gerade und scharf wie des Messers Schneide.

Ihr verletzt das Gewohnte, und es wird zum Notwendigen,

ihr verletzt das Bestehende, und es gibt nieman den, der euch zu widerspricht, euch zu bestreit und das von euch bestimmte Schicksal ändert.

Hinter euch kommen Gerüchte auf, überholen euch: ihr wärt keine Menschen, - und eine seltsame Freude darüber, daß ihr tatsächlich keine Men-schen seid, hält Einzug in euch und erhebt euch über Tod und Leben.

VIII

Die Entfernungen bedenken, was anbricht im Menschen und was vergeht und richten unablässig ihr Augenmerk auf euch und gewinnen von euch die Antwort.

In euch tritt der Krieg, und ihr tretet in den Krieg, und Geier folgen euch auf dem Fuße und künden an, daß ihr nie mehr lebendig herauskommt dort.

Ihr aber wünscht euch gar nicht heraus.
Mit eurem ganzen Wesen begreift ihr, daß der Krieg so tief in euch eindringt, weil er innen schon ist, und erst dann, wenn er bei seinem Ursprung angelangt ist, ist er endgültig zu Ende,
und läßt euch für immer los.

Es entfaltet sich im Ereignis das, was unbeweg-lich, ohne Gestalt und Namen im innersten Herzen versteckt lag, und unverhofft findet ihr euch unter vier Augen mit ihm.

IX

Jeder ist in der Verantwortung für alle andern, und jeder ist in der Frage für alle andern: Wer ist hier fremd, und wer ist unsereiner?

Die Blicke spannen sich: In der Ferne des Sehens ein verschwommener Hornhautfleck.

Was gestern und vorgestern offensichtlich war, hat sich heute in Zweifel gehüllt und verlangt zu prüfen, was es in Wirklichkeit ist, das Es.

Achtung! ... Achtung! ... Die Trübung stellt Fallen, und gesichtslose Masken fressen sich in die Gesichter.

Ihr nährt die Gefahr, und euch nährt die Gefahr.
Stimmen irren tastend in der Umgebung.

X

Eine Gegend teilt euch mit der andern, eine Zeit gibt euch weiter an die andere.

Es ist, als hätte es geregnet, als liefen quirlend Rinnsale, die der Boden verschluckt, und ihr werdet immer weniger, -
reicht es am Ende für alle und alles?!

Die Teile münden in die Ganzheit, die Zeit – in das Nachfolgende:
Dort ist schon immer jemand.

XI

Als allen Ecken und Enden der Welt versammeln sich Gäste zum Fest, und das Fest singt.

Eine nie da gewesene Ernte ist herangereift, und die Zeit hat, da sie sich vollendete, Geschenke vorbereitet für alle.

Zuletzt kommt die Braut und nimmt den Tod zum Bräutigam.

Geöffnet hat sich – und heraus aus einem Haufen Trödel schaut: das sehende Auge.

SASCHA HAWORKA

Mein Altersgenosse Sascha Haworka sitzt, tief in Gedanken versunken, auf dem gelben Stoppelfeld neben einem Haufen Eisenschrott,
sein Hemd steht offen,
an seiner Schläfe geronnenes Blut ...

„Sascha“, rufe ich, „komm mit, mit den andern allen, mit uns!“ ...

Er aber antwortet nicht,
er aber bleibt sitzen am selben Platz,
er aber bleibt in eben der Zeit,
bleibt sitzen im Jenseits, in seiner Welt,

und schaut auf den Weg, auf dem sich seine Altersgenossen entfernen.

In dem alten Haus

In jenem alten Haus dort sitzt mein Vater unfroh mit seinen Gästen bei Tisch:
Was es zu essen gab, ist gegessen,
was es zu trinken gab, ist getrunken,
trotzdem war es nicht genug.

Ins Fenster herein schaut ein klarer Herbst.
In der Ferne rollen die Züge.

Vater gibt mir Geld und sagt: „Geh und kauf zu essen und trinken, und wenn du gekauft hast, komm wieder!“

Ich gehe an tiefen, reinen Seen vorbei, in denen feierliche Bäume golden leuchten und die Wolken dunkeln,
steige in sausende Züge,

aber heute haben wir großen Ruhetag:
Alles ist eingenommen von diesem Herbst,
eingenommen von diesem Zauber,
von dieser Schönheit,
von diesem Tag,

an dessen Rand in dem alten dämmrigen Haus Vater immer noch mit seinen Gästen bei Tisch sitzt, auf meine Rückkehr wartend.

Die Ferne

Die Ferne tritt näher und tritt zurück, und überall treffe ich statt ihrer dämmrige Erde, andächtiges Wasser, Bäume mit rauher Rinde.

Ich frage sie nach der Ferne.

Die Erde sagt: Das ist mein Gehör.
Das Wasser sagt: Das ist mein Sehen.
Die Bäume sagen: Das ist unser Atmen.

Ich wende mich um.
Ich kann zur selben Zeit nur hier, wo ich stehe sein, wo ich schon bin.

Die Ferne ist mein verlorenes Paradies: es spiegelt sich ab in den Träumen wider und in den Fata Morganen.

Ich schickte Pfeile in die Ferne, nach verschiedenen Richtungen, und die Pfeile kommen zurück, auf mich zielend.

* * *

Was nötigt uns, unmerklich, von einer Stunde in die andere, einem Tag in den anderen hinüberzugehn und erlaubt nicht anzuhalten.

Der Fluß fließt und findet den Weg zum Meer,
der Baum wächst, hineinwachsend in Zeit und Raum,
und der Mensch entdeckt in sich, da er lebt, das Unermeßliche, darin eine neue Sonne scheint und ein neuer Sinn.

Etwas schaut mich mit meinen Augen an,
hört, was ich sage, mit meinen Ohren,
denkt nach über das Leben mit meinen Gedanken ...

Und auf der hölzernen Türschwelle sitzt ein kranker alter Mann, es fällt ihm schon schwer, hinauszugehn und zurückzugehen ins Haus – sein Körper hat seinen Weg in sich aufgenommen und ist selbst zur Schwelle geworden: Was letztendlich hilft dem Menschen, auch diese Schwelle zu über-schreiten?!

Die Körner wurden reif – und fanden ihren Boden, als sie aber reiften – schmiegten sie sich an den Halm.
Ich rufe – das Echo hallt wider.
Ich schweige – die Stille hallt wider.
Die Sonne geht unter in meinen Schlaf.
Und die Zeit zeigt wie das Relief einer unbekannten Gegend an, wo wir sind und wo es uns nicht gibt.

Die Hirten

Aus den Mulden ist das Wasser noch nicht zurückgegangen, aber hier, wo das kleine Feuer brennt, ist es schon recht trocken.

Ich habe mich an das Feuer gesetzt und warte, wann mein alter Freund, den ich viele Jahre nicht gesehen habe, von der in der Ferne weidenden Herde kommt.

Das ist hier ein kleiner Standort für die Hirten: Einer kommt, einer geht, der näht sich einen Flicken an, der pafft in Ruhe eine Selbstgedrehte und der holt sich den Proviant aus seiner groben Tasche ...

Ein alter Hirt erzählt von einem Hütejungen: “Wir wollten im Hof die Kuh schlachten, da wurde er plötzlich bleich wie der Tod, fing an zu heulen, griff sich, was er gerade in die Hand bekam, - es war ein Stück Glas – und stürzte sich auf uns.

Er hat sich arg die Hand verletzt mit dem Glas, aber mit seinem Schrei, der war wie von einem Apostel: ‚Man darf keine Kuh schlachten!' – hat er die Menschen verletzt ..."

Ich weiß, dieser Hütejunge war er, mein Freund.
Ich schaue zu dem vertrauten Dorf, zwischen dessen Blockhäusern gigantische Bauten ragen,
ich schaue ins Hirtenfeuer, das beruhigt und beunruhigt,
und in den Himmel, in den immer noch selben Himmel, in dem inmitten der Wolken die Seelen der Apostel und Kühe wandeln.

Das Grummet

Ich mähe, wo ich schon einmal gemäht habe – mähe das Grummet.
Der Herbst atmet. Der Sommer ist neblig.
Die Sehnsucht rührt an die Glocken der Ferne.
Unmerklich wächst das Gras, unmerklich wech-seln die Jahreszeiten.

Von einem Ende der Wiese komme ich ans andere Ende der Wiese.
Die Zeit zieht mich groß wie Gras, die Zeit mäht mich nieder wie Gras, und der Tod wird zur Geburt, die nichts von dem, was vor ihr war, weiß.

Beeile dich mit dem Wachsen, Gras,
beeile dich, du eine Hälfte des Augenblicks, mit der anderen dich zu verbinden, -
daß einmal das Wunder wahr wird, daß alle noch geboren werden konnten, und der Tod noch niemanden abmähen konnte.

* * *

Die Gestalten verlocken, ihnen zu folgen, aber beim ersten Schritt lösen sie sich in der Weite auf: Vielleicht sind sie nichts als Vögel, die den, der kommt, von den Nestern wegleiten?

Verschlungene Pfade sind es, die nach Osten wie nach Westen führen, auf Schritt und Tritt aber ragt, überall, von ihnen ein steile Höhe auf, und der Körper wird, da er sich selbst überragt, zum Verstand, und der Verstand wird, da er sich selbst überragt, zum Verständnis des Alls und dieses Verständnis sättigt und nährt mit sich, wasserführenden Adern gleich, jedes Wort und jeden Schritt.

Der Mensch – er ist zwei, die wie zwei Hände zusammen einen Schneeball formen oder einander eine glühende Kohle zuwerfen, um sie nicht zu verlieren: Der eine von ihnen ist der Beginn, der andere der Abschluß, der eine die Quelle, der andere die Mündung, der eine die Ursache, der andere die Folge, der eine die Frage, der andere die Antwort, und zwischen ihnen fließen, die ihnen entspringen und in sie münden, ihre Weltalle.

Alles, was mich berührt, ist mir ähnlich.
Der Tag der Schöpfung ist noch nicht beendet: Wieder und wieder knetet der Mensch ein besseres Schicksal.
Mich teilt der Raum, die Zeit vereint mich.
Wann trifft der Mensch mit dem Menschen zusammen?
Im Abgrund der Erinnerung düstert die schlaflose Laterne.

Warte, halt an, laß los deinen Wunsch – und schon bist du kein gegen alle gerichteter Teil mehr, und die Vögel kommen zurück zu dir, die sich nicht fangen lassen, wenn du sie fangen willst, die sich verstecken, wenn du sie suchst, und du wirst hören: Jeder Vogel hat deine Stimme, wirst sehen: jeder Vogel hat dein Gesicht.

Zwillingsgewächs

Wie ein Baum, der zwei Stämme hat auf seinem einen Wurzelgeflecht, bin ich ein Zwillingsgewächs.

Diesseits und Jenseits vereinigen sich in mir, Tod und Leben finden sich verkörpert in mir.

Von Tag zu Tag, von Jahr zu Jahr, von Jahrhundert zu Jahrhundert unternehme ich mit noch verborgener Kraft, mein Dasein zu widerlegen, mein Doppelwesen zu überwinden und wirklich ich selbst zu werden.

Auf die Fragen „Warum?“ und „Wozu?“, mit denen ich mich in die Höhe strecke, kommt – mein Echo zurück, und nachdem es lange im Zwischen-raum des Zwillingsgewächses gewandert ist, verschwindet es wieder.

Ich weiß: So, wie es ist, darf es nicht sein.

Aber so i s t es.

Junge Saat

Über sein Grundstück geht mein Nachbar und Schulkamerad Sascha Bahdantschyk, er trägt ein Bündel gelbes glänzendes Stroh.

„Wo hast du das Stroh her?“ frage ich ihn.

„Allein findest du das nicht, aber wenn du willst, kann meine Schwester es dir zeigen“, antwortet er.

Mit seiner blutjungen Schwester zusammen gehe ich zwischen den Beeten hindurch, zusammen treten wir hinter den Zaun.

Aber dort, wo das Stroh hatte liegen sollen, leuchtet von einem Feldrand zum andern grün die junge Saat.

Einmütig sprechen wir unsere Worte, einträchtig schlagen unsere Herzen, die junge Saat grünt in unsäglicher Freude,

Sascha Bahdantschyk aber, der mit seinem Bündel Stroh aus irgendeinem Grund noch immer auf dem Weg steht, schaut und schaut verwundert nach uns, solange wir ihn noch sehen können.

Wegweiser

Wir sind unterwegs, von einer Wirklichkeit, in der sich – mal allmählich, mal abrupt - alles verändert, in eine Wirklichkeit, die unsere sprachlose und nicht sehende Aufmerksamkeit anzieht wie der Pol die Magnetnadel, und von der umgeben, wir die werden, die wir sind.

Wir sterben zur Nacht, gehören aber der Nacht nicht,

wir erstehen wieder zum Tag, gehören aber dem Tag nicht.

Unsere kleinen Leben und unsere kleinen Tode führen uns in das Beginnende, wo wir spüren, erkennen, daß wir hier schon waren.

Wie sich die Achtsamkeit von Silbe zu Silbe, von Wort zu Wort bewegt, um schließlich den vollendeten Satz aufzunehmen, so lesen wir ununterbrochen uns selbst, und wichtig ist es dabei, nicht fehlzugehen, sich nicht zu verirren, nicht zu stocken, sondern alles der Reihe nach zu lesen und sich den an uns adressierten Text gänzlich anzueignen.

Aus der Tiefe der Jahrhunderte tauchen auf und verschwinden wieder die W e g w e i s e r - Menschen, die uns auf unseren Wegen begegnen.

Am Fest der Erlösung für Leib und Seele

Am Fest der Erlösung für Leib und Seele komme ich in unsere alte Holzkirche, in welcher ich seit langem nicht war.

Aber dort stehen in großer, dichter Menge mürrische Menschen, nicht von hier, und der Gottesdienst wird in einer nicht vertrauten, fremden Spra-che gehalten.

Mit Angst vor ihnen gehe ich, kaum daß ich die Kirche betreten habe, wieder hinaus und warte neben der Treppe zusammen mit der bestürzten Gemeinde, wann wir an der Reihe sind.

Vorbei ist die Zeit, da wir in unsere Kirche kamen, wann wir wollten,
vorbei ist die Zeit, da unser Leib das gleiche war wie die Seele und die Seele das gleiche wie der Leib.

Aljosy

Vom Dorf ist nicht mehr viel da, ein paar Blockhäuser mit alten Leuten und dann das Krankenhaus.

Wir gehen, uns am Geländer festhaltend, die schmale ausgetretene Krankenhausstiege hinab.

„Ich kenne hier alles von Kindsbeinen an“, sage ich zu meiner Begleiterin. „Meine Mutter hat hier als Hebamme gearbeitet, seit sie herkam, noch vor dem Krieg ...“

Sie sieht mich blauäugig und ruhig an.
„Und ich“, sagt sie, „bin von sehr weit hergekommen, um mein Kind hier auf die Welt zu bringen, damit dort, im Ausland, wo ich jetzt lebe, der Name unseres Dorfes anwesend ist und erklingt und die Seele erfreut –
A l j o s y.

Das Gewitter

Noch strahlte die Sonne sommerlich über der Erde, noch zogen die Furchen der Äcker in verlockende Fernen, und Blumen schenkten der Luft ihren feinen Duft, aber schon begann sich die Weite – als sähen die Augen nur unscharf – mit Dunst zu verhängen, und in den Schreien der raschen Schwalben ließ sich Angst vernehmen.

Etwas war unstimmig in der Natur, und um zu erkennen, was es war, dieses Unstimmige, blieb ich stehen und schaute mich um, und sprachlos sah ich – als seien die Bilder, die der Sommer gemalt hatte, nur meine Einbildung gewesen, und jetzt trete die Wirklichkeit selbst ein: - die Luft erzittert und brodelt, die Dämmerung vermischt sich mit blitzender Helligkeit, allenthalben werden feurige Lettern gezeichnet ...

Ganz nah ist das schreckliche Gewitter, und keine Zuflucht, um ihm zu entgehen.

Zwei Gesetzlosigkeiten

Die eine Gesetzlosigkeit wird die andere erzeu-gen, die noch unverschämtere.

Und die neue Ordnung, die, als sie begann, die Wahrheit zu sein gehabt hätte, wird sich entzweien und sich, wenn sie zustande gekommen ist, als Lüge erweisen:

Und der, der die Macht bekommt, damit er für alle der Ihre wird und alle für ihn die Seinen sind, wird sich mit Ketten von Leibwachen und Beratern umringen und das Seine hassen.

Das Krumme wird nicht gerade werden, sondern sich noch einmal krümmen.

Der Sturm

Als habe der Sturm etwas vor ...
Die Wellen, die im Meer tollten und das Meer aufbrachten, legten sich mit einemmal, und Stille trat ein.

Und in dieser gespannten, drohenden Stille schien es, als habe das Meer sich in zwei Teile geteilt, es erhoben sich zwei riesengroße Wogen und höher immer und höher – bis an den nach unten gekippten Himmel - steigend, zogen sie ungeduldig gegeneinander.

Das war vorgestern, und heute ist der Himmel wieder hoch, und das Meer, als erinnere es sich an etwas, beruhigt sich wieder, und der Geist, gefan-gengenommen von seinem Schicksal, träumt wieder vom Sturm.

Jan

Sich seinem umzäunten Anwesen nähernd, beginnt er sich zu entkörpern, sein schwarzes Mönchsgewand abzulegen.

Das ist genau der Zeitpunkt, da er kein Mönch mehr und noch kein Herr ist, und eben diesen Zeitpunkt wähle ich, um geradenwegs auf ihn zuzugehen und ihm, dem über mein Erscheinen Erstaunten, zu sagen ...

Ich weiß noch nicht einmal, w a s , denn das, was kommen und eintreffen will, stimmt nicht überein mit dem Gesagten, so wie mit der Erde das sich langsam aus ihr erhebende, das Gras nicht übereinstimmt.

Die Straße ist lang und leer.
Wolken ziehen auf – als werde es regnen.
Ein Augenblick – und er (oder - auf die neue

Art - Jan, der sein Glück nicht wollte, um Glück für alle anderen zu werden) öffnet die Tür zu seinem Anwesen,

und in diesem Augenblick lege ich die Hand auf seine Schulter, spüre, wie unter dem zertretenen dunklen Boden junges kräftiges Gras sprießt und wie der Regen naht in dichterer Dunkelheit, und sage die allerersten Worte: „Guten Tag, Jan! ...“

Der Herbst

Bald setzt der Regen ein, bald läßt er nach.

In die schlammigen gelben Pfützen schaut der blinde Himmel.

Eine Schar entblößter Maisstengel drängt sich wie Bettler am Weg.

Die Hohlwege und Wegraine rühmen sich noch eines lichten Grüns, und der Acker leuchtet von einem frischen strotzenden Rot.

Aber der Raum ist eine Lichtung.

Aber die Umgebung ist eine Wegscheide.

Langsamen Schritts kommen vom Feld die Großmutter und der Enkel zusammen zurück.

Die rauchenden Schornsteine

Tag und Nacht steigt Rauch aus den Schornsteinen, wiegt sich – eine flockige Regenwolke – über den Häusern.

Die Abreise naht.

Noch hat keiner laut von ihr gesprochen, aber wie von selbst vermindern sich langsam die Betätigungen, und die gehabten Gewinne verlieren an Wert.

Das Land des unbekannten Schicksals hat wissen lassen von sich und ist herangerückt an das Himmelsgewölbe.

Die rauchenden Schornsteine bleiben endlich allein.

Jemand

Die alten Weiden bewachen den Weg, daß er ihnen nicht wegrennt. An ihnen Kerben und Risse, an ihm zu Staub und heißer Asche zerriebene Spuren.

Jemand kommt und hat viele Gestalten und Namen.
Aber das, was sieht, will selbst von niemandem gesehen werden, und das, was nennt, kann sich selbst nicht benennen.

Jedoch die Entfernungen haben sich plötzlich zusammengezogen – und überall haben sich finstere Gruben geöffnet, leere Höhlen, stumme Gräben:
Daß man verschwinden kann, sich verbergen, sich vergraben ...

Die Bekanntschaft ist tiefer als vordem, bald kündigt sie die Begegnung an, bald verschiebt sie sie auf später,
die Begegnung mit jemandem, der kommen muß.

Die Zeit des Wandels

Das Kleine wird groß, bleibt aber klein,
das Gierige wird freigiebig, bleibt aber gierig,
das Häßliche wird schön, bleibt aber häßlich.

Das Große wird klein – und ist dann klein,
das Freigiebige wird gierig – und ist dann gierig,
das Schöne wird häßlich – und ist dann häßlich.

Die Zeit des Wandels ist da und die Grube höher als der Berg.

Der Sommer

Zum Fluß hinunter steigen Gemüsegärten.
Die Obstgärten reifen.
Die Weite hat sich geöffnet und tränkt mit ihrer Fülle Kamille und Löwenzahn.
Über dem weißen Schloß verdichten sich langsam die Wolken.
Ein Pfad ist gelegt bis zur Insel der von Bäumen umhüllten und in die Außerhalb-Zeit vertieften Stille.
Die Vogelscheuche – Hose, Hemd und Hut – fragt verständnislos den stummen Himmel, wozu sie M e n s c h ist.

Musik

Im Wohnzimmer ist Musik: betäubend, lästig, eitel, dumpf.

Sie ist hier die Herrin und duldet keinen Gedan-ken, kein Wort neben sich.

Aber niemand wagt vor den andern, sie nicht zu wollen, sie leiser zu stellen oder gar ab.

Die Gäste glauben, sie gefalle den Gastgebern, und die Gastgeber glauben, sie freut die Gäste.

Der blinde Maler

Sich an den Zäunen festhaltend, über Steine stolpernd, mit dem Fuß in der auf den Gräbern seiner Freunde frisch aufgeschütteten Erde einsin-kend, geht er hin zu jenem so weit zurückliegen-den, fernen Frühlingsgarten, der einst von der Erde bis zum Himmel blühte und ihn einweihte in die Unsterblichkeit und in dem er etwas vergessen zu haben glaubt.

Aus dem, was er malte, wurden Bilder, die ihr eigenes Maß, ihre Kunden und ihren Wert hatten, jedoch er malte nicht sie, sondern das, was seine Aufmerksamkeit fesselte und von sich wissen ließ und was er bis zu Ende weder sehen noch verstehen konnte.

Das Weiß lief in die Welt hinaus und lockte ihn mitzuwandern, das Schwarz betete schweigend an der Wand, das Rot griff ein in die Taten, das Gelb mähte die Erscheinung, das Grün hörte dem Märchen zu, das Himmelblau verhieß, das tiefe Blau machte die Träume wahr.

Obwohl er nie wieder in den Garten gekommen war, stand der Garten, ohne sich zu zeigen, immer hinter seinen Augen, als sei er selbst nichts als ein besonderer Behelf, wie der Pinsel etwa oder die Farben, und in Wirklichkeit male der Garten.

Er geht durch das, was sich verwirklicht hat, und die Blindheit findet den Weg, der geendet hat, und wenn er ankommt - stellt er sich zwischen die Bäume, und die Bäume werden um ihn stehen, als seien sie die Seinen, und jemandes Hände werden ihm teilnehmend reife, duftende, üppige Geschenke geben in seine Hände –

Früchte.

DIE DINGE

I

Man gräbt eine Siedlung aus.
Man gräbt die Dinge aus.
Da ist ein Hand-Ding, da ein Bein-Ding, da ein Kraft-Ding, da ein Macht-Ding ...
Die Dinge sind der letzte Körper der Menschen, der, der am längsten lebt.

An den Dingen halte ich mich fest, auf die Dinge stütze ich mich, die Dinge sinds, die ich erbe ...
Mit den Dingen mißt sich meine Zeit, umreißt sich mein Raum, ohne sie verliere ich mich, ohne sie verschwinde ich, ohne sie bedeute ich selbst nichts.

Auf dem Markt, wo man alles erwirbt und verkauft, frage ich die Dinge, wie sie heißen.
Sie nennen meine Namen.

II

In den Schaufenstern sind Dinge ausgestellt – kann sein, für ein Treffen, kann sein auch, für ein Trennen.

Wir bleiben vor ihnen stehn wie vor unseren seligen Entschlafenen, betrachten sie, nehmen sie auf in die Seele und in das Gedächtnis.

Und spüren, erregt, daß uns mit ihnen eine geheime Ähnlichkeit verbindet, als seien wir einst, am Anfang, als Gott die Welt erschuf, ebenfalls Dinge gewesen und seien es dereinst erneut.

Alles, an dem wir reich sind, sind Dinge, und alles, vor dem wir uns als Götter erweisen, sind sie.

Wir gehn weiter.
In den Schaufenstern aber bleiben die Dinge zurück, und in den Dingen - wir.

III

Die bekannten Dinge verschwinden.
Ich habe mich gewöhnt an sie, finde es schade um sie.

Ich suche – aber im Raum sind sie nicht, und in der Zeit, als sei sie gealtert, haben sich Krümmun-gen gebildet, vermutlich haben sie sie versteckt.

Die Dinge sind das verkörperte M e i n e , wie aber stelle ich es an, daß die Krümmungen verschwinden und die Dinge, die verschwunden sind, sich wiederfinden?!
IV

In dieser Stadt ist Jan ein Unbekannter: Niemand stellt ihn an, und es besteht keinerlei Bedarf an ihm.

Die Tage ziehen sich hin und bringen keinen Wechsel, und dann steigt Jan auf ein Podium und tut, als sei er ein Ding.

Und dieses Ding beginnt, in langsamen Bewe-gungen, von einem Fuß auf den andern zu treten, den Kopf zu wenden, bald die eine, bald die andere Hand zu heben, sich zu beugen, das Gesicht abzutasten,
und alle, ausnahmslos, die auf dem Platz waren, bewundern es, klatschen ihm Beifall, spornen es an, zu zeigen, was es noch alles kann, und zum Dank legen die einen in die Mütze neben ihm eine Mark, die anderen zwei.

V

In Hoffnungen, Irrtümern, Verlusten verrinnt unsere Zeit, und indem sie vergeht, gewinnt sie aus uns, wie gleichsam aus Erz, die Antwort.

Wir haben uns noch nicht verwirklicht, und Veränderungen beunruhigen unseren Verstand, wir wissen nicht einmal, was wir zu denken haben und was - zu wünschen.

Wir sind ein Versuch, und die Zeichen, die wir malen. wischen wir wieder weg.

Und Gott, der uns verläßt, legt uns ein Gerät in die Hände, mit dem sich die Wirklichkeit ordnen läßt, -
das Ding.

VI

Gezählt sind unsere Bedürfnisse, gemessen die Möglichkeiten, und ein Mensch ist dem andern nicht Bruder noch Feind, sondern – Ding.

Als verdorre das Wurzelwerk, versiege der Brunnen, gehen wir, allmählich, unmerklich, unter in den Ort, den auf der Oberfläche vermerkten, und die Welt, benutzt und erkannt, findet das Wort nicht für uns.

An den langen einsamen Abenden denkt Jan an seine Heimat und hegt das Gebet im Herzen:
„Komm und errichte dein Reich und erlöse uns aus der Umarmung unserer Gewinne, N i c h t s e i n ! “

VII

An Festen oder aus anderen Gründen geben wie einander Geschenke – Dinge.

Längst schon haben unsere Gedanken die Kraft verloren, unsere Worte – ihr Gewicht, und Dinge sind das Größte, was wir geben und nehmen können.

Wir schöpfen uns in den Dingen aus, und verschwinden wir, als würden wir weggewischt, bleiben noch eine Weile die Dinge auf der Welt, die uns einmal gehörten –
als Erinnerung an etwas, was es nicht gibt.

VIII

Aus dem menschenleeren Gotteshaus gehen wir in ein Kaufhaus voller Menschen.

Das muß wohl so sein: Die Menge im Kaufhaus, die Kirche leer?!

Es ist schwer für uns, fast unmöglich, herauszufinden, warum uns Gott verlassen hat und nicht wieder zu sich nimmt: Vielleicht gehören wir zu sehr uns selbst, und Gott ist für uns jemand oder etwas, wie ein Ding oder eine Person, -
aber keine, die gescheiteste Antwort nicht, die wir ersinnen, ist imstande, s i c h i n d i e K u r v e z u l e g e n.

Zuweilen beschleicht uns die Empfindung, daß wir uns an der Schwelle befinden: Noch ein wenig – und der Sieg zeigt sich, bei dem kein Sieger ist,
aber wir schreiten fort – und die uns bekannten Beschäftigungen schaffen uns eifrig an, und die Dinge, eins nach dem andern, kaufen uns.

IX

Kommen wir in eine bekannte oder auch nicht gar so bekannte Stadt, gehen wir durch ihre Stra-

ßen und fotografieren, was uns in die Augen fällt: Gebäude, merkwürdig von einem Ereignis her, Denkmäler, jemandem oder etwas zu Ehren, Sehenswürdigkeiten, Ansichten –

und bitten andere, auch uns zu fotografieren.

Später, wenn wir die Fotos betrachten und auseinanderlegen und vor uns in der Hand halten, was uns nicht gehört, sagen wir zu den Anwe-senden: das ist der Reichstag, das – eine Kirche aus dem zwölften Jahrhundert, das – eine Moden-schau, und hier bin ich, -

und in diesem Augenblick verschwinden wir für einen Moment, in dem Bewußtsein, daß wir noch nicht einmal ein Ding sind, wir sind ein Vor-Ding, der Vortag eines Dings, und erst, wenn wir aus dem Vortag hinausfallen, willigen die Dinge ein, uns sich gleichzustellen in unseren Rechten.

X

Als wolle ein Lied aus ihm werden, läßt Jan die Dinge zurück im Vergangenen und wendet sich selbst dorthin, wohin die wundersame, noch lautlose Weise lockt.

Er sucht etwas, fragt man ihn aber – was, weiß er nichts zu sagen: Das, was er sucht, kann man wohl weder wissen noch besitzen.

Mitte des Sommers.

Frauen nehmen reife Kirschen zwischen die Lippen.

Auf den nahen Fluren siedeln sich Träume an.

„Begegne ich dem, was mir begegnen soll, wird es mich sogleich erkennen“, denkt Jan.

Und die Platzregen mögen den Durst in ihm und die Menschen – das Nichtsein.

PUNKTIERUNGEN

Alte Birke
am Fenster –
das Morgengrauen
dauert den ganzen Tag
und der – dauert ewig.

Neujahrstanne auf der Müllkippe.
Das war es – das Neujahr.
Das war es – sein Einzugsfest.

Da schärft und schärft seinen Schnabel
am Stein ein Rabe:
Na, flieg schon,
es langt.

Auf dem verschneiten Feldrain
wiegen sich trockene Stauden:
Nun keine Angst mehr vorm Frost?

Der Schnee taut.
Schade –
sowohl um ihn
als irgendwie auch um mich selbst.

Oben – Sonne,
unten – Wasser:
In eine unbekannte Ferne
strebt ein Stück Treibeis.

Hab keine Angst, plumpe Fliege:
wie werde ich denn nun noch
dir etwas tun,
nach dem überstandenen Winter?!

Sie kostete die Torte
und aß dann Schwarzbrot:
der Geschmack meiner Tante.

Kartoffeln werden gelegt:
Jetzt
überlegt selber,
kümmert euch selbst,
wie ihr aus diesem Versteck kommt.

Fürchte dich nicht, Bach,
zu Mulden und Gruben zu fließen:
Der Fluß
wird dich nicht vergessen

Komme aus dem Takt der Zeit,
falle
in den Abgrund der Zeit.

Pfad über dem Abhang:
dort geht es sich angenehm,
jeder Schritt auf ihm
hat einen Inhalt.

Stachlige Sommerdisteln –
aber schau: Die Biene
hält Freundschaft mit ihnen.

Das Regenrohr –
Aufmerksamkeit,
gerichtet in
Himmel und Erde zugleich.

Eine Sandwelle liegt
an das Hoftor geweht –
eine Welle der toten Zeit.

Weiden – Lieblinge des Glücks:
Eine solche Dürre,
sie aber – am Fluß.

Der Himmel hat sich bewölkt,
die Tiefe
ist zurückgekehrt in den Umkreis.

Gesang im Himmel,
der Himmel im Gesang:
die Lerche.

Im Heimatdorf:
Wie seltsam
die von der Wiege an gewöhnte
Mundart wieder zu hören
von Unbekannten.
„Wo ist er nun – dieser Gott?!“
Wehklage
meiner erkrankten Tante.

So viele Menschen –
und keiner kauft meine Ware?!

Eine alte Oma und Bohnen.

Hähne,
mit Schnur festgebunden:
Man verkauft sie,
aber sie krähen.

Mir schlüpft hinterher
in die Kirche ein Ahornblatt:
Draußen ist es zu langweilig.

Aufs Ufer schoben sich
und legten sich
fort in den Traum
die Boote.

Die Zweige schaukeln
in den herbstlichen Bäumen –
und schaukeln,
in ihren sich verflechtenden Schatten
das Haus.

Alles ringsum hat Raureif bedeckt:
Die Blumen lassen die Köpfe hängen,
der Stein ist aufgeblüht.

Es wird Abend.
Im Park schreien Krähen –
und mit den Schreien betasten sie,
daß sie da sind.

Ales Rasanau

Der Fliederstrauch hinter dem Zaun
hebt die Blätter:
Bleib mir vom Leibe, Frost!

Zerstörte Mauern.
Hartnäckig
halten die Steine sich fest
an der gewesenen Größe.

Aus dem Weißrussischen übertragen von
Elke Erb *und* ***Halina Skakun***

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LEBENSLAUF

Ales Rasanau,
1947 – am 5. Dezember, geboren in Sjalez/Brest, namhafter weißrussischer/ weißruthenischer Dichter.
1961 – Erste Gedichte.
1966-68 – Philologiestudium in Minsk, aus politischen Gründen relegiert.
1969-70 – Abschluß des Studiums in Brest. Danach ein Jahr Lehrer in dem Dorf Krugel/Kreis Kamjanez.
1971-72 – Armeedienst
1972-73 – Mitarbeiter/Redaktion bei der Zeitung *Literatur und Kunst (Litaratura i mastactwa)*, Minsk und bei der Zeitschrift *Natur und Heimat (Rodnaja pryroda)*, Minsk.
1974-86 – Lektor im Verlag *Mastackaja Litaratura* (Schöne Literatur).
1991-92 – Vorsitzender der weißrussischen Stiftung Familie Rerichs.
1992-94 – Mitarbeiter am Skaryna-Zentrum für künstlerische und wissenschaftliche Forschung in Minsk.
1994-99 – stellvertretender Chefredakteur der Zeitschrift *„Krynica“* (Quelle).
Lebt als freischaffender Autor in Minsk.

1990 – Staatlicher Janka Kupala Preis
1992 – Literarisches Colloquium Berlin (Juni)
1995 – Institut fürs östliche Europa, Finnland (September-November)
1998 – Baltisches Zentrum für Schriftsteller u. Übersetzer in Visby, Schweden (November)
1999 – Gast des Schriftstellerverband Sloveniens in Lubljana (September)
1999 – DAAD Stipendium in Berlin (Nov.‘99-Jan.2000)
2001 – Hannah Arendt Stipendium, Hannover (Jan.-Juni 2001)
2001 – Gast der Künstlerhäuser Worpswede (Juli-Dezember)
2002 – /Jan.-Juni, Sept.-Dez.)
2002 – Gast der Preußischen Seehandlung Berlin (Juli-August)
2003 – Gast der Kulturvermittlung Steiermark und des Kulturkontakts Austria (Februar-Mai, in Graz)
2003 – Herderpreis (Mai)
2003 – Gast der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung in Langebroich (15.Mai-15.September)

1970 – *Adradžennie* (Wiedergeburt), Gedichte.
1974 – *Nazauždy* (Auf immer), Gedichte und ein Poem.
1976 – *Kaardynaty byccja* (Koordinaten des Seins), Poeme.
1981 – *Šljach 360.* (Weg 360.), Poeme und Quanteme.
1988 –.*Vastryje straly* (Die Pfeilspitze), Versetten, Punktierungen, Quantemen.

1992 – *U horadzie waladary Rahwalod* (In der Stadt herrscht Rahwalod), Quanteme und Punktierungen.
1995 – *Paljavanne u rajskaj daline* (Jagd im Paradiestal),Versetten, Poeme, Punktierungen, Wortverse. Übersetzungen aus Velemir Chlebnikow.
1998 – *Rečaisnasc* (Wirklichkeit), Versetten und Poeme.
1999 – *Tanec z vuzakami* (Tanz mit den Schlangen), Auswahl.
2000 – Hlina. Kamen. Zaleza" (Lehm. Stein. Eisen), Poeme, veröffentlicht in Bialystok/Polen.
2002 – *Hanoverskija punkery – Hannoversche Punktierungen* (zweisprachige Ausgabe), Nachdichtung von Oskar Ansull, Nande Röhlmann u. Halina Skakun.

1995 – *Zeichen vertikaler Zeit, Poeme, Versetten, Punktierungen, Betrachtungen,* eine umfassende Auswahl, herausgegeben von Norbert Randow, übertragen von Elke Erb (Agora Verlag, Berlin).
2002 – *Tanz mit den Schlangen*, aus dem Weißrussischen von Elke Erb u. Uladsimir Tschapeha, Agora Verlag, Berlin
2002 – *Hanoverskija punkery – Hannoversche Punktierungen* (zweisprachige Ausgabe), Nachdichtung von Oskar Ansull, Nande Röhlmann u. Halina Skakun.
Veröffentlichungen in deutschspr. Literatur– und Kulturzeitschriften: Die Horen; Sinn und Form; Halbjahresschrift Südosteuropa; Lichtungen.

Чэслаў Мілаш
Czesław Miłosz

ТОЕ

Каб нарэшце мог я сказаць, што сядзіць ува мне.
Крыкнуць мог: людзі, я ж вам хлусіў,
Гаворачы, што такога ўва мне няма,
Калі ТОЕ далей там сядзіць, днём і ноччу.
Але дзякуючы менавіта яму
Мог я апісваць месцы, якія лёгка гарэлі.
Кароткія каханні і прыгоды, рассыпаныя на попел.
Пярсцёнкі, люстэркі, брэтэлька варушыцца на плячы.
Сцэны ў спальнях і на мардабойсках.

Пісанне было для мяне стратэгічнай абаронай.
Замятанем слядоў. Бо людзям не падабаецца той,
Хто сягае па забароненае.
Клічу на дапамогу рэкі, дзе плаваў, клічу азёры

З кладкамі паміж зараснікоў чароту, клічу даліну,
дзе рэха песняў вечаровае святло паўтарае,
І прызнаю, што мае экстатычныя пахвалы існавання
Маглі быць толькі спробамі высокага стылю,
А пад сподам было ТОЕ, што назваць не бяруся.

ТОЕ падобна да думкі бяздомнага, калі ідзе замерзлым чужым
месцам.

Падобнае да хвіліны, калі загнаны жыд бачыць,
як набліжаюцца цяжкія каскі нямецкай жандармерыі.

ТОЕ ёсць, калі сын караля выходзіць з замку да места
і бачыць сапраўдны свет:
бяду, хваробы, старасць і смерць.

Альбо — да слоў лекара,
Што дыягназ не павярнуць — як прысуд.
Таму так зроблена,
бо натыкнуцца на ТОЕ гэта натыкнуцца на каменны мур
і зразумець, што вось такі мур
не адступіць перад любой нашай просьбай.

ДА ЛЯШЧЫНЫ

Не пазнаеш мяне, але гэта я, той самы,
Хто рэзаў на лукі твае скарычнявелыя пруты,
Такія простыя і гнуткія ў сваім бегу да сонца.
Разраслася ты, аграмадня твой цень, новыя галінкі гадуеш.
Шкада, што я ўжо даўно не той хлопец.
Кій цяпер толькі выразаць магу; бачыш, ужо хаджу з ляскай.

Любіў я тваю кару, бронзавую, з белым налётам.
Абсалютна ляшчынавага колеру.
Радуюць мяне, хто пратрывалі, дубы і ясені,
Але найболей ты мяне цешыш,
Заўжды чароўная, у пэрлах арэхаў,

З пакаленнямі вавёрак, з іх бясконцым танцам.
Гэта падобна да задумы Геракліта — калі тут стаю,
Калі памятаю сябе, даўно мінулага,
Жыццё, якое было, а якое магло быць.

Не трывае нічога, але трывае ўсё: так аграмадная сталасць.
У ёй спрабую змясціць сваё прызначэнне,
Якога, праўду кажучы, не хацеў мець сам.
Шчаслівы быў я толькі з лукам у руках, крадучыся берагам рэчкі,
А ўсё, што было пазней, аднаго варта — паціснуць плячыма.
Бо гэта толькі біяграфія — гэта зачыць, хлусня.

POST SCRIPTUM

Біяграфія тое самае, што выдумка альбо вялікі сон.
На ўскрайку неба паміж бярозаў стос аблокаў адно на адным.

Жоўтыя, іржавыя вінаграднікі падвячоркам.
Быў нядоўга слугой і вандраўніком.
Адпусцілі мяне, і вяртаюся незнаёмай дарогай.

Шатэйны — Напа Валлі, восень 1997

НЕ РАЗУМЕЮ

„Міхенхаус Генрык, ротмістр райтараў Яго Каралеўскай Мосці, узяў шлюб у Куянах 10 лютага 1659 году з Малгажатай з Хорнаў і адразу па шлюбе быў забіты сваім шваграм Хорнам".

Кнігі і метрычныя запісы Еванельска-рэфарматарскай парафіі ў Куянах; Шымон Канарскі, „Кальвінская шляхта ў Польшчы".

Але Куяны побач Шатэйняў, дарогай уздоўж Нёмана там басанож бегаў. Дык вось духоўны з Кяйданаў, дзе быў кальвінскі збор, прыехаў санямі ў лютым, каб даць шлюб. Не маглі на шлюб паехаць да Кяйданаў? А Куяны былі чые? Міхенхауса? Хорнаў? Адкуль такія прозвішчы ў той зборцы народаў пры князю Радзівіле? І чаму Хорн забіў пана Генрыка Міхенхауса? Можа, з прычыны свайго збочанага, кры-

візмешанага кахання да дачкі Малгажаты? І як забіў? Ударам шаблі? Рапірай? З мушкета? З ручніцы? І дзе ротмістр Яго Каралеўскай Мосці пахаваны? Што далей было з яго ўдавой Малгажатай? З кім мела шлюб? З кожным днём усё глыбей і глыбей, сам ужо цень, уваходжу між ценяў. Стагоддзі праходзяць, імёнаў і духаў кругом мяне ўсё болей і болей, а не так, як у маладосці, калі адзін рытм маёй крыві забараняў мінаючым людзям да мяне даступіцца. Цяпер я ім блізкі, клічу іх, уяўляю іх. Зямля, яе зерне, босыя ногі памятаюць каляіны дарогі, глыбокія лужы пасля дажджу, а на горцы парк і двор Куяны. Колькі іх, тых, хто жыў у гэтым наваколлі, у плоці, як я, і таму я не здольны зразумець, як жыццё можа замяніцца ў смерць, а ўзнятыя ў подыху лёгкія застыгнуць. Так моцна думаю: вось тут, дзе даволі ўзяць малы акраец планеты Зямля і будаваць на ім нябачную сувязь жыцця з жыццём ажно да нябёсаў, цяпер, калі іх косці ніхто не знойдзе. Гэта ўсё роўна, як некалі за сталом на складчыне студэнтаў і студэнтак раптам пераставаў там быць і ўсіх нас, разрагатаных, разгавораных, аглядаў зрокам, як быццам усе мы былі так даўно.

ДЗЕД МОЙ ЗЫГМУНТ КУНАТ

На фотакартцы майго дзеда, дзе яму шэсць гадоў,
праяўляецца, на мой розум, таямніца яго асобы.

Шчаслівы хлопчык, радасны па-зладзейску,
з-пад скуры свеціць душа, хуткая і павольная.

Фотакартка з шасцідзесятых гадоў дзевятнаццатага стагоддзя,
і цяпер я, у позняй старасці, туды збіраюся,
каб таварышыць дзіцяці ў яго забавах.

Над зялёным возерам, дзе цяпер камяні шпурляю,
і з-пад ясеняў, што ў вершах маіх змушаны застацца.

Кунаты пісаліся кальвіністамі, што цешыць мой снабізм,
бо кальвінская шляхта на Літве была самай адукаванай.

Сямейка позна змяніла веру, каля 1800 году, але не памятаю,
каб мой дзед сядзеў на касцельнай лаўцы ў Святабросці.

З другоа боку, мой дзед ніколі не гаварыў пра ксяндзоў кепска,
ніколі не адступаў ад прынятых традыцый і звычаяў.

Студэнт Галоўнай Школы Ў Варшаве, танцаваў на балях,
чытаў творы эпохі пазітывізму.

Паважна ўзяў да галавы асновы арганічнай працы
і пачаў вырабляць сукно ў Шатэйнях —
бегаў я і гуляў у пакоях з сукнавальнымі машынамі.

Быў гжэчны з усімі і з кожным, малым і вялікім,
багатым і бедным, меў Божы дар выслухаць усіх.

Оскар Мілаш, які пазнаў яго ў Коўне Ў 1922-м годзе,
называў яго un gentil homme francais du dix-huitiem siecle,
французскім шляхцічам васемнаццатага стагоддзя.

Але вонкавая паліроўка не вычэрпвала, аднак, яго сутнасці,
пад ёй хаваліся мудрасць і сапраўдная дабрыня.

Разважаючы пра свой спадчынны цяжар, маю хвіліну на перадых,
калі згадваю дзеда, бо нешта павінна ўва мне быць ад яго,
гэта значыць, чаго-небудзь я ўсё-такі варты.

Назвалі яго „літваманам”, і ён сапраўды збудаваў дом на Легмядзі,
які аддаў пад школу; а хіба не ён аплочваў літоўскага настаўніка?

Любілі яго ўсе, літоўцы, жыды, палякі,
мір плыў па ім у навакольных вёсках.

(У тых вёсках, якія праз пару гадоў па яго смерці
былі вывезены ў Сібір,
і цяпер на тым месцы роўна і пуста.)

З кніжак дзед найболей любіў чытаць успаміны Якуба Гейштара,
бо там да дробязяў апісаныя нашы даліны Нявежы
ад Кяйданаў да Кракінова.

У малалецтве гэта мяне не цікавіла, бо што мне з таго, што было
так даўно, калі адна толькі будучыня мяне абыходзіла.
Сягоння прагна чытаю тыя ўспаміны, навучаны ўжо, чаго вартыя
адны назвы мясцінаў, павароты дарогі, пагоркі, паром на рацэ.

Як моцна трэба цаніць правінцыю і дом, і даты, і сляды людзей,
хто ўжо мінаваў.

Каліфарнійскі валацуга, захоўваю талісман, фотакартку пагорка
ў Святабросці, дзе спіць пад дубамі мой дзед Зыгмунт Кунат,
прадзед Шымон Сыруць і жонка яго Ефрасіння.

ВОЗЕРА

Возера, як паненка, глыбокае возера,
Зарастае чаротам з усіх берагоў,
Грай для мяне белым днём аблокамі,
Хто ў чужых краях прападаў шмат гадоў.

Гэта паненка мне сапраўдная праўда,
У вялікім месце над морам ляжаць яе косці.
Надта ўжо справядліва адбываецца кожная страта.
Аднялі адно ад другога — і бракуе чагосьці.

Гэй, паненка, паненка. Ляжым у адхланні.
Косці душаць, чэрап, скабы, ногі і рукі.
Няўжо гэта ты і я? Мы за светам, як у абранні.
Нам не лічыць гадзіннік ні хвілін, ні гадоў, ні мукаў.

Ах, каб тая рэч нетрывалая, хоць і вечная,
Лёс бы мой адгадала, перажыць яго дапамагла!
Мы з табой закутыя ў крышталі, напэўна.
Непадобная ты да жывой паненкі была.

ПАСЛЯ ПАДАРОЖЖА

Жыццё дзіўнае, незразумелае! Як быццам вярнуўся з яго, як з далёкага падарожжа, і спрабую ўспомніць, дзе быў я і што рабіў. Не надта атрымваецца, а зусім няма як убачыць сябе самога. Меў намеры, матывацыі, нешта вырашаў, нешта выконваў, але на адлегласці той чалавек выглядае істотай іррацыянальнай, абсурднай. Усё роўна, як не ён рабіў, а ім рабілі свае тыя, хто з яго карыстаўся. Бо ён напісаў мноства кніжак, кніжкі тут, ён там, і як працягнуць паміж імі нітку?

У разважанні пра жыццё-падарожжа пякуча дабівае немагчымасць адказу на пытанне пра сутнасць і сэнс самога сябе. Незразумелы сабе самому, хачу адгадаць, кім быў я для іншых, асабліва жанчынаў з майго сяброўства альбо кахання. Бо цяпер выглядае як заспаны тэатр марыянетак, дзе лялькі ляжаць дагары, у блытаніне сваіх шнуркоў, нават не маюць паняцця, у якім спектаклі зайгралі.

ГАЛАВА

Аграмадная галава выглядала
з-за пагоркаў на другім беразе ракі
і бачыла хлопца з вудай,
а хлопец бачыў адзін паплавок
і думаў пра адно: клюне альбо не клюне.

— Што з ім зрабіць, — задумвалася галава,
аддаючы загады лятаючым духам,
спецыялістам ад парадкавання лёсу.

— Маем, што маем, — кажа сама сабе галава,
маючы перад сабой тое ж месца над рэчкай
і старога, які вярнуўся сюды з далёкіх вандровак.

— Некаторым усё здаецца,
што гэта яны пастанаўляюць, спаўняюць.
А вось гэты хоць ведае,
што быў лялькай у гульні моцных,
хіхікаючых, ныркуючых у паветры,

і адно толькі здзіўляе,
што вось такі лёс яму выпаў.

ЗАБУДЗЬ

Забудзь пра цярпенні,
Якія сам наклікаў.
Забудзь пра цярпенні,
Якія ад свету маеш.
Бо вада яшчэ і цячэ,
Блісне вясна і загіне,
Крочыш па зямлі і ледзь памятаеш яе.

Часам здалёк пачуеш песню.
Што гэта, спытаеш, хто там спявае?
Нявіннае сонца ўсходзіць,
Нараджаецца ўнук і праўнук.
Цяпер яны цябе вядуць за руку.

Адны імёны рэкаў з табой яшчэ засталіся.
Як доўга рэкі ўмеюць трываць!
Палі твае, ворныя,
Вежы местаў, непадобныя.
Ты на парозе стаіш, анямелы.

У МЕСЦЕ

Места было ўкаханым, шчаслівым,
Цэлы час у чырвоных півонях, у позніх бэзах,
Падпіралі нябёсы барокавыя вежы.
Добра было вярнуцца з маёўкі і ставіць букеты ў вазах,
За вакном бачыць вуліцу, каторай некалі хадзіў да школы
(На мурах рэзкая мяжа святла і ценю).
Веславалі на байдарках па возеры.
З каханнем выбіраліся на астравы, парослыя хмызняком.
Потым нарачонства і шлюб у касцёле св. Юрыя.
А потым брацтва гуляе ў мяне на хрысцінах.

Цешуся з гульняў у лепшага з тых мужыкоў, красамоўцаў, паэтаў,
З апладысментаў тлуму, калі вуліцу запаўняе Шэсце Цмока.
Па нядзелях сядзеў на ганаровай лаўцы ў касцёле.
Насіў тогу і ланцуг, дар суграмадзянаў.
Стараўся, бо ведаў, што ўнукі мае вернымі месту будуць.

Каб так было. Толькі здзьмухнула мяне
За моры, за акіяны. Бывай, згублены лёс.
Бывай, места майго болю. Бывайце, бывайце.

СУМЛЕННАЕ АПІСАННЕ СЯБЕ САМОГА НАД ШКЛЯНКАЙ ВІСКІ Ў АЭРАПОРЦЕ, ЗДАЕЦЦА, У МІНЕАПОЛІСЕ

Мае вушы чуюць усё менш, мае вочы слабнуць, але далей
ненасычаныя.

Бачу іх у міні спаднічках, джынзах альбо
ў лёгкіх тканінах.

Кожную разглядаю асобна, іх попкі і лыткі, задумёны ўвесь,
закалыханы мроямі порна.

Стары распусны дзед, у яму табе самы час, не на гульбы ды забавы
з маладосці

Няпраўда, бо раблю толькі тое, што заўжды, складаючы сцэны
з жыцця гэтай зямлі і на загад эратычнай фантазіі.

Не прагну менавіта вось гэтых, бо ўсяго прагну,
а яны толькі знак экстатычнага суіснавання.

Не мая віна, што нас такімі зляпілі, напалову з абыякавай
кантэмпляцыі, а напалову з апетыту.

Калі па смерці траплю на Неба, то хіба там будзе так, як тут,
толькі што вызвалюся ад тупых мазгоў і цяжкіх касцей.

Буду, як адзін чысты зрок, буду глытаць прапорцыю
чалавечага цела, колеру ірысаў, чэрвеньскі ранак
на парыжскай вуліцы,
усю незразумеласць, усю незразумелую незлічонасць
бачанага мною.

НА МАЁ 88-ГОДДЗЕ

У месце цесна: крытыя пасажы, вузкія
маленькія пляцы, аркі,
што спускаюцца тарасамі да марской бухты.

І я, загледзеўшыся вось на маленькую прыгажуню,
налітая ўся, нетрывалая ў часе,
як быццам адзін рух у танцы між старых камянёў.

Сукенкі колеру летняй моды,
пантофелькі стукаюць па камянях, рэха ляціць
з глыбіні стагоддзяў,
суцяшае мяне гэты абрад вяртання.

Даўно за сабой пакінуў
адведзіны кафедраў і вежаў на варніцах солі.
Цяпер выглядаю як той, хто бачыць, а не размінецца,
лятаючы дух, міма сівізны і старэчых хваробаў.

Ацалеў той дух, бо з ім вечнае і Божае здзіўленне.

Генуя, 30 чэрвеня 1999 года

БЕГ

Бягу я, радасны, восенню цёмным паркам,
Пад нагамі ігліца, лісце лапоча,

Апусцелі паляны, з дубоў жалуды апалі,
Тэлебачаннем сінім вокны свецяць у вочы.

Так лёгка яшчэ не ступаў я ніколі.
Альбо надта даўно, меў тады гадоў восем.
Узлятаў на неба, меў сабе поўна волі,
А цяпер даганяе мяне мая восень.

Нядобра вітае мяне ява на гэтым свеце.
Днём ступаю з ляскай, змагаюся з астмай.
Але ноч мяне цягне на дождж і вецер,
На пачатак свету, прыгожы, прыдатны.

НАД РУЧАЁМ

Шум празрыстай вады на камянях
у яры пасярод высокага лесу.
Святлее ў промнях сонца на берагах яго папараць,
множыцца неакрэсленая форма лістоты,
лісты вострыя, заточаныя,
падобныя да сэрца, падобныя да лапаты,
падобныя да языка, падобныя да пальца,
карбаваныя, зубчатыя,
распілаваныя — хто ўсе іх апіша —
і кветкі! Белыя і распушчаныя,
поўныя чараў, яснажоўтыя зоры,
ружачкі, гронкі.
Тут сядзець і ўзірацца,
як чмялі завіхаюцца,
пасіконікі гуляюць,
зрываюцца ў лёт мухалоўкі,
чорны жук варушыцца ў зарасніку.
Здаецца, чую голас Дэміурга:
„Ці то скалы анямелыя з першага дня стварэння,
ці то жыццё, што канчаецца смерцю,
і прыгажосць, што на шчасце тваё на цябе спадае”.

О!

О, шчасце ўбачыць ірыс
Колеру індыго, як колішняя сукенка Элі,
і пах далікатны — так пахла яе скура.

О, колькі словаў трэба, каб ірыс апісаць,
бо ён і тады квітнеў, калі не было ніякай Элі,
ніякіх каралеўстваў нашых,
ніякіх краінаў.

О!
ГУСТАЎ КЛІМТ (1862 -1918), ЮДЫТА (ДЭТАЛЬ), АЎСТРЫЙСКАЯ ГАЛЕРЭЯ, ВЕНА

О, паўраскрытыя вусны, а вочы прыкрытыя, ружовыя
сысачкі грудзей голага цела твайго, Юдыта!

Гэта цябе ўяўлялі тыя, хто бег у атаках,
каго рвала артылерыйскімі снарадамі,
хто валіўся на дол, у адно гніллё!

О, адлітае золата тваіх тканінаў, ажарэлка з радамі
дарагіх камянёў, Юдыта, такое ім развітанне!

О!
САЛЬВАТОР РОСА (1615-1673), ПЕЙЗАЖ З ПОСТАЦЯМІ, ГАЛЕРЭЯ ЙЕЛЬСКАГА УНІВЕРСІТЭТУ

О, спакой вады пад скаламі і жоўтая ціша, і ў вадзе
ізноў тыя ж аблокі.

Тыя, на першым плане, ужо апранаюцца, другія
на другім баразе маленькія і таямнічыя ў сваім занятку.

О, тут самае звычайнае вынятае са штодзённасці і ўзнесенае
на сцэну, падобную і непадобную да зямной.

О!
ЭДВАРД ХОПЭР (1882-1967), ПАКОЙ У ГАТЭЛІ, КАЛЕКЦЫЯ ТЫСЭНА, ЛУГАНА

О, як жа той смутак не ведае, што ёсць смуткам!
А, тая роспач, несвядомая, што яна роспач!

Кабета кар'еры, каля яе багаж, сядзіць на
ложку, напаўапранутая, у ніжняй спаднічцы чырвонай, але
прычасаная без заган, у руках картка з лічбамі.

Хто ты? — ніхто не спытае, і сама не ведае.

У ЛЮБЫМ МЕСЦЫ

У любым месцы я, на любым я месцы
на зямлі, перад людзьмі хаваю перакананне,
што я не адгэтуль.
Як быцам пасланы быў, каб мог праглынуць як найболей
колераў, смакаў, гукаў, пахаў, даведацца
пра ўсё, што ёсць
доляю чалавека, ды замяніць той здабытак
на чараўніцкі рэестр і там аднесці яго, адкуль
прыйшоў.

VOYEUR

Падглядаў я тых, хто па зямлі вандравалі.
Шумела, змянялася ў галактычным слоіку з мылам.

Капялюшык мела з ліловымі кветкамі, мела трусы з каронкамі,
Балявалі з ёй ля абруса, прыбітага сонечнымі плямамі.

Альбо яе голыя грудзі пад сукенкай empire.
Пераапранаўся ў каляровы фрак з ордэнам,
Каб мацней адчуваць іх цвёрды дотык.

Заўжды думаў пра тое, што кабеты носяць схаваным:
Цёмная брама ў сад ведаў,
Спевы птушак, абшыванак і спаднічак.

А пазней яны паміралі, іх атласы, люстэркі.
Догрэссы, князёўны, паненкі са службы.
Горла сціскала мне, бо такая прыгажосць ператваралася ў тлён.

На самай справе, не шукаў я кахання з імі.
Прагнулі іх мае вочы; прагна і яшчэ раз прагна.
Як на камічным відовішчы,
На якім філасофія і граматыка,
Паэтыка і матэматыка,
Логіка і рыторыка,
Тэалогія і герменеўтыка,
А таксама ўсе навукі разумнікаў і прарокаў
Пазбіраліся, каб складаць песню з песняў
Пра звярка пушыстага, якога не прыручыць.

ТАК ЗВАНАЕ ЖЫЦЦЁ

Так званае жыццё:
усё, што дае тэмы для мыльных операў,
не здавалася мне годным аповяду,
альбо хоць і хацеў бы гаварыць, але не ўмеў.

Здзіўлялі перакручаныя гісторыі мужчынаў, жанчынаў,
што цягнуліся ажно пакуль у памяці не пачынала мільгацець.
Сам умеў толькі цярпець, сціснуўшы зубы,
чакаць, калі старасць адбярэ значэнне ў тых драмаў
і брызне мыльнаю операй
мілавіцы, нянавісці, спакусаў і здрадаў.

ПРАВІЛА

Толькі не прызнанні. Бо ўласнае жыццё
Мяне так даела, што адшукаў бы палёгку,
Апавядаючы пра яго. І зразумелі б мяне
Няшчасныя — колькі іх! — хто на вуліцах местаў
Хістаюцца, паўпрытомныя ці нападпітку,
Хворыя на гной памяці і віну за сваё існаванне.
Дык што ж трымае мяне? Сорам,
Што не такое ўжо маляўнічае маё гора?
Ці мая ўпартасць? Бо занадта модныя крык і плач,
Нешчаслівае дзяцінства, крыўда і гэтак далей.
Нават калі б даспяваў да жалоснай скаргі,
Лепш замаўчаць, лепш нахвальваць нязменны
Парадак жыцця. Але не, нешта іншае
Не дазваляе мне гаварыць. Хто церпіць, павінен
Быць праўдамоўным. Але дзе там, адны маскі, касцюмы,
А колькі камедыі, шкадавання сябе самога!
Фальшывыя пачуцці адразу відаць па фальшывых фразах.

А я занадта цаню стыль, каб рызыкаваць.

У ЧОРНАЙ РОСПАЧЫ

У чорнай роспачы і ў чорным сумневе
Прысягаю на вернасць Незразумеламу
І выгляд раблю, што радуюся, а радасці мала,
Бо скаргі множыць прасцей — даволі іх маю.

І што адказаць цяпер, калі б хто запытаўся:
Мужны быў чалавек — ці такім здаваўся?

ПРЫКЛАЛД

Прыяцельніца мая васьмідзесяцігадовая піша ў дзённіку:
„Не мела ні ахвоты, ні часу на гора”.
І мацуе мяне яе прыклад.

Блішчыць Вілія ў месячнай поўні, недалёка прыстані
Кахаемся. Не раз ва ўспамінах пацешыць мяне тая хвіліна,
Хоць у жыццёвым спіску маім зашмат горкага.

Спяваць і скакаць перад абліччам Пана!
З той простай прычыны, што скарга не дае нічога,
Як гаворыць мая мужная, непераможная Ірэна.

АБУДЖАНЫ

У глыбокай старасці, з усё горшым здароўем, прачнуўся
пасярод ночы і тут адчуў. Адчуў шчасце, такое аграмаднае
і дасканалае, што ў мінулым жыцці былі толькі яго пачаткі.
І шчасце тое не мела аніякіх прычынаў.
Не адбірала свядомасці і нідзе не знікала мінулае, якое ў сабе
насіў разам з маёй згрызотай. А цяпер яно раптам было
дакладзенае
як патрэбная частка цэлага. Як быццам нейкі голас гаварыў:
„Не бядуй, усё адбылося так, як мела быць, зрабіў, што было
прызначана і не мусіш думаць пра даўно мінулыя справы”.
Спакой я чуў, быў гэта спакой апошняга балансу ў рахунках,
злучаўся
з думай пра смерць. Шчасце на гэтым баку мяжы было як запавет
такога ж шчасця на другім баку. І я цалкам разумеў,
што атрымаў нечаканы падарунак, і не меў паняцця, за што
звалілася на мяне так вялікая ласка.

ЗАГЛЫБЛЕНЫЯ

Але не кожнаму здараецца сапраўдная старасць.
Бо яе рыса гэта выцягванне з памяці
Пыхі ўласнага цела, якая некалі нас распірала,
Нас, тых самых і зусім іншых.
Быў найвышэйшы камізм
У доўгай працы над валасамі перад люстэркам,
У клопатах, ці капелюш да твару,
У злізванні вуснаў кончыкам языка
І руханні па іх памады,
У завязцы гальштука перад люстэркам
З мордай цара звяроў.

А як жа гуляўся намі Дух Зямлі!
Бо калі індывідыюм гэта форма, а гатунак гэта матэрыя,
Як меркаваў Дунс Скотус,
То мы, індывідыюмы, спаўнялі, чаго жадаў гатунак,
Заглыбленыя ў матэрыі, так бы мовячы, вышэй вушэй.

А пазней рушыць у міражы сінтэтычнае места.
Палёт ластавак між гатыцкіх вежаў.
Глядзіць у вакно стары, які бачыў шмат местаў
І пасміхаецца, ужо амаль вызвалены ад усяго,
І не збіраецца нідзе вяртацца.

VIPERA BERUS

Хацеў сказаць праўду
і не выходзіла.
Спрабаваў спавядацца,
але не ўмеў прызнацца ні ў чым.
Бо не верыў у псіхааналіз —
бо каб верыў, о, тады б набрахаў усяго.
І дагэтуль цягаю ў сабе віны, скручаныя, як гадзюкі.
А мне самому гэта зусім не абстрактны вобраз.
Стаю на амшарыне ў Раўдонцы каля Яшуноў,

а хвост гадзюкі як раз знікае ў купіне моху
пад малой сасонкай,
толькі націснуў я на курок
і вываліў зарад шроту з берданкі.
Дагэтуль не ведаю, ці хоць зернетка волава
трапіла ў агідны белы трыбух
альбо ў зігзаг на хрыбце Vipera berus.
Так ці інакш, але гэта лепш паддаецца апісанням,
чым прыгоды душы.

ТЭХАС

Вярнуўся з Тэхаса,
Чытаў там вершы.
Нідзе за чытанне вершаў не плацяць так добра, як у Амерыцы.
Пад аўтографам ставіў дату 2000.

Старасць абляпіла ногі, як густая смала.
Розум бароніцца, гэта значыць, прытомнасць.
І што маю з ёй зрабіць, адкрыцца перад кім-небудзь?
Найлепшая стратэгія гэта не гаварыць нічога.

Бо спазнаў сорам прыгаданай ілюзіі
кахання, нянавісці,
чакання, імкнення.

І ледзь магу паверыць,
што ўдалося мне перажыць жыццё.

МАЙСТАР ЗАБАВАК

Майстар, раскладай свае інструменты.

З гор вяртаецца высокае рэха, чуваць гул вясенніх патокаў.

Дзіцячым вачам, як некалі тваім, адкрываецца першы раз
прыгажосць зямлі.

Майстар, будуеш зорку, якая павандруе
па толькі што народжаным небе.

У той час, калі ты адыходзіш без жалю, думаючы, як цяжка
было пражыць жыццё.

І навучыцца, што атрымаеш не тое, чаго хацелі,
а дзве найбольшыя цноты гэта ўпартасць і адмаўленне.

І што свядомасць не цешыць, бо гэта свядомасць клоўна,
які скача казлом на сцэне і прагне апладысментаў.

Здабыў непажаданыя веды пра сябе і іншых,
перапоўніўся да краёў шкадаваннем і захапленнем.

Абодва, хто маюць далей рабіць справу, пачыналі там,
дзе ты скончыў, майстар пакананай роспачы.

Хто хваліўся, аднаўляў, аздараўляў і дзякаваў,
бо і табе былі, і іншым будуць усходы сонца.

ВЫ, ПЕРАМОЖАНЫЯ

Вы, пераможаныя і прагнаныя,
Год за годам узіраецеся ў фатакартку белага двара
І кампаніі ў летніх строях перад ганкам,
Прабачце мне, панічы з добрага роду,
Што яшчэ ў школе вам здрадзіў,
Калі выбраўся скруціць шыю ў краінах інтэлекту,
Дзе на свята Божага Цела не пасоўваецца балдахім над
тлумам вернікаў
І гірлянды з зялёных галінаў не аздабляюць парафіяльны касцёл.

Аказваецца, аднак патрэбныя
Яліны ў святле месяца, самота і гнеў,
Каб мог падняць да іншай моцы

Мой павет і вас, мае цені,
Хто прыходзіць на маю позву і голас,
А ўсё таму, што быў скалечаным чалавекам,
Адлучаным ад звычаю бацькоў,
І дадзеная была мне іншая вернасць.

ПРАДСТАЎНІКІ

Прадстаўнікі не ведаюць, што яны прадстаўнікі.
Лятуць сабе высока над лугам,
дзе пан у коркавым шлеме
ідзе з сачком лапаць матылёў.

Як жа пераканаць матыля, што ён прадстаўнік?
О, магутны, драпежны ўладар! Махараджа!
Прарок Ілля! Хабакуку!
Складзі свае крылы на алтар ведаў!

О, Базылеўс! Лэдзі Макбэт! Тыран! Ленор!
Замест таго, каб быць толькі сабой, можаш быць
прадстаўніком гатунку.

І спакойна трываць у рэестры
побач з каралеўствамі, помнікамі і святынямі,

Разам з панам у коркавым шлеме, які крочыць лугам
у тысяча дзевяцісотым годзе нашай эры.

ГОД 1900

Трэба выбрацца з думкі пра сваю ўласную асобу,
гэта першая дапамога ад дэпрэсіі.
Пераношуся ў далёкі 1900 год.

Але як паразумецца з дзяржавай мёртвых?
Гляджу ў люстэркі,

у калідоры люстэрак, адбітых у люстэрках.
Там прамільгне капелюш з пяром чаплі, аборкі
альбо бель цела ў паўзмроку.
Марыёля, Стэфанія, Лілька
расчэсвае доўгія валасы.

Калі выпалі яны з прасторы і часу,
то маюць быць там, дзе імператар Тыберый,
дзе паляўнічыя на бізонаў з-пад дванаццаці тысяч гадоў.
Але яны ўсё яшчэ блізка, толькі адплываюць паволі,
паволі, год за годам,
як быццам балююць далей на нашым балі нячыстых.

Ніжэйшы верш, менавіта пад такім загалоўкам, быццам бы складзены Таркватам Тасам, быў падараваны мной старанна каліграфічна спісаным арыгіналам пані Ганне Івашкевіч на імяніны яе 26 ліпеня 1943 года. Не друкаваўся ні ў адным з маіх збораў вершаў.

Тарквата Таса

SICILIA SIVE INSULA MIRANDAE

На гранатавым моры белы востраў святлее.
Птушкі лятуць і бачаць зараснікі аліваў
І асла, на якім служанка, Артэміда,
Едзе дахаты дарогай між вінаграднікаў.
Гаспадыня яе Міранда. Дом на пагорку.
Калі седакі на мулах едуць пад браму,
То клічуць доўга, склаўшы далоні пры вуснах,
А рэха іх даганяе: Міранда, Міранда.
Троху вышэй кратэр вулкану над залёным лесам,
Сонца бліскуча сходзіць па сходах. Спавітыя спіралі яе валасоў
Цямнеюць на доўгай сукенцы колеру цела.
А на сходах ужо госці, вядзе іх у пакоі
І пляскае ў далоні: Артэміда, падай віна!
Тое вазьмі, што стаіць направа.

А потым сядаюць на аздобленых разьбою крэслах
На яе пільным позірку, падобным да несапраўднай ночы.

ПРА ПАЭЗІЮ, З ПРЫЧЫНЫ ТЭЛЕФОНАЎ ПА СМЕРЦІ ГЭРБЭРТА

Не павінна існаваць
з прычыны зачацця,
эмбрыёну І родаў,
хуткай дарасласці,
заняпаду і смерці,
бо што ёй да таго.

Жыць не можа
ў альковах сэрца,
у згрызлівых хваробах вантробы,
сентэнцыях нырак,
тым болей у мазгах,
залежных ад доступу кісларoду.

Не павінна яе быць, але ёсць.
Той, хто ёй служыў,
ляжыць, у прадмет ператвораны,
цяпер яму толькі раскладацца на солі і фасфаты,
завальвацца
ў свойскі дом хаосу.

Ранкам разрываюцца тэлефоны.
Капелюшы з саломы, штучных валокнаў, тканінаў
прыкладаюцца, як у люстэрку,
як перад выйсцем на пляж з гатэлю.
Далей занятыя сабой пустка і прага.

Вызваленыя з прывідаў псіхозаў,
з крыку гінучых тканак цела,
з пакуты пасаджанага на кол

Цягаецца па свеце
Ясная вечнасць.

UNDE MALUM

Адкуль бярэцца зло?
як гэта адкуль

з чалавека
заўжды з чалавека
і толькі з чалавека
Тадэвуш Ружэвіч

На жаль пане Тадэвуш
прырода добрая а чалавек кепскі
гэта вынаходніцтва рамантыкаў
калі б так было
то можна было б вытрымаць
а пан такім спосабам паказвае глыбіню свайго аптымізму

дастаткова дазволіць чалавеку
спляжыць свой уласны гатунак
і надыдуць нявінныя ўсходы сонца
над вызваленай флорай і фаўнай

на пустках па былых фабрыках
вырастуць дубровы
кроў разадранага ваўкамі аленя
ніхто не ўбачыць
і ястраб будзе падаць на зайца
без сведкаў
знікне на свеце ўсё зло
калі знікне розум і ўсведамленне

так пане Тадэвуш
зло (і дабро) толькі для чалавека

РУЖЭВІЧ

ён гэта ўзяў паважна
паважны смяротны
які не танцуе

запальвае дзве тоўстыя свечкі
сядае перад люстэркам
задаволены як сам выглядае

няма ільготаў
фрывольным формам
а камізм людскіх вераванняў
хоча спазнаць да канца

рыецца ў чорнай зямлі
бо ён і лапата і паранены той лапатай крот

САДОЎНІК

Усе мы целам сваім і справамі нашымі падлягаем д'яблу, бо мы толькі госці на свеце, дзе ён ёсць панам і богам. Таму ў яго ўладзе хлеб, які з'ядаем, пітво, якое п'ем, вопратка, якую носім, а нават паветра, карацей, усё, чым жывем.

Марцін Лютар, "Каментар да Галатаў", раздзел 3

Адам і Ева не для таго былі створаныя,
Каб кланяцца князю і ўладару той зямлі.

Другая, сонечная зямля трывала ў часе.
Яму і ёй дадзена на вечнае шчасце.

Сівабароды садоўнік даглядаў на ёй дрэвы,
Хоць свет так і не блішчаў, як садоўніку трэба.

Глядзеў ён скрозь дні і вякі, як праз аптычную трубу,
На сваю справу, так добра пачатую.

Але справа тая праз віну спазнання замяніцца мела
У ненасытнасць душы і падатнае ранам цела.

Папярэджваў іх, але ведаў, што гэта не дапаможа,
Бо гатовыя ўжо яны да свайго падарожжа.

Нябачны ў лістоце, думаў ён, поўны смутку,
Бачыў агні і масты, караблі, дамы і чыгунку.

Самалёт у небе начным мільгацеў іскрою,
Ложы ў спальнях бачыў і трупы на полі бою.

О, бедныя мае дзеці, куды вы спяшыце, да жвіру,
дзе чэрап жоўтыя зубы вышчэрвае шчыра?

Дзе хаваюць лыткі ў трусы, крыналіны,
Дзе далей адкрываюць наступствы, прычыны?

Вось надыходзіць мой вораг, і зараз вам скажа:
Паспрабуйце, і божаму будзе роўнае жыццё ваша.

Добра ў злачынстве з любоўю самім сабе слугам,
Ну, сапраўдныя богі, толькі з жабрацкім духам.

Няшчасныя мае дзеці, доўгі шлях вам наканаваны,
Пакуль ізноў заквітнее сад зруйнаваны.

І вернецеся да ганку ліпавай алеяй,
Дзе кветнік пахне чаборам і шалфеем.

Ці так было трэба правальвацца ў бяздонне,
Шукаць сістэмы, парадку, замест у казцы жыць, як у доме.

Над якім домам заўсёды мая апека?
Бо праўду кажа Пісанне, што ў мяне твар чалавека.

АДЗІН І МНОГА

Лічбу адну Князь Таго Свету множыць,
А кожны асобна ёсць пад апекай Божай.
Майстар выключэнняў і Пан выратаванняў
Жыў ад пачатку ў маіх блуканнях.

Адзін; табліцы множання супраць.
Дакладны, свабодны ад абагульвання.
Без рук, без вачэй, аднак існуе сапраўды.
Нябачны, схаваны, але заўжды там, дзе ты.

Няхай нас не страшыць ні шлях змарнаваны,
Ні пячоры цмокаў, турмы, кайданы,
Ні пад слаямі гною мурашнік штодзённы,
Ані адлеглых галактыкаў выгляд цёмны.

Бо голас чалавечы нястомна трывае
І песні хвалы і гневу спявае.
І нам неабходныя ўсе без вынятку рэчы,
І чужыя, і прыгожыя, няхай мы сабе і пярэчым.

АЛКАГОЛІК УВАХОДЗІЦЬ У НЯБЕСНУЮ БРАМУ

Якім я буду, я ведаў ад пачатку.
І ад пачатку кожнай жывой істоты.

Гэта жахліва, мець такую свядомасць,
дзе існуюць у адным часе
ёсць, будзе і было.

Жыць пачынаў я даверлівы і шчаслівы,
упэўнены, што гэта для мяне штодзень усходзіць сонца
і ранкам распускаюцца кветкі.
Ад раніцы да вечара бегаў па садзе зачараваным.

Нічога не ведаючы, што Ты з Кнігі Генаў
выбіраеш мяне для новага эксперыменту,
як быццам мала было доказаў,
што гэтак званая вольная воля
не здольная ісці насуперак прызначэнню.

Цярпеў я пад тваімі распешчанымі вачыма,
як чарвяк, жыўцом насаджаны на церневы шып.
Адкрываўся мне страх і жах таго свету.

Ці мог я не ўцякаць ад яго да сваіх мрояў?
Да атруты, праглынуўшы якую стамляешся скрыгатаць зубамі,
расцякаецца куля, што цяжарам душыць грудзі,
і можаш сабе думаць, што і ты яшчэ пажывеш, як усе?

Неяк я зразумеў, што толькі блукаю ад надзеі да надзеі
і запытаў Цябе, Усёведаючы, чаму
ты мяне мучыш. Ці гэта выпрабаванне, як у Гіоба,
пакуль не ўзнаю я веру маю за міраж
і скажу: няма ні Цябе, ні тваіх прысудаў,
бо адзін толькі выпадак светам кіруе?

Як можаш глядзець
на адначасовы, на міліярды памножаны боль?
Уважаю, што тыя, хто з гэтай прычыны не могуць паверыць,
што Ты ёсць, аднае пахвалы ў Тваіх вачах заслужылі.

Можа, яшчэ і таму, што літасцівы Ты быў без меры, ступіў
на зямлю,
каб самому спазнаць, што адчуваюць смяротныя істоты.

Ты цярпеў пакуты ўкрыжавання за грэх — але чый грэх?

Дык вось, малюся да Цябе, бо не маліцца не ўмею.

Бо сэрца маё Цябе прагне, хоць і ведаю, што Ты мяне не вылечыш.

І так мае быць, каб тыя, хто церпяць, далей цярпелі,
Імя Тваё праслаўляючы.

АБРАД

Так, Вераніка, усё так. Не ў спакоі тут справа.
Хутчэй у паблажлівасці да сябе і іншых.

Не трэба вымагаць ад людзей
Добрацей, для якіх не яны створаны:
Гармоніі разумення, асноваў веры,
Дзе адна не супярэчыць другой, згоды
Паміж учынкамі і верай, пэўнасці сябе.

Здавалася б, людзі ажно празрыстыя, відаць іх наскрозь,
А там цёмныя сілы, што клубяцца як дым.
Цяпер думаю пра Юрку, Афанасія, Кацю,
Бо ніхто не ўзгадае пра іх да Суднага Дня.

Што тут складанага! Лінія лёсу
Расшчапляецца, падскоквае, кідаецца ў бок,
Але ў чалавечай памяці застаецца як адна.
Аднойчы сказаныя словы ўжо ім прыпісаныя,
Хоць самі яны не прызналіся б да тых словаў.
І калі нават хацелі прадставіць доказы,
То нічога з таго не выйшла, бо дзе ім да праўды.

Вось такія стаялі тады на каленях у нашым касцёле,
Паміж калонаў з залатой акантоўкай наверсе,
Зграбных анёлаў, чые тонкія трубы
Абвяшчаюць так вялікую вестку, што не ўлазіць у наш розум.

Кароткая наша ўвага, кажа тут Вераніка.

А думка мая вяртаецца, нягледзячы на літургію,
Да люстэрка, ложа, тэлефона, кухні,
Няздольная ўзняць места Ерусалім
З-пад дзвюх тысячаў гадоў і крыві на крыжу.

Але плаўна ляцім, хоць абцяжараныя
Пахам соуса, крыкам у вузкіх вулічках,
Кавалкам мяса ў вітрыне мясной крамы.
Так ляцім, уздымаемся над алтаром, касцёлам, местам,
Аблятаем усю віруючую Зямлю.

І яны, Вераніка, нашы блізкія,
Побач, на той самай лаўцы, бо іх свядомасць
Гэта мая свядомасць. Вось і ўся таямніца.
Міласэрнай перамены маяго "я" на "мы".

"Бо вы соль зямлі, вы святло зямлі" —
Так сказаў і паклікаў нас да свае хвалы,
Пераможца непадуладнага нікому закона гэтага свету.

Ведаю, што паклікаў — кажа Вераніка.
Але што з тымі, хто не выйшаў з сумневу?
Ці ж яны даюць доказ,
Калі маўчаць — з любові да Яго імя?

А можа, пачнем абагаўляць камень,
Звычайны камень ля палявой дарогі, сам яго Побыт,
І памолімся, не адкрываючы вуснаў?

АСОБЫ

Быў ён адзіным паэтам свайго малога народу.
Бо да яго ніхто не ўмеў закаручку на паперы паставіць.

Запісваў ён закляцці шаманаў і аповесці пра пачатак:
Пра нейкіх людзей, што нараджаліся з кветак

І мелі крылы, і тыя крылы былі крыніцай святла.
А на небе не было аніякага святла ўвогуле.

Потым з'елі яны знойдзены корань, спазналі грэх
і страцілі свае крылы, і зрабілася цемра.
Але прасілі яны, і на просьбу тую зрабілі ім сонца і месяц.

Думаў ён: што ж перакласці на сваю мову?
Гамера? Біблію? Маркіза дэ Сад? Рыльке?

Альбо толькі скласці гімн свайго народа
Ды выдумаць штандар з выявай мядзведзя.

***

Аднак я разважаю пра слабасць мовы.
Я надта стары, і разам са мной знікнуць словы невымаўленыя,
У якіх маглі б жыць, як у доме, тыя асобы, хто даўно памёр.
А я не ўмеў справіцца з тым, каб са словаў
Выглядалі яны авалам твару, формай брывоў, колерам вачэй,
Так і вандруюць яны, размінаюцца са мной недзе ў даліне.
Ледзь-ледзь адасобленыя ад неабсяжнага тлуму
Сагоддзяў, моваў і пакаленняў.

І ты З імі, Клаўдына, што так да мяне пісала:
„Ты для мяне па-ранейшаму як нейкае дзіця
(можа, паэты такія ажно
да канца), як нехта такі, каму выбачаеш усе выбрыкі і кахаеш яго
пры ўсіх браках і недахопах".

Той, кім я быў, бачыць бярозавы лес і нас абоіх у тым лесе,
І лавы ля стала на вячэры ў суседзяў.
Амаль як з прычыны нашага вяселля, але што толку так позна
складаць
гісторыю жыцця.

Цябе таксама клічу, Раксана, хоць таксама ж не хацеў бы
нацкоўваць біёграфаў на твой след.

Спачатку б'ецца сэрца, калі імя прагучыць, а потым толькі тое,
што былі сабе неяк мужчына і кабета, як усе, у вяках
ператвораныя.

Праз гады маглі б ты і я ў нейкім партовым месце
сядзець у бары І ўзгадваць той чароўны час.

І я б расказаў табе ўсё, што зразумеў,
хоць зразумеў мала.

Зразумеў, што сапраўдная мілавіца чамусьці хаваецца
ў масках каханкаў.

Зразумеў, што насуперак сваёй волі мы пакідаем тых, каго
сапраўды
любім, і асуджваем іх на смерць ад холаду.

Або заўсёды ты, Вераніка. Ажно дрыжу, калі тваё сапраўднае
імя вымаўляю.
Былі мы два караблі ў імгле, не бачыла мяне і цябе я не бачыў.

Трагедыя спазнання, чым віна адрозніваецца ад памылкі,
ужо завальваецца дзесьці паміж безназоўных здарэнняў.

Праўда, былі мы маладыя, не верылі, што гэтак проста
ўсе няшчасці здарацца з намі, з людзьмі высокага розуму.

Зараз буду там, у вас і з вамі разам, на раўнінах падземнага Краю,
і ты моўчкі сустрэць мяне выйдзеш.

Што можа быць за размова тых двух, што размінуліся, калі не маю
нічога ў сваю абарону па-за спісаныі старонкамі маіх твораў.

Але чую хор, магутны, грыміць, далучаюся і спяваю
з іншымі разам.

Наш хор грэшнікаў, мужчынаў і кабетаў, што перагортваюць
старонкі партытуры ў сонцы — як там, на зямлі.

З палёгкай думаю, што не быў я лепшы ці горшы многіх
і што разам з імі даравання грахоў чакаю.

А з усіх бакоў напіраюць плямёны, без ані голасу, і нявінная
трава заплятае намагільныя пліты.

У ПАРАФІІ

Каб не быў я крохкі, пасярэдзіне пераламаны,
Не думаў бы пра іншых — гэтак, як я, пераламаных пасярэдзіне.
Не выбраўся б на шпацыр на пагорак, на цвінтар ля касцёла,
Каб пастарацца пазбыцца спачування самому сабе.
Шалёныя Зоські, прайграўшыя ўсе бітвы Казюкі,
Замучыўшыя самі сябе Агаты
Ляжаць пад крыжамі з годам нараджэння і смерці. І хто ж
Цяпер за іх скажа? Хто ведае іх нараканні, плачы, надзеі, слёзы
Пакоры? Тыя самыя ў слізні, у смярдзючай мачы,
У шпітальным сораме перакручанага цела.
І адразу вечнасць. Не да ўжытку. Непрыстойная нават.
Як батлейка, пераеханая коламі воза; як слон,
Які топча хрушча; як акіян, які праглынае астравок.
То праўда, што дзіцячая дурната нас усіх
Ёсць адной непавагай да рэчаў апошніх ці скрайніх.
Не мелі мы часу, каб хоць што зразумець
У побыце хоць адной асобы.
У яе principium individuationis,
І я таксама не разумеў, але што з тым зробіш.
Усё жыццё адбыў, як у лушпінах арэха,
І дарэмна хацеў быць кімсьці іншым.

А цяпер у зямлю, парафіяне.
З надзеяй, што трубы на Суд паклічуць нас па імёнах.
Замест вечнасці зелень і рух аблокаў,

Паўстаюць тысяча за тысячай Зосі, Кацярыны, Варфаламеі,
Марысі, Агаты, Браніславы,
Каб нарэшце ведалі,
Навошта тое было і для чаго.

МАЛІТВА

Пад дзевяноста маю, і яшчэ з надзеяй,
Што скажу, выкажуся, што набалела.

Як не перад людзьмі, то перад Табой,
Хто карміў мяне палыном і мёдам.

Саромлюся, бо мушу верыць, хто вёў і бараніў мяне,
Усё роўна як меў я перад Табой асаблівыя заслугі.

Быў я падобны да лагернікаў, якія дзве галінкі сасновыя
Вязалі крыжам, і шэптам маліліся ноччу ў бараку на нарах.

Прыносіў я да Цябе просьбы эгаіста, а Ты рачыў іх спаўняць,
А для таго, каб сам я ўбачыў, да чаго дурныя яны былі.

Але калі са шкадавання для іншых маліў пра цуд,
Маўчалі, як заўжды, што зямля, што Неба.

Маральна падозраны з прычыны веры ў Цябе,
Здзіўляўся я простадушнай упартасці няверуючых.

І што за танцор з мяне перад Вяліччам,
Калі маю рэлігію за добрую для слабых, як сам?

Найменш нармальны з усяго класа ксяндза Хомскага,
Ужо тады ўглядаўся ў шалеючы вір прызначэння.

Цяпер пяць маіх пачуццяў паволі замком замыкаеш,
І я толькі стары чалавек на канапе ў цемры.

Выданы таму, што мяне і так мучыла,
Бег я спераду самога сябе, вершыкі ўсё складаў.

Звольні мяне ад правінаў, выдуманых і сапраўдных,
Запэўні мяне, што рабіў я дзеля Твае хвалы.

А ў хвіліну мае агоніі будзь са мною Тваім цярпеннем,
Бо не можа яно ратаваць ад болю той свет.

DAEMONES

Споведзі час надыходзіць.
І адкрываецца праўда.
Жыцця тваяго стагоддзе
На свет ідзе, як з-за кратаў.
Горкае тое імгненне,
Голаву кожны апусціць,
Сорам баліць, сумленне,
Калі, як на сцэну, пусцяць
Да публікі абыякавай,
Што спіць на старой трагедыі.
Цаню я тваю адвагу,
І кладу на твой зыск, каб ведалі,
Што ты церпіш з вачыма адкрытымі,
Не хаваешся ў той іроніі.
А дарэчы, старому і збітаму,
Час глядзець на сябе, як старонняму,
Прайшлі гулянкі, раскошы,
Пакута, можа, паможа,
Ногі баляць, не спіцца,
І мяса труны баіцца.

Да канца дабягае дамова.
Не стрымаеш заходу сонца.
Адрабіў прамовы, замовы,
Недарэмна пражыў, час скончыць.
А твае выбраныя творы

Ліжа слава, як хваляй мора,
Тыя прэміі, гонар, авацыі
Ты прыймаеш у добрых манерах,
Залаты ланцуг маеш важны,
Што мацуе ў надзеі і веры.

— Шкада мне, паночкі д'яблы!
Каб вы хоць далі мне складна,
Але вам з мяне зыску мала,
Каб у душах у вас заспявала,
Бо заўжды мяне форма вязала,
А гульня ўжо йшла — і замала
Сам глядзеў я, ці лепшы, ці горшы,
Ці іначай як выглядаю,
Бо калі ў гульні пераможаш,
То жыццё далей выбягае.
Рытмы з рыфмамі проста здзьмухнуць
І адну квінтэсэнцыю чуць.

Абабег я кафедры змрочныя,
Абаронцы нябачныя крочылі
За мной следам — у попеле, дыме.
Але ўсе мы прыйшлі жывымі.
Быў караны, бо выжыў у замеці
Долі той, меў правалы ў памяці,
Надта ж чорныя вершы складаў.
Але кім я быў так папраўдзе,
Пісаніна ніколі не здрадзіць.
А, каб я ў аблоках лятаў,
Што, прапораце Неба віламі,
Каб да смерці шпыняць мяне вінамі,
Дзе ж я гэта калекаю стаў?

— Кепска быць, прызнаеш з пакорай,
Быць здаровым, бо маюць за хворага.
І штодзённую роспач хаваць,
Страшнай маскі з вачэй не змываць,
І з надзеяй па бруку цягнуцца,

Што больш людзі не засмяюцца.
А трывога мая найбольшая,
Што залезуць у душу, да болю
І замест Справядлівага
Прыдурка ўбачу вечна шчаслівага,
Каторы ў адным нязменны:
У сваім вялікім значэнні.
— Падсвядомасці ніякай не меў я.
Грахоў меў шмат, і душой, і целам.
З псіхааналізам да мяне не лезьце.
Калі нават прагрэс, то нічога па тым прагрэсе.
Проста д'яблы мучаюць, проста горка і крыўдна.
Баранюся замовай, як быццам малітвай.
А замест споведзі ноччу складаю строфы.
Толькі таму разумны, бо з засценка родам.

ПА ЎСІМ

Зляцелі з мяне погляды, перакананні, вераванні,
характарыстыкі, аксіёмы, прынцыпы,
звычкі і правілы.

Ачухаўся голы на ўскрайку цывілізацыі,
якая здалася мне камічнай і незразумелай.

Скляпенні залаў паезуіцкай акадэміі,
дзе калісь набіраўся навукі,
не былі б мною задаволеныя.

Хоць дагэтуль памятаю
колькі лацінскіх сентэнцый.
Далей цякла рака праз дубровы і сасновыя бары.
Стаяў у траве па пояс, дыхаў дзікім водарам
жоўтых кветак.

І аблокі. Як заўжды ў гэтым Краю,
поўнае Неба аблокаў.

ПРАМЕННІ ЯСНАСЦІ

Тут ясныя праменні,
Тут росаў зіхаценне.
Дапамагайце кожнаму,
Хто спазнае прыгожае.

Заслона недасяжная.
Сэнс спраў зямных нябачны.
Пакуль жывем, імчым у сне,
Шчаслівыя і не.

Мы ведаем, бег скончыцца.
Пагубленае знойдзецца.
І будзем мець, што мелі,
З душой у бедным целе.

MITTELBERGHEIM

Станіславу Вінцэнцу

Спіць віно ў бочках з дубоў над Рэйнам.
Будзіць мяне звон касцёла між вінаградаў.
Міттэльбергхайм. Чуў малую крыніцу,
што цурчыць на падворку ў цэбар,
стук драўляных ступакоў на вуліцы,
плугі, драўляныя колы, подых тытуню пад паветкай,
схілы гор — і восень побач са мною.

Мае вочы яшчэ спяць. Не падганяй Ты мяне,
Агонь, Моц, Сіла — зарана яшчэ.
Я пражыў шмат гадоў і, як у тым сне,
чуў, што дасягаю рухомай граніцы,
за якой праяўляюцца колер і гук,
за якой паяднанае ўсё на зямлі.
Не адчыняй маіх вуснаў гвалтам.
Дай мне верыць, што сам дасягну

і што сам даплыву ў Міттэльбергхайме.
Я ведаю — бо абавязаны. Са мною восень,
драўляныя колы, лісце тытуню пад паветкай,
тут навокал...

Тут мая зямля,
дзе б не глянуў і на якой не пачуў бы мове,
і я шчаслівей другіх, бо магу браць усё —
погляд, усмешку, зорку, складку шоўка на каленях.
Спакойна азіраючыся, маю ісці скрозь горы
на світанку дня — над вадой, над местам,
над дарогамі, над звычаямі людзей...
Агонь, Моц, Сіла, які мяне так трымаеш
у сваёй далоні, чые барозны глыбокія, што яры,
вычасаныя паўднёвым ветрам.
Агонь, Ты пэўнасць даеш у хвілінах жаху,
у тыднях сумневу —
зарана яшчэ, хай віно даспее.
Хай спадарожныя спачываюць у Міттэльбергхайме.

МАЛЫ ПЕРАПЫНАК

Жыццё не дзеля цярпення, але неяк цярпелі.
Чыё? Маё?! А што гэта значыць?

У малым перапынку, заядаючы шніцалем на паперцы,
стаю пад сцяной,
поўны задумы на тоўстых шчоках.

І быў бы сабе, кім не быў ніколі.
І дабіўся бы сабе, чаго не дабіўся.
Галак за вакном на снезе я ўспамінаў бы іншых,
не ў такіх маіх словах думаючы.
А калі скажуць, што чуў я адзін шум ракі
між Геркулесавых Слупоў,
то і даволі — бо замучыла мяне тая слуханіна.

У цёмных пакоях пісарчукі нешта лічаць,
бразгаюць на касцяшках.
Альбо — гоняць статкі з дымам пажараў.
Кінутае адзенне яшчэ хвіліну
трымае форму плячэй і рук.
На ружовае мядзведзяня насыпалася кастрыца.
А тут — новыя народы,
з мноствам сваіх вазоў і гарматаў.
Ну і што б рабіў у тым калючым канцлагеры?!

Калі б споўнілася ранняе каханне!
Калі б шчаслівы ішоў Партовай вуліцай
(не было там ніякага порта, адно мокрае бярвенне
ля тартака на беразе),
калі б сабе ехаў у дэлегацыі, залічаны да айцоў места,
а каб мы яшчэ падпісалі дамову з “Ферары”...

Хто хоць раз нараджаецца на Зямлі,
быць мог бы тым, каго ў сне
наведала б Ізіда,
мог бы спазнаць абрад таямнічы
і пазней казаць: бачыў.
Бачыў апоўначы сполахі ў праменнях.
Ступіў за парог Празерпіны.
Усё да дробязяў абабег і вярнуўся.
І багоў з-пад зямлі. І багоў з-над нябёсаў.
Абагаставіў іх — вачыма ў вочы.

Альбо — гладыятар, нявольнік.
Пад надпісам на камяні гладкім:
не было мяне.
быў.
няма мяне.
не стараюся ні пра што.

*Пераклаў з польскай — **Алесь Чобат***

КАРЭЛ ЧАПЭК
Karel Čapek

ЧАСЫ ЗАНЯПАДУ

Перад пячорай было ціха. Толькі развіднелася, як мужчыны пайшлі, махаючы дзідамі, у бок Бланска альбо да Райцаў, дзе быў заўважаны статак аленяў. Тым часам жанчыны збіралі ў лесе журавіны, часам было чуваць іхні віск і балбатню. Дзеці з большага плюхаліся ўнізе ў ручаі – ды і хто даглядаў бы гэтых гарэзаў, гэтую распярэзаную і здзічэлую галоту. А стары дагістарычны чалавек Яначак драмаў сярод гэтай прыемнай цішы на лагодным кастрычніцкім сонцы. Праўду сказаць, ён храпеў і ў носе ў яго свісцела. Але ён рабіў выгляд, што не спіць, бо як ніяк быў ахоўнікам пячоры племені і яе гаспадаром, як належыць старому правадыру.

Яначкава старая расклала свежаздзёртую скуру мядзведзя і пачала скрэбці яе вострым лёзам. Гэта трэба рабіць старанна, пядзю за пядзяй – А не так, як робіць маладуха, -- прыйшло ў галаву старой Яначкавай. Тая недарэка абы як пачухае, ды ўжо ляціць нянькацца ды кешкацца з дзецьмі. Такая скура, думае старая Яначкава, не вытрымае нічога, ссохнецца або сапрэе; але я не буду звязвацца з ёю, думае пра сябе пані Яначкава, пакуль ёй не скажа сын. – І што праўда, дык тое, што маладуха не ўмее эканоміць. Эх, гэты кажух прабіты якраз пасярод хрыбта! Людцы даражэнькія, наракае старая, што за небарака пхнуў таго мядзведзя

ў спіну? Папсаваў усю скуру! Мой так ні за што не зрабіў бы, ён заўсёды біў прама ў карак.

„Э-хэ-хэ", раптам завохкаў стары Яначак, праціраючы вочы. „Яшчэ не вярнуліся?"

„Дзе там", прабурчэла старая. „Не дачакаешся".

„М-да", уздыхнуў стары, сонна жмурачыся. „І дзе гэта яны? Ага. А дзе жанчыны?"

„А што мне, глядзець за імі?" забурчэла старая. „Ведаеш жа, недзе бадзяюцца".

„А-ха-ха", пазяхнуў дзед Яначак. „Недзе бадзяюцца. Замест... замест таго, каб, скажам, тое альбо тое... А так вось. Вось так!"

Было ціха. Толькі старая Яначкава хутка і са зласлівай стараннасцю скрэбла сырую скуру.

„Я і кажу", гукнуў стары Яначак, задуменна чухаючы спіну. „Убачыш, яны зусім нічога не прынясуць. І трэба ж дадумацца: я пра гэтыя іхнія нікчэмныя касцяныя дзіды. Я ўсё кажу сыну: Глядзі, любая костка недастаткова цвёрдая і надзейная, каб з яе рабіць дзіды! Нат ты, як жанчына, павінна прызнаць, што ані косць, ані алені рог не маюць гэта – гэткай прабіўной сілы, ведаеш? Трапіш гэтым вось у костку, а костка костку не праб'е, ці ж не так? Думаць жа трэба. А вось каменная дзіда, даражэнькая... Ведама, з ёю больш працы, але затое, даражэнькая, гэта ж прылада. Дык хіба сыну што скажаш?"

„Сам ведаеш", падхапіла з горыччу пані Яначкава. „Сёння ўжо нікім не пакамандуеш".

„Ды я нікім і не камандую", расхваляваўся дзядок. „Але ж не даюць сабе рады! Учора я знайшоў там пад скалой такі прыгожы плоскі абломак крэмня. Дастаткова было б крыху абчасаць яго, і быў бы то наканечнік дзіды ўсім на радасць. Нясу яго дахаты і паказваю сыну: Глядзі, вось гэта камень, га? а ён на гэта – і навошта ён, тата? – Дык яго ж, кажу, можна абсячы на дзіду. – Ды кіньце вы, татка, кажа ён, хто гэта будзе часаць ды поркацца? Без таго ўсякага ламачча ў пячоры цэлыя кучы, няма куды падзець; на дручку яно не трымаецца, як ты не прывязвай, дык што з ім рабіць? – Лентухі!" раптам пачаў крычаць дзед. „Сёння нікому ўжо не хочацца апрацаваць як след кавалак крэменя, вось як! Распярэзаліся! Вядома, такі касцяны наканечнік робіцца раз-два, але ж і зламаецца ў любы момант. І няхай сабе, кажа сын, зробім новы і ўсё тут. Ага, і да чаго яно дойдзе? Штохвіля новая дзіда! Сама скажы, дзе такое бачана? Мая ж ты жоначка, ды такі прыстойны крамянёвы наканечнік мог бы вытрымаць цэлыя гады! І я кажу, і будзе так, як я сказаў: яны яшчэ вернуцца з радасцю да нашай сапраўднай ка-

меннай зброі! Таму я і хаваю, дзе што знайду: старыя дзіды, сякеры і крамянёвыя нажы. А гэта ўсё ламачча!"

Старога правадыра душылі сум і раздражненне. „Ну, бачыш", азвалася пані Яначкава, каб навесці яго на іншыя думкі. „Тое самае са скурамі. Матуля, кажа мне маладуха, навошта столькі скрэбсці, шкада працы? Паспрабуйце хоць раз вырабіць скуру попелам, тады прынамсі не смярдзіць". – „Ты мяне яшчэ будзеш вучыць", абарвала старая адсутную нявестку, „я ведаю, як трэба! Спрадвеку людзі скуры скрэблі, і якія то былі скуры! Вядома, калі табе шкада працы... Ім абы адчапіцца ад працы! Таму яны ўвесь час нешта прыдумваюць і перайначваюць. Вырабляць скуру попелам! Дзе вы такое чулі!"

„Так вось цяпер," пазяхнуў Яначак. „Дзе ўжо там, так, як мы рабілі, ім ужо не пасуе. Маўляў, каменную зброю няёмка трымаць у руцэ. Гэта праўда, мы не надта зважалі на камфорт; але сёння – ані-ні, абы ручкі не назаляць! Сама скажы, да чаго гэта ўсё дойдзе? Вазьмі цяперашніх дзяцей. Толькі іх, дзядуля, не чапайце, кажа нявестка, няхай сабе гуляюць. Ага, і што з іх будзе?"

„Ну хаця б яны не рабілі такі гармідар," наракала старая. „Ім абы гарэзіць, праўду кажу!"

„Вось такое цяперака выхаванне," казаў стары Яначак. „А калі час ад часу скажу нешта сыну, дык ён кажа: Татуля, вы ўжо гэтага не разумееце, цяпер іншыя часы, іншая эпоха. Дык жа, кажа, і гэтая касцяная зброя не ёсць апошнім словам; некалі, кажа, людзі вынайдуць яшчэ іншы матэрыял. Ну, ведаеш, гэта ўжо занадта: нібыта нехта калі бачыў іншы трывалы матэрыял, акрамя каменя, дрэва або косці! Ты павінна прызнаць гэта, як дурная баба, што... што... што гэта перакрочвае ўсе межы!"

У пані Яначкавай апусціліся рукі. „Ты", сказала яна,"і скуль толькі бярэцца ў іх гэтая дурасць?"

„Ну, гэта ж цяпер такая мода," шамкаў бяззубым ротам старэча. „Вось, калі ласка, тамака ў той бок, чатыры дні хады адсюль, прыйшло нейкае новае племя, нейкая чужынская галота, гэта яны ўсё так робяць. Каб ты ведала, усёй гэтай дурасці нашы набраліся ад іх. Гэтай касцяной зброі і ўсяго. Нават... нават купляюць у іх гэта," крыкнуў ён засмучана. „За нашыя добрыя скуры! Нібыта ад чужынцаў некалі было якое дабро! Галоўнае абы не звязвацца з чужынскім збродам! Наогул, гэта стары досвед продкаў: на кожнага чужаніцу трэба без лішніх размоваў напасці ды цюкнуць. Так было спрадвек: нюні не распускаць, а даць яму дыхту. Ды што вы, тата, кажа сын, цяпер іншыя справы, цяпер у нас абмен таварамі... Абмен таварамі! Калі некага пабіць і адабраць у яго ўсё, што меў, то тавары нашы, а таму не трэба нічога за гэта даваць... навошта нейкі абмен? Ды

што вы, тата, кажа сын, пры гэтым вы расплочваецеся чалавечымі жыццямі, а іх шкада!.. Вось як: шкада, маўляў, чалавечых жыццяў! Такія вось цяперашнія погляды," балматаў з агідай стары. „Яны баязліўцы, справа ў гэтым. Шкада, маўляў, жыццяў! А як, скажы, пракарміць столькі людзей, калі яны не будуць забіваць адзін аднаго? Ужо і цяпер у гушчы засталося зусім мала аленяў! Глянь ты, чалавечых жыццяў ім шкада; але да традыцыі павагі не маюць, сваіх продкаў і бацькоў не шануюць... Гэта ж нейкі заняпад," гукнуў дзед Яначак. „Днямі гляджу, а нейкі смаркач мазюкае глінай па сцяне пячоры фігуру бізона. Я яму даў у карак, а сын кажа: Не чапайце яго, бізон жа атрымаўся, як жывы!.. Ну такога яшчэ не было! Хіба раней займаліся такімі празмернасцямі? Як не маеш што рабіць, хлопча, дык чашы нейкае лязо, толькі не малюй бізонаў на сцяне! Навошта нам уся гэта лухта?"

Пані Яначкава сціснула вусны: „Калі б толькі бізоны," вымавіла яна праз хвіліну.

„Што там яшчэ?" спытаўся дзед.

„Так, нічога," замялася пані Яначкава, „мяне сорамна пра гэта казаць... Так, каб ты ведаў," раптам яна набралася смеласці, „сёння раніцай я знайшла... У пячоры... кавалак мамантавага біўня. З яго была выразана... нібыта голая жанчына. Грудзі і ўсё такое, ведаеш?"

„Ды ты што," жахнуўся старэча. „І хто ж гэта выразаў".

Пані Яначкава расчулена пацінула плячыма: „Хто ж яго ведае? Мабыць нехта з маладых. Я гэта кінула ў агонь, але... У той былі такія грудзі! Ого!"

„... Ну, далей няма куды," вырвалася ў дзеда Яначка. „Дык гэта ж распуста! Бачыш, а ўсё ад таго, што яны рэжуць усё магчымае з косці! Нам такая бессаромнасць за ўсё жыццё ў галаву не прыйшла, таму што з крэменя такое не зробіш... Вось да чаго гэта давяло! Вось яны, іхнія вынаходніцтвы! Яны ўвесь час будуць нешта выдумляць, будуць нешта новае ўводзіць, аж покуль усё не раструшчаць ды не панішчаць... І я кажу," гукнуў дагістарычны чалавек Яначак у прароцкім прасвятленні, „што гэта не на доўга!"

/1931/

СВЯТАЯ НОЧ

„Ты мяне здзіўляеш," крычала пані Дзіна. „Калі б то былі прыстойныя людзі, то пайшлі б да старасты, а не сталі б жабраваць! Чаму іх не пусцілі ў дом Шымановічы? Чаму гэта менавіта мы павінны даваць ім прытулак? Што мы, нечым

горшыя ад Шымановічаў? Я ведаю, Шымонава жонка такую галоту не пусціла б у хату! Здзіўляеш ты мяне, чалавеча, што так апускаешся перад невядома кім!"

„Не крычы," бурчэў стары Ісахар, „а то яны пачуюць!"

„Няхай чуюць," не ўгаманялася пані Дзіна, яшчэ больш падвышаючы голас. „Небачаныя рэчы! Дык што гэта за гульні такія, што я не смею пікнуць ва ўласнай хаце з-за нейкіх бадзяг! Ты ведаеш іх? А можа хто іншы іх ведае? Ён кажа, гэта мая жонка. Кажуць, ягоная жонка! Ведаю я, якая завядзёнка ў такіх туляг! А табе і не сорамна пускаць нейкіх такіх у хату!"

Ісахар хацеў быў запярэчыць, што пусціў іх толькі ў хлеў, але не стаў; бо надта любіў свой спакой.

„А яна," працягвала раз'юшана пані Дзіна, „яна ў цікавым становішчы, каб ты ведаў. На Пана Хрыста, яшчэ гэтага нам не хапала! Езус Марыя, да чаго мы дакаціліся! І дзе толькі была твая галава?" Пані Дзіна перавяла дух. „Ну, зразумела, нейкай маладзіцы ты не можаш сказаць: не. Як яна вытаропілася на цябе, дык ты і рады са скуры вылузацца, каб прыслужыць. *Дзеля мяне* ты б так не стараўся, Ісахар! Дык кладзіцеся, людцы, у хляве саломы хапае... Нібыта ва ўсім Віфлееме адны мы з нашым хляўком! Чаму гэта Шымановічы не далі ім ахапак саломы! Таму што Шымонка паказала б мужу, як ёй гэта не падабаецца, разумееш? Адна я, дура не дура, толькі такая натура, маўчу..."

Стары Ісахар павярнуўся да сцяны. Можа перастане, думаў ён; яна крыху мае рацыю, але падымаць такі вэрхал...

„Пускаць чужых людзей у хату," надрывалася ў справядлівым гневе пані Дзіна. „Хто ведае, што яны за такія? І цяпер мяне цэлую ноч са страху не зажмурыць вока! Але ж табе ўсё адно, як бачу? Дзеля людзей ты ўсё, а дзеля мяне нічога! Хаця б раз ты палічыўся са сваёй змардаванай і хваравітай жонкай! А раніцай мне яшчэ прыбіраць за імі! Калі гэты чалавек цясляр, чаму ён не на працы? І чаму гэта я павінна цярпець гэтыя прыніжэнні? Чуеш, Ісахар?"

Але Ісахар, павярнуўшыся да сцяны, рабіў выгляд, што спіць.

„Дзева Марыя," уздыхала пані Дзіна, „такое вось жыццё! Не спаць ад хвалявання цэлую ноч... А ён сабе спіць, як бервяно! Нам павыносяць усё з хаты, а ён сабе дрымне... Божа, што за напасць!"

Каля поўначы яго абудзіў з дрымоты здушаны жаночы стогн. Вой, бяда, – напалохаўся гаспадар, – ну, цяпер трымайся! Абы не раззлавалася Дзіна... Тады яе не ўціхамірыць!

І ляжаў нерухома, нібыта спаў.

Праз хвіліну пачуўся новы стогн. Божа, змілуйся! Божа, зрабі, каб Дзіна не

абудзілася, маліўся напалоханы стары Ісахар, але ўжо пачуў, як Дзіна пад ягоным бокам закруцілася, потым устала і пачала напружана ўслухоўвацца. Бяды не пазбегнуць, сказаў сабе ў адчаі Ісахар і затаіўся.

Пані Дзіна моўчкі ўстала, накінула ваўняную хусту І выйшла на двор. Няхай ідзе, сказаў сабе бязрадны Ісахар. Я лезці ў гэта не буду, няхай робіць, што хоча...

Глухое маўчанне цягнулася дзіўна доўга. Потым пані Дзіна вярнулася, асцярожна тупаючы. Скрозь сон Ісахару падалося, што скрыпяць і грукаюць нейкія дзверы, але ён вырашыў не высоўвацца. Мабыць, Дзіне холадна, падумаў ён, і яна распальвае агонь.

А Дзіна тым часам ізноў ціхенька выйшла. Ісахар расплюшчыў вочы і ўбачыў над вогнішчам кацялок з вадою. Навошта гэта, сказаў ён сам сабе здзіўлена і адразу ж заснуў. Абудзіўся ўжо тады, калі пані Дзіна нейкімі незвычайна імпэтнымі і рашучымі крокамі бегла на двор з кацялком, з якога валіла пара.

Ісахар здзівіўся, устаў і сяк-так апрануўся. Трэба паглядзець, што там, сказаў ён сабе энергічна, але ў дзвярах сутыкнуўся з Дзінай.

Даражэнькая, чаго ты так лётаеш, хацеў ён гукнуць, але не паспеў.

„Што ты тут соўкаешся?" гыркнула на яго пані Дзіна і пабегла на двор з нейкімі шматамі і полкамі ў руках. На парозе яна абярнулася. „Ідзі спаць", строга прыкрыкнула на яго, „... і не лезь не ў сваю справу, чуеш?"

Стары Ісахар выбраўся на дворык. Перад хляўком ён убачыў бязрадную мужчынскую постаць і падаўся да яе. „Вой-вой", прабурчэў ён жаласна. „Яна і цябе вытурыла? Ну, бачыш, Іосіф, гэта ж жанчыны..." І каб неяк не згадваць пра іхняе мужчынскае бяспраўе, гукнуў, паказваючы на неба: „Глядзі, зорка! Ці ты бачыў калі-небудзь такую зорку?"

/1930/

АЦІЛА

Раніцай гончык прынёс з узлесся паведамленне, што на паўднёвым усходзе ўначы палае вогненная паланіца. У той дзень было холадна і вільготна, падаў дробны дожджык, мокрыя дровы не хацелі гарэць; трое людзей з групы, што хавалася ў яры, памерлі ад крываўкі. Не было што есці, і тады двое мужчын выправіліся да пастухоў ў залессе. Яны вярнуліся позна пасля абеду, прамоклыя і выматаныя на смерць. Ад іх ледзь дамагліся расповеду пра кепскія справы: авечкі здыхаюць ды і каровы пухнуць; пастухі кінуліся на іх з каламі і нажамі,

калі адзін з іх хацеў адвесці ўласную цялушку, якую быў даверыў ім перад уцёкамі ў лес.

„Памолімся", сказаў святар, які пакутваў на дызентэрыю. „Госпад змілуецца".

„Хрыстэ элейсон", пачаў у роспачы мармытаць невялікі натоўп. У гэты момант выбухнула вісклівая сварка паміж жанчынамі з-за нейкай ваўнянай шматы.

„Што гэта такое, праклятыя бабы?" зароў стараста і пачаў хвастаць жанчын пугай. Гэтым бязраднае напружанне неяк паслабілася, мужчыны зноў адчулі сябе мужчынамі.

„Сюды гэтыя чуркі на конях не дабяруцца," разважаў адзін вусач. „Слабкавата ім па гэтых ярах ды пралесках... У іх жа коні малыя ды худасочныя, як козы".

„Я вось скажу", запярэчыў нейкі раздражнёны мужык, „што трэба было нам заставацца ў горадзе. Столькі мы грошай аддалі на гэтыя муры... За такія грошыкі можна было паставіць муры да самага неба, ці ж не так?"

„Ну, ведаеш", пасмейваўся сухотлівы пісар. „За такія грошыкі можна было паставіць муры з кнышоў. Хадзі ды адкусі кавалак – шмат людзей пажывілася з гэтага; можа і табе што засталося".

Стараста пагрозліва засоп; размова яму відавочна не падабалася.

„А я скажу", гнуў сваё раздражнёны грамадзянін, „што кавалерыя нішто супраць такіх муроў... Не пускаць іх у горад ды ўсё тут. Сядзелі б цяпер У сухім".

„Дык вяртайся ў горад ды залазь у ложак," параіў яму вусач.

„Што мне там рабіць самому?" запярэчыў раздражнёны. „Я толькі кажу, што трэба было нам заставацца ў горадзе і бараніцца... Я ж маю права сказаць, што дапушчана памылка, не? Тыя муры столькі нам каштавалі, а тут раптам кажуць, што яны ні на што не вартыя! Так атрымліваецца, даражэнькія!"

„Няхай будзе так ці не так," працягваў святар,"а мы мусім спадзявацца на дапамогу божую. Людцы, гэты ж Аціла ўсяго толькі нейкі паганец..."

„Біч божы", азваўся манах, трасучыся ад ліхаманкі. „Кара божая".

Мужчыны пахмурна змаўчалі; хворы на ліхаманку манах увесь час чытаў ім маралі, хаця і не належаў да супольнасці. У нас ёсць свой святар – думалі мужчыны.—Ён наш, трымаецца разам з намі і не папракае надта за нашыя грахі. Нібыта ўжо мы столькі награшылі, думалі пра сябе незадаволеныя мужчыны.

Дождж скончыўся, але цяжкія кроплі ўсё яшчэ шамацелі, падаючы з кронаў дрэў. Божа, божа, божа, дундзеў святар, пакутуючы ад хваробы.

Надвячоркам вартаўнікі прыцягнулі мізэрнага юнака, уцекача з захопленай ворагам тэрыторыі на ўсходзе.

Стараста надзьмуўся і пачаў дапытваць юнака. Ён відавочна прытрымліваў-

ся думкі, што такую дзяржаўную справу трэба рабіць заўзята. Так, сказаў юнак, гуны ўжо ў адзінаццаці мілях адсюль і паціху прасоўваюцца далей; яны занялі ягоны горад, ён іх бачыў. Не, Ацілу не бачыў... аднак, бачыў іншага генерала, такога тоўстага. Дык горад спалілі? Не, не спалілі; той генерал выдаў пракламацыю, што цывільнаму насельніцтву нічога не будзе, але горад павінен даць войску пітво, правіянт і яшчэ нешта. А таксама, што грамадзяне павінны паўстрымацца ад любых непрыяцельскіх выказванняў супраць гунаў, а інакш дойдзе да суровых рэпрэсій.

„Але ж тыя паганцы забіваюць і жанчын і дзяцей," заявіў з упэўненасцю вусач.

Здаецца, што не, сказаў юнак. У іхнім горадзе прынамсці не. Ён сам быў схаваўся ў салому, але калі матулька сказала, маўляў, людзі кажуць, што гуны будуць забіраць маладых мужчын пасвіць іхнія статкі, то ён уцёк уначы. Вось, маўляў, і ўсё, што ведае.

Мужчыны расхваляваліся. „Дык жа вядома," заявіў адзін, „што яны адсякаюць немаўляткам рукі, а ўжо што робяць з жанчынамі, дык і не выказаць".

„Я нічога такога не ведаю," сказаў юнак, нібыта апраўдваючыся. Прынамсці, калі яны прыйшлі, дык так кепска не было. А колькі ёсць тых гунаў? Можа з дзвесце, больш не будзе.

„Хлусіш," крыкнуў вусач. „Кожны ведае, што іх больш за пяць тысяч. І куды яны прыходзяць, там усіх забіваюць і ўсё паляць".

„Зачыняюць людзей у гумно і паляць там," сказаў другі.

„А дзяцей саджаюць на дзіды," падхапіў трэці з прыкрасцю.

„І пякуць іх на агні," дадаў чацьверты, шморгаючы носам. „Праклятыя паганцы!"

„Божа, божа," стагнаў святар. „Божа, змілуйся над намі".

„Ты падаешся мне нейкім дзіўным," звярнуўся вусач да юнака з падозраю. „Як ты можаш казаць, што бачыў гунаў, калі ты хаваўся ў саломе?"

„Матулька іх бачыла," балматаў юнак, „і насіла мне на паддашак ежу..."

„Хлусіш," гарланіў вусач. „Мы ж ведаем, што куды б гуны не прыйшлі, зжыраюць усё, як саранча. Пасля іх нат лісця на дрэвах не застаецца, ясна?"

„Цару нябесны, цару нябесны," пачаў істэрычна галасіць раздражнёны грамадзянін. „А чаму гэта ўсё так? Хто вінаваты? Хто дапусціў? Мы столькі грошай аддалі на войска... Цару нябесны!"

„Хто дапусціў?" здзекліва азваўся пісар. „А то ты не ведаеш? Спытайся візантыйскага пана імператара, хто паклікаў сюды гэтых жоўтых малпаў! Хлопча, сёння ўжо кожны ведае, хто аплочвае перасяленне народаў! Гэта называецца – высокая палітыка, ведаеш?"

Стараста з важнасцю засоп. „Глупства. Усё зусім інакш. Яны, гэтыя гуны, мабыць, дома пухлі з голаду... навалач гэткая... працаваць не ўмеюць... ніякай цывілізацыі... а жэрці хочуць. Таму і ідуць на нас... каб нам гэта... плён нашай працы. Ім бы толькі красці, дзяліць здабычу... І перці далей, падлюгам!"

„Гэта неадукаваныя паганцы," сказаў святар. „Дзікі і неасвечаны народ. Гэта Госпад проста нас выпрабоўвае; памолімся і падзячым, і ўсё неяк будзе добра".

„Біч божы," пачаў усхвалявана прамаўляць ахоплены ліхаманкай манах. „Бог вас карае за вашы грахі, Бог вядзе гунаў і знішчыць вас, як некалі Садома. За вашую распусту і блюзнерства, за упартасць і бязбожнасць вашых сэрцаў, за вашую сквапнасць і абжорлівасць, за вашу грэшную раскошу і мамону вас Бог пакінуў і выдаў у рукі ворагаў!"

Стараста пагрозліва прахрыпеў: „Ты асабліва не раззяўляйся, Domine: тут табе не касцёл, ведаеш? Яны прыйшлі, каб нажэрціся. Яны – згаладнелыя, абадранцы і галота..."

„Гэта ёсць палітыка," заўпарціўся пісар. „Адчуваецца рука Візантыі".

Але тут рэзка азваўся чарнявы мужык, па прафесіі лудзільшчык: „Ніякай Візантыі; гэта ўсё катляры нарабілі, больш няма каму! Тры гады таму тут быў вандроўны катляр, дык ён меў такога малога і сухарлявага каня, як у гунаў".

„Ну і што з таго?" спытаўся стараста.

„Раскіньце мазгамі," крычаў чарнявы мужык. „Гэтыя катляры ішлі наперадзе ды глядзелі, што дзе... То былі шпіёны... Гэта змова катляроў! Ці хто ведае, адкуль яны прыйшлі? і што наогул ім тут было трэба? Што, што... навошта, калі ў горадзе ёсць свой лудзільшчык? Абы толькі нам справу папсаваць... ды шпіёніць... Хаця б раз пайшлі ў касцёл... чаравалі... быдла закліналі... курваў за сабой цягалі. Усё ад гэтых катляроў!"

„Нешта ў гэтым ёсць," падхапіў вусач. „Катляры народ дзіўны, нат сырое мяса жаруць".

„Кодла злодзеяў," пацвердзіў стараста. „Курэй крадуць і наогул."

Лудзільшчыка душыў справядлівы гнеў. „Дык бачыце! Кажуць: Аціла, а на самой справе катляры... За ўсім, за ўсім гэтыя праклятыя катляры! Зачаравалі нам быдла... наслалі на нас панос... Усё катляры! Трэба было іх вешаць, як толькі які з'явіцца! Вы што, не ведаеце... не ведаеце пра пякельныя катлы? А можа не чулі, што гэтыя гуны на маршы грукаюць у катлы? І дзіця павінна зразумець гэтую сувязь! Гэта катляры ва ўсім вінаватыя... А ты," крычаў ён з пенай на вуснах, паказваючы на чужога юнака, „ты таксама катляр, ты – хаўруснік і шпіён катляроў! Таму прыйшоў сюды... І хочаш нам галаву задурыць, як гэтыя катляры, ты хацеў нас здрадзіць катлярам..."

„Павесіць яго”, завішчаў узбуджаны мужык.

„Пачакайце, суседзі,” гарланіў стараста сярод агульнага вэрхалу. „Гэта трэба расследваць... Ціха!”

„Што з ім цырымоніцца,” скавытаў нехта.

Пачалі збягацца жанчыны.

У тую ноч успыхнула паланіца і на паўночным захадзе. Падаў дробны дождж. Пяцёра чалавек з групы памерлі ад крываўкі і кашлю.

Юнака павесілі пасля доўгіх катаванняў.

/1932/

Пераклаў з чэшскай Валеры Буйвал

Karel Čapek. Kniha apokrifů. Praha, 1974. (Заўвага перакладчыка. У тэксце пакінута (нетыповая) пунктуацыя чэшскага арыгіналу – В.Б.)

Карэл Чапэк *(1890-1938) – чэшскі пісьменнік і драматург. У беларускім перакладзе друкуюцца тры навелы з ягонай „Кнігі апокрыфаў”.*

ПЭР ЛАГЕРКВІСТ
Pär Lagerkvist

ВЫЗВАЛЕННЕ

Я сяджу і трымаю маленькі камень у руцэ. Ён чырвоны з сінімі пражылкамі. Калі прыглядацца, то ён мае яшчэ шмат колераў: зялёны, фіялетавы, і яшчэ нешта ззяе, як золата. Калі павольна паварочваеш яго, то мяняюцца ўсе колеры і нюансы, нібыта ўсе яны знаходзяцца ў ім. Я ніколі не стамляюся глядзець на яго, узірацца ў ягоную гладкую, чыстую паверхню, што здаецца амаль мяккай, як любая сапраўды гладкая паверхня. Дзіўна, што маленькі камень, – не больш за птушынае яйка, – можа даваць такія багатыя і невычэрпныя перажыванні, можа змяшчаць у сабе так шмат. Як цэлы свет. Нешта бясконцае, чаго часцінкай з'яўляешся ты. Ты сядзіш і так проста трымаеш гэта ў руцэ.

Я знайшоў яго на двары турмы і здолеў пранесці з сабой.

Падчас паўгадзіннага шпацыру забаронена нахіляцца і падымаць што-небудзь з зямлі. Ахоўнік убачыў і спытаў мяне, за чым гэта я нахіляўся. Але, калі я сказаў, што там нічога не было, ён адстаў ад мяне, сказаўшы толькі, што тут сапраўды няма што шукаць. Мне пашэнціла, ён не абшукаў мяне. Камень мой! У мяне сапраўдны камень! Свет, таямнічае, вялікае царства належыць мне. Царства без межаў, нешта невычэрпнае. Яно ўсё маё! Гэтае ўсё ёсць маёй уласнасцю. Усё гэта невядомае, жывое, сапраўднае, што напаўняе мяне сваёю бясконцасцю.

Трэба схаваць яго падалей, у кут пад нары. Там ніхто яго не знойдзе. Ды і хто будзе шукаць гэта?

Часта я думаю, што ўсё створана радасцю. Нябёсы, светы, сусвет, усё, што існуе. Хто яшчэ мог стварыць усе гэтыя прасторы, гэтую сонечную сістэму і Млечны Шлях, як не радасць. Чаму ж цяпер усё інакш? Чаму не так, як раніцай стварэння? Калі нябёсы і зямля тыя ж самыя, а жыццё такое ж багатае і захапляючае, нават яшчэ багацей, чым калісьці.

Што пазбавіла нас Радасці?

Сінь мае сваё значэнне, чырвань сваё. Усё ў камені мае, безумоўна, сваё значэнне. Я не магу ўсведаміць гэта, але разумею, што ўсё павінна быць напоўненае зместам, сэнсам і багаццем. Гэта ж відавочна. І калі гэта было так, то была і вялікая радасць. Чаму ж цяпер не так? Калі яна паўсюль і дастаткова толькі нахіліцца, каб завалодаць ёю. Яна зіхаціць паўсюль.

І на турэмным двары таксама.

Нябёсы і зямля твае. Зямля поўная кветак, і ўсе зоркі ззяюць. Але далёка, у пустыннай прасторы, не для цябе. А водар кветак нібыта створаны толькі для ветру.

Дык дзе той, хто павінен ўдыхваць водары і прымаць прывітанні з зоркі ў сузор'і Андрамеды? Ён, якога ранішняе сонца павінна шукаць першым сярод усяго жывога. Ён, што павінен блукаць па палях, аблашчаны святлом.

Дзе чалавек? Дзе ты?

Багацце жыцця ляжыць, нібыта забытае. Мы топчамся па беднай яго глебе, галеча напаўняе нас. Мы трымаемся за галечу, як ненавіснік за сваю нянавісць, як хворы за сваю хваробу. Жабракі, мы ямо гэты чэрствы хлеб, праклінаючы таго, хто ёсць побач з намі.

А багаты стол стаіць некрануты, гасцей няма.

Я не магу не разважаць над сваім лёсам. Над сваім і ўсіх іншых. Чаму мы сядзім тут за кратамі? І ахоўнікі таксама за кратамі турмы, іхняе жыццё праходзіць таксама, як наша. Значыць, калі тут утрымліваюцца вязні, то і ахоўнікі таксама становяцца вязнямі. Куды ні глянь – адны вязні. Каморы і вязні. Волі няма нікому!

Турэмным ахоўнікам павінна быць значна цяжэй. Іхняе жыццё павінна быць абсалютна пустым. Іхнія твары заўсёды пахмурныя і без выразу, нязменныя. а ў вязняў на тварах пакута, адчай, жарсці, яны поўныя жыцця, выразныя. Мы жывем у страху, увесь час нас нешта мучыць. Для нас галеча яшчэ мае свой сэнс.

Толькі вязні могуць знайсці нешта на турэмным двары.

Мора вызначыла ягоныя формы. Гэта ясна, менавіта таму ён такі гладкі. Мора насіла яго бясконцы час, магчыма цэлыя тысячагоддзі. Хвалі абмывалі яго, пры-

бой уздымаў яго і апускаў зноў, ён належаў бясконцай і нястомнай стыхіі. Аж покуль ён не стаў настолькі роўным, што здаецца мяккім, як жывая істота. Мяккі, як жанчына. Таму што яго вынасіла мора. Ён ляжаў ў глыбі і слухаў шум тысячагоддзяў, шамаценне пяску паміж камянямі.

Мора...

Я павінен быў любіць жыццё. Калі я ўспамінаю яго, то гэта нібыта ўспамін пра каханую жанчыну, з якой разлучаны даўно і назаўсёды. Бачыш ейныя залітыя сонцам валасы, але не можаш бачыць само сонечнае святло. А ейная постаць нібыта ідзе на фоне краявіду, які ўсё ніяк не паўстае ў памяці. Сцяжыну я не пазнаю, хаця ўпэўнены, што яна нейкім чынам знаёмая мне. Не пазнаю дрэва, менавіта гэтае дрэва. Але я бачыў дрэва, падобнае на гэтае. Шмат што забылася або проста змянілася з тае пары. Але не яна. Яна ўсё тая ж. Ейныя крокі лёгкія і павольныя, а галава крыху пахілена ў бок, нібыта перад нябачнай галінай. А можа яна ўслухоўваецца ў нешта. Так, гэта яна, я кахаў яе. Я не магу ўбачыць ейны твар. Таму што яна адыходзіць. Я бачу толькі постаць. А яна не абарочваецца.

Можа жыццё ўжо не мае для мяне твару?

Мора...

Яно ўздымаецца вечна, як і ўчора, як здавён-даўна, у недасягальнай даўніне. Хвалі плёскаюцца і шумяць. Мне здаецца, я чую іх, калі сяджу з каменем у руцэ. Я чую водгук хваляў, што набягаюць на бераг і зноў адступаюць.

З морам тое ж самае. Яго немагчыма забыць. Яно надта простае і вялікае, каб можна было забыць яго. У ім ёсць нешта цэльнае і нязменнае, нешта сталае, вечнае. Кожны яго рух вечны і заўсёды новы; набліжэнне хвалі да берагу, плынь, што мяняе накірунак, нібыта сустрэўшы нябачную перашкоду, і вось яна адступае, імкнецца да невядомай мэты. Мяккі ўздрыг на ягонай паверхні, нібыта подых глыбіні. Усё вечнае і вечна маладое.

Так, варта было кахаць яе.

Муры не могуць адгарадзіць мяне ад жыцця, ува мне шум мора. Яны здольныя толькі зрабіць так, што я не бачу ёйны твар. Глыбіня ўнутры нас, толькі цяпер у ёй нішто не адлюстроўваецца. Яны не могуць адгарадзіць нас ад кахання, а толькі разлучыць з каханымі. Але што яны зробяць, калі мы ўсё роўна кахаем?

У нейкі момант сасуды нашай існасці злучаюцца з усеагульнай глыбінёй. Тады ўсё становіцца цэласным, усё ўздымаецца і апускаецца разам з хвалямі, з вечным подыхам. Тады ўсё – гэта толькі глыбіня і нязменнасць, недасягальная і схаваная, непазнавальная. Што ёсць адлюстраваннем самой Рэчаіснасці? Што ёсць тварам жыцця?

Мабыць, я адчуваю нешта, што не адчуваў раней. Мабыць, разумею нешта важнае. Цяпер, калі валодаю гэтым нябачным, я разумею лепш. Гэта тое ж самае, калі думаецца лепш, закрыўшы вочы рукой. Мабыць, я напаўняюся, як начынне, таямнічай плынню і з заплюшчанымі вачыма пазнаю закрыты ад рэчаіснасці свет.

Нехта казаў пра сляпца, што перамог свой лёс. Чаму ж і мне не перамагчы?

Некаторыя думаюць, што можна бачыць у цемры. Не ведаю. Можа і не? Можа гэта свецяцца крыніцы, можа свеціцца глыбіня. А можа ўсё ўгрунтавана на радасці! Можа гэта – як узірацца ў вялікую, светлую раніцу стварэння.

Не, я не хачу прызнаць, што жыву ў галечы! Хачу верыць, што жыццё—гэта цуд, цуд вечнай маладосці. Хачу верыць, што ўнутры яго ёсць святло і што крыніцы майго жыцця праб'юцца праз усе муры. Хачу верыць, што ўсё добрае поўнае багацця і моцы, а дрэннае пераможана дабром. Я буду прыціскаць руку да вачэй і глядзець толькі ў сапраўдны і вечны свет маладосці.

Перамажы свой лёс! Адсунь муры, што засцілі нам далягляд! Яны думаюць, што здольныя ўвязніць нас, што могуць пазбавіць нас зроку. Не так проста пазбавіць чалавека зроку! Забяры ягоны свет – але гэта толькі адлюстраванне. Забяры ягонае жыццё – але гэта толькі яго ўласнае жыццё, а не тое, вялікае і ўсемагутнае, якому ён належыць і з якім яго не ўдасца разлучыць. Жыццё не ведае, што яны пабудавалі нейкія муры, закрылі крыніцы, каб нішто не адлюстроўвалася ў іх. Яно адкрывае крыніцы на турэмным двары і хавае іх, каб яны напоўніліся, а вязні спатолілі смагу. Яно адкрывае іх сляпцу, не ведаючы, што ён сляпы, не ведаючы болю і непакою. Яго нішто не хвалюе, яно недасягальнае, недаступнае нікому, ніхто не можа нанесці яму шкоду. Яно светлае і ўсемагутнае, якім было заўжды.

Людзі пакутуюць. Але жыццё не ведае пакутаў.

На тэрыторыі турмы расла вішня. Яе спілавалі. Але яна яшчэ красуе. Яна ляжыць на зямлі распілаванымі кавалкамі і красуе. Галіны скалечаны, але яны жывуць, і некаторыя з іх белыя ад квету. Здаецца, дрэва красуе, як звычайна, як заўсёды.

Не, вязні не павінны знемагаць у пакутах! Трэба пераадолець пакуты, пераадолець саму смерць. Яны належаць жыццю і іх нельга разлучыць з ім. Яно моцна трымае іх, яно не аддасць іх. Не дапаможа гвалт, не ўдасца зламаць, знішчыць іх. Яны поўныя нечага, што ніколі не паддаецца адчаю. А хто не адчайваецца, не ведае, што такое адчай.

Квітнее цела.

Так, мы былі целам. Але не на яго яны рабілі замах. Яны знявечылі чалавечае

цела, але ім не перамагчы. А ўрэшце бессмяротнае ў чалавеку – яно пераможа ўсе сілы знішчэння. Калі чалавек церпіць гвалт над сабой, у ім, у ягоным спакутваным целе ўсё ясней абуджаецца галоўная думка. Яе таямнічасць адкрываецца, як ніколі раней. І тады ўсё, што захінала глыбокі сэнс, знікае. Ад бясконцай пакуты вобраз згортваецца і набывае кранальную прастату і веліч. Самі сілы знішчэння і ўявіць сябе не могуць, што яны вызваляюць несмяротнае.

Але навошта тады ўсе гэтыя пакуты? Яны патрэбны для перамогі, нельга перамагчы без іх? Можа цела павінна застацца для нас назаўсёды знакам перамогі? Ці ёсць у гэтым сэнс? А пакута – гэта адзіны шлях нашага самаздзяйснення, самараскрыцця? Толькі праз яе мы існуем у глыбокім сэнсе? Ці гэта магчыма? Дык тады гэтыя сілы, што знішчаюць і нявечаць, -- стваральныя? Самі па сабе бясплённыя, няздольныя да жыцця, адмоўныя – але стваральныя. Стваральныя! І можа таму, з-за гэтай ўражальнай сувязі ім застаецца толькі наша цела.

Не, нішто не прымусіць мяне паверыць у гэта! Нішто не прымусіць паверыць!

Пакута нічога не стварае, яна ніколі не перамагае! А гвалт яшчэ менш здольны перамагаць. Яны не даюць нам самаздзяйснення! Такое ні ў якім сэнсе не можа быць стваральным. А толькі багацце, святло! Толькі яны трымаюць у сваёй руцэ стваральную сілу, толькі ў іх ёсць сцвярджэнне, здзяйсненне, станаўленне. Дык ці радасць не ёсць асновай жыцця!

Так, безумоўна. Я і не думаю інакш. Так мусіць быць.

Я адно не разумею, чаму пакута такая вялікая і, як злавесны цень, яна шырыцца і пакрывае сабой усё жыццё. Што ёй дазволена гэта. І чаму пакута ўсё мацней, цень яшчэ больш змрочны ў найвышэйшых формах жыцця, нібыта яна расце, становіцца ўсё больш інтэнсіўнай разам з інтэнсіўнасцю жыцця. Чаму гэта так? Можа гэта патаемная неабходнасць?

Так, як чалавек, не пакутуе ніводнае іншае стварэнне. І ўсё ж – як ніхто з іншых мы адораны багаццем і шчасцем, якое наканавана менавіта нам. Але цяжар нашага лёсу, ценю, што ляжыць на нас, цісне ўсё мацней і мацней. І нам ўсё цяжэй і цяжэй ісці па шляху да вышыняў.

Чаму чалавечы лёс – гэта сумны спектакль? Трагедыя ў раскошным каралеўскім замку, што ззяе ў святле дня, а ўначы жыве ў атачэнні вечных зорак. Старадаўняя захапляючая сага несмяротнай красы, але змрочная і прыніжальная для нас.

Дык у гэтым наша несмяротнасць?

Мы пытаемся. Мы абвінавачваем.

Але чалавек павінен змагацца. Працягваць змаганне за перадавыя пазіцыі, не

пакідаць сваё месца ў першай траншэі. Краіна без межаў належыць яму. Краіна, што рассцілаецца перад ім ўсё шырэй і шырэй на нічыёй зямлі – гэта наша радзіма, за якую мы змагаемся да перамогі і паміраем. Часам вораг прарывае пазіцыі, усё бяжыць у бязладдзі. Знясіленыя войскі прыхапкам збіраюць на новай лініі абароны далёка ззаду. Усе ў адчаі, жаўнеры ляжаць у сваіх лёхах смяротна стомленыя і змардаваныя, праклінаюць сваю краіну, якую мусяць бараніць. Нават найхробрайшыя і найбольш адказныя могуць засумаваць за жыццём без вайны, без надчалавечых намаганняў. Яны хацелі б жыць, як кветкі ў полі, як дрэвы і птушыная чарада, з іхнімі простымі радасцямі. Дык у гэтым наша ахвяра? А можа змаганне бессэнсоўнае? І перамога таксама? Што ўсё гэта для краіны, якая не мае межаў? Як можна абараніць яе? І перамога не лічыцца, яна не дае выніку, усё застаецца нявызначаным, як і раней. Змаганне і ахвяры не маюць канца, а радзіма так і не ўспомніць пра верных ёй, што спачылі ў зямлі. Бо змаганне надта неабсяжнае і велічнае, і яго героі незлічоныя і безыменныя. Што ж гэта за лёс, выбраннікамі якога мы ёсць!

Але калі надыходзіць ноч, некаторыя з нас падымаюцца і глядзяць у зорным святле на спустошаную, пакінутую зямлю, дзе загінулі так многія. Яны бяруць сваю зброю і крадком вяртаюцца туды, у цемру.

Я ўспамінаю воблака, якое ўбачыў колькі дзён таму, калі стаяў і глядзеў на яго цераз краты. Яно было падобнае на чалавечую галаву. Галаву чалавека з высакароднымі рысамі, чыстым і думным профілям – вобраз пыхі, ганарлівасці і вытанчанасці.

Пакуль я стаяў і глядзеў, абрысы пачалі мяняцца. Спачатку здавалася, што своеасаблівы і прыгожы твар становіцца яшчэ прыгажэй, непаўторны характар набывае больш выразнасці. Але потым узнікла нешта неспакойнае, дзіўнае і празмернае – нават нешта хваравітае, проста агіднае. Твар нібыта распаўся, пакуль я глядзеў на яго, але не згубіў падабенства са сваім былым я. Паціху ён нібыта пакрыўся праказай, згубіў дакладнасць, расплыўся ў гніенні. Урэшце вока з яго глыбокім позіркам пераўтварылася ў пустую дзірку, а ніжняя сківіца адвісла. Гэта быў ашчэраны чэрап.

Але ўсё ж чэрап меў падабенства з вялікім і прыгожым, якое я бачыў раней. Засталося нешта агульнае, нешта, што было іхняй схаванай таямніцай.

Адчай! Гэта б значыла, што я гатовы прызнаць: камора, дзе я, дзе знаходзяцца іншыя спакутваныя вязні,-- і няма больш нічога! Што гэта і ёсць жыццё. А той малы адрэзак часу, калі мы сядзім у турме, і ёсць нашым прызначэннем, нашым непазбыўным лёсам. Вось тады мы і прызнаем сябе вязнямі!

Але жыццё – гэта не тое, што заключана ўнутры нас. Яно злучае нас з жывы-

мі і мёртвымі ўсіх часоў. Са смерцю і ўваскрасеннем, З усеагульным пераўтварэннем і абнаўленнем, нязменным, з бесперапыннай раніцай стварэння.

І вось разбураны межы часу і прасторы. Воля, воля, воля!

Я шмат часу разам З воблакамі. Яны – маё таварыства, можна сказаць, мае даверлівыя сябры. Я не ведаю іхніх найглыбокіх таямніц. Але нешта я магу ўлавіць, і нейкім чынам вызначыць. Імклівы лёс не заўважае нас, жыццё мінае, нараджэнне, існаванне, смерць. Воблачны лёс, воблачныя падзеі, лунаюць вобразы, нетрывалы свет святла і я ў ім. Ён нібыта мой.

Акно так высака, што я не магу бачыць зямлю. Нібыта я пакінуў яе.

А ўначы я разам з зоркамі. Яны ззяюць зусім побач, ззяюць сваім незямным святлом.

Я нібыта пахаваны – але ў бясконцай прасторы.

Не трэба баяцца. Перад намі незлічоныя багацці, невычарпальныя магчымасці. Мы маем караблі з каштоўным грузам і загадкавыя гавані нашай душы, куды яны заплываюць пад нябачнымі ветразямі. Яны вязуць каштоўны груз, яны заўсёды ў плаванні. А смерці і галечы няма.

Няма пагібелі, няма смерці, няма бездапаможнага адчаю пасля паразы. Трэба толькі зноў сабраць сілы, вярнуцца і рабіць зноў, працягваць стварэнне. Ёсць толькі асэнсаванне і радасць пасярод ззяючай, вечнай раніцы стварэння.

Адчай! Ці ж нам адчайвацца?! Нам, што нясуць у сабе несмяротныя сілы і несмяротны покліч перамогі. Нам, што ёсць адным з найвялікшых цудаў. Нам, што нясуць у сваёй душы таямніцу дасканаласці, нясуць яе праз часы, хаця і не разумеюць яе сэнсу. Яна – непазнавальная, яна не можа ўвасобіцца ў рэчаіснасці, яе нельга дасягнуць. Яна можа жыць толькі ў загадкавым улонні абсалюту, замкнёная пячаткай, недасягальная. І калі б мы зламалі пячатку, то ўсё роўна не здолелі б спазнаць яе змест. Але жыццё штораз нараджаецца нанова, штораз зерне ламае пячатку і таямніца злучаецца з стваральнымі сіламі, аддае ім свой пераможны покліч.

Сама наша існасць ёсць вечным поклічам перамогі!

Пераклаў са шведскай ***Валеры Буйвал***

Pär Lagerkvist. *Prosa.* Stockholm, 1949.

Пэр Лагерквіст *(1891-1974) – шведскі пісьменнік, драматург, паэт. Лаўрэат Нобелеўскай прэміі па літаратуры (1951). У філасофскай навеле „Вызваленне" („Den befriade människan" – 1939 г.) раскрываецца жыццясцвярджальная гуманістычная пазіцыя пісьменніка, ягонае непрыняцце гвалту і вайны.*

КАЛЕВАЛА

РУНА ПЕРШАЯ

Уступ (1 – 102). Дзева паветра апускаецца на марскія хвалі і , зацяжарыўшы ад ветру і вады, становіцца маці вады (103 – 176). Качка зьвівае гняздо на калене маці вады і адкладвае яйкі (177 – 212). Яйкі выпадаюць з гнязда і разьбіваюцца на кавалкі, якія ператвараюцца ў неба, зямлю, сонца, месяц ды хмары (213 – 244). Маці вады стварае мысы, затокі, берагі, водмелі ды глыбіні мора (245 – 280). Маці вады нараджае Вяйнямёйнена, яго даўгі час носіць па хвалях, пакуль не прыбівае да берага (281 – 344).

У мяне ўзьнікла думка,
нарадзілася жаданьне
засьпяваць, завесьці песьні
ды пусьціць за словам слова
5 старажытных песьнесьпеваў,
роду нашага паданьняў.
Растаюць у роце словы,
з вуснаў птушкаю ірвуцца,
зь языка яны зьлятаюць
10 ды паміж зубоў струменяць.
Мілы сябра, братка любы,
залатых гадоў таварыш!
Засьпявайма разам песьню
ды прамовім разам словы,
15 калі тут ужо сыйшліся,
з двух бакоў мы на сустрэчу!
Рэдка мы бываем разам,
рэдка бачымся з табою

на прасторах запусьцелых,
20 у краі Поўначы убогім.
Дык давай мне свае рукі,
моцна счэпім свае пальцы,
засьпяваем гучна песьні
ды найлепшыя паданьні,
25 каб сябры нашы пачулі,
ды паслухалі прыветна,
каб пачулі нашы дзеці,
каб пачула наша моладзь:
як зьбіралі, зьберагалі
30 тыя вершы, тыя сьпевы
ў апаяску Вяйнямёйнен,
у кузьні волат Ільмарынен,
у вострай сталі Каўкам'елі,
у джалах стрэлаў Ёўкахайнен,
35 у паўночных дальніх гонях
Калевалы верасовай.
Іх сьпяваў калісьці бацька,
калі рэзаў тапарышча,
маці навучала песьням,
40 калі ніткі выпрадала,
я ж тады дзіцёнкам малым
каля ног яе круціўся,
немаўлятка неразумны
маці малаком духменіў.
45 Словаў шмат было пра Сампа
ды пра чары хітрай Лоўхі:
і старэла ў песьнях Сампа,
зьгінула ад чараў Лоўхі,
Віпунен сканаў ад чараў,
50 Леммінкяйнен – у карагодах.
Ёсьць яшчэ нямала песень,
загавораў шмат я помню,
што сабраў я па ўзьмежках
ды з галінак верасовых,
55 ды з кустоў каля дарогі,
з розных парасткаў маленькіх,
з патаптаных сьпелых траваў,
там, дзе пасьвіў я гавяду,
у гады свае малыя,
60 пастушком хадзіў за статкам,
там, па купінах мядовых,
там, па залатых палянах
усьлед за Муўрыккі-чарнохай,
побач з Кіммаю пярэстай.
65 Насьпяваў мароз мне песьні,
дождж нашапацеў мне вершаў.
Вецер слоў яшчэ навеяў,
хвалі з мора нашапталі.
Птушкі ў шэраг словы склалі,
70 вершаліны дрэў – у сказы.
Я зматаў іх у клубочак,
у адзін маток зьвязаў іх.
Я паклаў клубок на сані,
у вазок паклаў я зьвязку,
75 песьні я прывёз дадому,
да асеці я давёз іх
і паклаў у медны кошык
пад столь клеці на паліцу.
Доўга песьні на марозе
80 у маркоце праляжалі.
Ці не ўзяць нам іх са сьцюжы,
не забраць з марозу песьні?
Ці не ўнесьці ў хату кошык,
ды на лаву тут, пад стольлю,
85 пад магутнай кроквай новай
пад прыгожаю паставіць?
Мо адчынім кошык песень,
поўную паданьняў скрынку,
каб клубок той разматаць нам,
90 разьвязаць маток легендаў?
Лепшую сьпяю вам песьню,
каб найлепей загучала,

хай дадуць мне хлеба лусту,
паднясуць мне збанец піва.
95 а калі не будзе піва,
альбо квасу маладога,
дык сьпяю я песьню нашча,
нават без вады, насуха,
каб вясёлым быў наш вечар,
100 каб уславіць дзень мінулы
ды парадаваць дзень новы,
раньне новае пацешыць.
Чуў я некалі як песьні,
дзіўнасьпеўныя складалі:
105 па адной прыходзяць ночы,
дні па аднаму сьвітаюць,
і ў самоце нарадзіўся
Вяйнямёйнен – песьнесьпеўца,
юнай Ілматар дзіцятка,
110 маладой дачкі паветра.
На паветраных прасьцягах
гожае дзіця прыроды
доўга берагла цнатлівасьць,
заставалася нявіннай
115 на паветраных падворках,
на раўнінах гладкіх неба.
Ды журба апанавала,
надакучыла дзяўчыне
век адною заставацца,
120 век самотнай ды нявіннай
на паветраных падворках,
на раўнінах гладкіх неба;
і зьляцела зусім нізка,
на марскія хвалі села,
125 на марскі хрыбет
бязьмежны,
на марскі прастор бяскрайні.
Наляцеў шалёны вецер,
ярасны віхор з усходу,
пену ён пагнаў па моры
130 ды ўзьняў высока хвалі.
Калыхаў дзяўчыну вецер
ды насілі хвалі дзеву
па марскіх абшарах сініх,
па вяршынях белапенных:
135 зацяжарыла ад ветру
і ад хвалі плод панесла.
Цьвёрды плод яна насіла,
чэрава сваё цяжкое
можа сем стагоддзяў цэлых,
140 дзевяць жыцьцяў чалавечых;
ды не наступалі роды,
незачаты не радзіўся.
Маткаю вады дзяўчына
мчала на ўсход, на захад,
145 і да поўначы, да поўдня,
да нябесных далягляда ў
у бязьлітасных пакутах,
родаў вогненных спахватак;
ды не наступалі роды,
150 незачаты не радзіўся.
Стала ціха плакаць дзева,
кажучы такія словы:
“Вохці мне, гаротнай дзеве,
і маёй няшчаснай долі!
155 Чаму раптам я з паветра
апынулася на моры.
каб гайдаў мяне тут вецер,
каб мяне ганялі хвалі
па марской вадзе бязьмежнай,
160 па марскіх бурлівых хвалях!
Лепей бы я засталася,
як раней, дачкой паветра,
чым, як зараз, чужаніцай,
маткаю вады гайдацца:
165 золка мне тут і няўтульна,

холадна мне тут, няшчаснай,
жыць на хвалях дураслівых,
плаваць па вадзе сьцюдзёнай.
Гэй ты, Укка, бог вярхоўны
170 валадар усяго паветра!
Ты прыйдзі на дапамогу,
ты прыйдзі на заклік гучны,
ты пазбаў ад болю дзеву,
а жанчыну ад пакутаў!
175 Не марудзь, а пасьпяшайся
пільная ў мяне патрэба!"
Хутка час прайшоў кароткі,
усяго адно імгненьне,
прыляцела качка-птушка,
180 б'е крыламі ў паветры,
месца для гнязда шукае,
для жытла шукае месца.
На ўсход ляціць, на захад,
і на поўнач, і на поўдзень,
185 ды знайсьці не можа месца,
нават кепскага не знойдзе,
каб там зьвіць сабе гнязьдзечка,
каб жытло сабе там зладзіць.
Пакружыла, палятала
190 і, падумаўшы, сказала:
"Ці то зьвіць гняздо на ветры,
ці жытло зрабіць на хвалях?
Дык гняздо разьвее вецер,
разьнясуць па моры хвалі."
195 Слаўная дачка паветра,
гаспадыня вод пачула,
плячо з хваляў паказала
ды ўзьняла з вады калена,
каб гняздо зьвіла там качка,
200 каб жытло сабе зрабіла.
Качка, стройная істота,
усё лятае, кружыць, кружыць,
раптам на прасторы сінім
бачыць маці вод калена
205 і за купіну прызнала,
за зялёны мяккі дзёран.
Пакружляла, палятала,
села на калена дзеве
і зьвіла сабе гнязьдзечка,
210 каб адкласьці туды яйкі:
залатых было шэсьць яек,
сёмае – было з жалеза.
Пачала выседжваць яйкі,
награваць калена дзевы,
215 дзень сядзела, два сядзела,
трэці дзень калена грэе.
Маці водаў, дзева неба,
гаспадыня мора чуе,
што агнём гарыць калена,
220 скура, як агонь палае;
думае: згарыць калена
і ўсе жылы там растануць.
Так каленам варухнула,
здрыганулася ўсім целам,
225 што ў ваду зьляцелі яйкі,
на марскую хвалю ўпалі,
ушчэнт разьбіліся аб воды,
патрушчыліся ў кавалкі.
Не прапалі яйкі ў твані
230 у глыбінях вод кавалкі,
выгляд набылі цудоўны,
усе зьмяніліся дзівосна:
ніжняя часціна яйка
стала маткаю-зямлёю,
235 верхняя часьціна яйка
небасьхілам стромкім стала,
верхняя жаўтка часьціна
сонцам зазіхцела яркім,
верхняя бялка часьціна

240 ясным месяцам зазьзяла,
што было пярэстым ў яйках
стала зоркамі на небе,
а цямнейшыя часьціны
сталі хмарамі ў паветры.
245 Час ідзе сабе наперад,
год за годам прабягае,
сьвеціць маладое сонца,
новы маладзік зіхцее.
Усё плыве, дачка паветра
250 гаспадыня – маці водаў,
па вадзе плыве спакойнай,
па туманных плыве хвалях,
перад ёй – вада безь межаў,
неба сьветлае – за ёю.
255 Дзевяць год так праляцела,
наступае год дзесяты –
галаву над роўняй мора
узьняла дачка паветра
ды ўзялася за стварэньне,
260 пачала тварыць тварэньні
на марскіх хрыбтах празрыстых
на абшарах вод адкрытых.
Як рукою дзе кранала --
мыс за мысам узьнімаўся,
265 дзе нагой дно даставала –
ямы рыбныя ўзьнікалі,
там, дзе бурбалкі пускала –
цёмныя віры глыбелі.
Дзе зямлю кранала бокам –
270 роўны бераг там рабіўся,
а нагой чапляла сушу –
ласасёвыя затокі;
галавой ледзь закранала –
бухты малыя стварала.
275 Адплыла ад сушы далей
ды спынілася на хвалях –
пад вадой узьніклі скалы,
камяні на дне ўзьняліся
караблям ды мараходцам
280 на нянацкую пагібель.
Выспы вось ужо гатовы,
скалы створаны ў моры,
небакрай вятры падпёрлі,
землям дадзены найменьні,
285 знакі на каменьнях бачны,
рэзы выразаны ў скалах,
толькі вечны песьнепеўца
Вяйнямёйнен не радзіўся.
Векавечны Вяйнямёйнен
290 у цёмным чэраве блукае,
трыццаць летаў там прабыў ён,
гэтулькі ж і зім халодных
на марскіх прасторах сьветлых,
на марскіх туманных хвалях.
295 Вось ён думае, гадае,
што ж рабіць яму тут далей,
у цёмным патаемным месцы,
у жытле маленькім цесным,
дзе маладзіка і сонца
300 ён ніколі там не бачыў.
Ён такія словы мовіў,
ён сказаў такія словы:
“Месяц, сонца залатое,
ты, Мядзьведзіца, на небе,
305 навучыце, памажыце
адчыніць мне тыя дзьверы
ды гняздо маё пакінуць,
маю цесную хаціну!
Пакажыце мне дарогу,
310 шлях да берага дзіцёнку,
каб пабачыць месяц ясны,
сонцам сьветлым захапляцца,
на Мядзьведзіцу дзівіцца,

паглядзець на зоркі ў небе!”
315 Не пусьціў на волю месяц,
сонца шлях не паказала.
Патрываў ён яшчэ крышку
і жыццё такое ўстыла:
моцныя хіснуў вароты
320 безнайменным сваім
пальцам,
адамкнуў замочак з косьці
малым пальцам нагі левай,
на лакцях сьлізнуў з парога,
з сенцаў на каленях выйшаў.
325 Ён зваліўся ніц у мора,
паляцеў рукамі ў хвалі,
муж на волю мора аддаўся
і герой застаўся ў хвалях.
Пяць гадоў ён там гайдаўся,
330 пяць і шэсьць гадоў
спадраду,
сем і восем год праплаваў,
ды нарэшце супыніўся
каля мыса без найменьня,
ля зямлі зусім бязьлеснай.
335 На калені муж узьняўся
ды на локці абапёрся,
устаў пабачыць месяц ясны,
сонцам сьветлым захапляцца,
на Мядзьведзіцу дзівіцца,
340 паглядзець на зоркі ў небе.
Так радзіўся Вяйнямёйнен,
роду мужны песьняпеўца,
вынашаны дзевай неба,
Ілматар, дачкой паветра.

РУНА ШОСТАЯ

Ёўкахайнен злуецца на Вяйнямёйнена і падпільноўвае яго па дарозе ў Пох’ёлу (1-78). Ён бачыць, як Вяйнямёйнен пераязджае на кані праз рэчку, і страляе з лука, але страла трапляе ў каня(79 – 182) . Вяйнямёйнен падае ў ваду, моцны вецер выносіць яго ў адкрытае мора (183 – 234) і Ёўкахайнен радуецца, думаючы, што стары песьняпеўца болей ніколі не сьпяе новых песень.

Стары мудры Вяйнямёйнен
неяк вырашыў наведаць
вёску сцюжную ў далёкай
цёмнай Пох’ёле халоднай.
5 Конь ягоны быў саловы,
сьветлы, як сьцябло гароху.
Залатой зцугляў аброцьцю,
кантар срэбраны накінуў,
вершкі на каня садзіцца
10 і сядзібу пакідае.
Паляцеў ён па дарозе,
шпарка мерыць шлях далёкі ,
на кані саловай масці,
сьветлым, як сьцябло гароху.
15 Едзе Вяйнёлы палямі,
верасамі Калевалы,
конь імкліва лічыць вёрсты,
хата родная зьнікае,

карацее шлях далёкі.
20 Вось марскім хрыбтом ён едзе,
па адкрытай роўні мора,
капыты ў каня сухія,
ногі у вадзе не мокнуць.
Хлопец малады лапландзкі,
хударлявы Ёўкахайнен,
25 у душы хаваў варожасць,
з даўняе пары зайздросціў
Вяйнямёйнену старому,
векавечным яго сьпевам.
Вогненны ён лук наладзіў
30 і дугу яго аздобіў:
выгнуў лук сабе жалезны,
а дзяржак мядзяны выліў,
залатой пакрыў аздобай,
срэбрам рупна ўпрыгожыў.
35 Дзе ж ён адшукаў вяроўку,
цеціву з чаго зрабіў ён?
Узяў ласінай жылы ў Хійсі,
ніткі ільняной – у Лемпа!
Вось гатовы стромкі выгін,
40 праца скончана над лукам.
Ён цудоўны быў на выгляд,
пэўна каштаваў нямала:
конь на выгіне нясецца,
збоку жарабя імчыцца,
45 сьпіць дзяўчына на загібе,
ля зарубкі зайка дрэмле.
Нарабіў ён безліч стрэлаў,
мноства тройчы іх апёрыў,
стрэлы ён выточваў з дуба,
50 а канцы з галін смалістых.
Майстраваў ён тыя стрэлы
ды апёрваў іх адразу
пер'ем ластаўкі маленькай,
вераб'інымі крыламі.
55 Вось гартуе тыя стрэлы,
наканечнікі іх сыціць
зьмеяў страшнаю атрутай,
гадаў чорнаю крывёю.
Як закончыў усе стрэлы,
60 цеціву на лук напнуўшы,
стаў чакаць старога Вяйнё,
пестуна марскіх заліваў.
Вечарам чакаў і ўранку,
пільнаваў сьпякотным поўднем.
65 Вяйнямёйнена нястомна
цэлы тыдзень ён чакае,
выглядае праз вакенца
ды цікуе з-за адрыны,
слухае каля дарогі,
70 вока з поля не спускае,
за сьпіной калчан паўнюткі,
лук пад пахай нагатове.
Пільнаваць падалей выйшаў,
з-за другой ён сочыць хаты
75 з края вогненнага мыса,
ля затокі з лукавіны,
з агнявога вадаспаду,
ад святой бурлівай рэчкі.
Вось аднойчы на сьвітаньні
80 толькі раньне засьвяціла,
ён акінуў вокам поўнач,
потым стаў да сонца тварам:
кропку чорную заўважыў,
штосьці сіняе на хвалях
85 „Можа хмарка там на ўсходзе,
ці дзяньніца ўзнялася?"
То не хмарка там на ўсходзе,
не дзяньніца паднялася –
гэта мудры Вяйнямёйнен,
90 векавечны песьняпеўца.
У Пох'ёду ён кіраваўся,

ён імчаўся ў Піментолу
на кані саловай масьці,
сьветлым, як сьцябло гароху.
95 Малады ж той Ёўкахайнен,
хлопец збэшчаны лапландзкі,
ухапіў свой лук цудоўны,
вогненны свой лук наладзіў
Вяйнямёйнену на згубу,
100 на сьмерць мужу Сувантолы.
Пачала пытацца маці,
так пыталася старая:
„На каго ты лук наладзіў,
абкаваў яго жалезам?”
105 Малады ж той Ёўкахайнен
дзёрзка ў адказ прамовіў:
„Я на тое лук наладзіў,
абкаваў яго жалезам
Вяйнямёйнену на згубу,
110 на сьмерць мужу Сувантолы.
Вяйнямёйнена я зьнішчу,
зьгіне вечны песьняпеўца,
стрэламі праб’ю я сэрца,
ды пячонку, ды рамёны.”
115 Маці ж не дае дазволу
і страляць забараняе:
„Вяйнямёйнена пакінь ты,
не губі ты калевальца!
З роду моцнага той Вяйнё,
120 да таго ж ён мой пляменнік.
Вяйнямёйнена заб’еш ты,
Калевы пясьняр загіне –
і загіне ў сьвеце радасьць,
песьня на зямлі пагасьне.
125 Радасьць лепей тут, на сьвеце,
на зямлі прыемней песьня,
чым у Манале падземнай,
пад скляпеньнем Туонелы.”
Малады тут Ёўкахайнен
130 некаторы час падумаў,
прыпыніўся на хвілінку:
„Біць!” – адна рука жадала,
адмаўлялася ж другая
амываць крывёю пальцы.
135 Вось нарэшце ён прамовіў,
вымавіў такія словы:
„І няхай сабе загіне,
хоць і двойчы ў сьвеце радасьць,
хай усе пагаснуць песьні –
140 сьмела выпушчу я стрэлы.”
Вогненны свой лук напружыў,
нацягнуў акуты медзьдзю,
зь левага калена цэліць,
стаў на правае калена.
145 Выняў ён стралу з калчана,
узяў апёраную тройчы,
выбіраў стралу палепей,
самы хуткі стрыжань выбраў,
вось прыклаў яе да лука,
150 да тугой ільнянай ніці.
Вогненны свой лук узняўшы,
да пляча яго прыставіў
і намерыўся страляць ён,
у Вяйнямёйнена нацэліў,
155 словы гэткія прамовіў:
„Трапным будзь ты, наканечнік,
бі мацней, сасновы стрыжань,
цеціва слізгай льняная!
Як рука пацэліць нізка,
160 хай страла імчыцца вышай,
а калі высока возьме,
хай страла ніжэй ударыць!”
Моцна цеціву рвануў ён,
першую стралу пусьціўшы,
165 ды высока паляцела –

па-над галавой у хмары,
у стракатыя аблокі,
прама ў пахмурнае неба.
Ён на гэта і не зважыў,
170 выпусьціў стралу другую,
тая нізка паляцела,
увайшла ў зямлю-матулю,
у Манале быць захацела,
там зарыцца ва ўзгорак.
175 Хутка стрэліў ён раз трэці:
гэтая страла папала
ў шыю сіняму аленю
Вяйнямёйнена старога.
Цераз левую падпаху,
180 цераз мяса ля лапаткі –
так забіў каня той масьці,
што падобна да гароху.
Векавечны Вяйнямёйнен
пальцамі ў ваду зваліўся,
185 ён упаў рукамі ў пену,
у шумныя марскія хвалі
са сьпіны ласінай сіняй,
з жарабка саловай масьці.
Тут узьняўся моцны вецер,
190 хвалі грозныя ўзьнясьліся,
Вяйнямёйнена панесла,
ад зямлі яго пагнала
на прасторы вод шырокіх,
на бурлівыя прасьцягі.
195 Стаў хваліцца Ёўкахайнен,
дзёрзкі малады хлапчына:
„Гэй, старэча Вяйнямёйнен,
болей ты ў жыцьці ніколі
залаты не ўбачыш месяц,
200 і нага твая не ступіць
на паляны Калевалы,
Вяйнёлы абшар зялёны!
Шэсьць гадоў па моры плаваў,
сем гадоў ты там гайдаўся,
205 восем год насіцца будзеш
па марскіх бурлівых хвалях,
па марскіх абсягах пенных,
шэсьць гадоў – камлём яловым,
бервяном сасновым – сем год,
210 восем год, як пень карчавы!”
Вось вярнуўся ён дахаты,
маці так яго спытала:
„Дык няўжо забіў ты Вяйнё,
сына Калевы ты зьнішчыў?”
215 Ёй прамовіў Ёўкахайнен
у адказ такія словы:
„Вяйнямёйнена забіў я,
сына Калевы я зьнішчыў,
мора зараз падмятае,
220 хвалі яно мяце старанна.
У каламуць вады пясчанай,
у мутныя ад жвіру хвалі
пальцамі стары зваліўся,
ськінуўся ўніз рукамі,
225 павярнуўся потым бокам,
на сьпіну перакуліўся,
па марскіх панёсься хвалях,
па марскіх вірах бяздонных!
Маці так яму сказала:
230 „Ты, нягоднік, дрэнна зробіў,
што забіў старога Вяйнё,
сына Калевы ты зьнішчыў,
Сувантолы моц і веліч,
Калевалы аздабленьне.”

Пераклаў з фінскай мовы
Якуб Лапатка
(Прамы пераклад з фінскай на беларускую робіцца ўпершыню)

ПЕРАКЛАДЫ АЛЕНЫ ТАБОЛІЧ І ЗМІЦЕРА ЗАНЕЎСКАГА

TRANSLATEDS BY ALENA TABOLICH & ZMICIER ZANEVSKI

ІРЛЯНДСКАЯ ПАЭЗІЯ

Знакаміты Оскар Ўайлд (1854-1900), драматург, літаратурны крытык, пісаў такасама вершы і паэмы.

Шэймус Хіні (н. 1939), лаўрэат Нобелеўскай прэміі, вядомы як адзін з выбітнейшых паэтаў Ірляндыі.

Іан Мак а'Гобхэйн (н.1928) піша вершы на ангельскай і гаэльскай мовах.

Іан Духіг (н.1954), які жыве ў г.Лідс, вось так піша пра ірляндскую мову:

Іан Духіг/ Ian Duhig

З ірляндскай

Паводле Дайніна, мову гаэлаў
не перасягне ніводны лексікограф.
Месяц – белае кола ў скрыліку
сырой бульбіны ці рэпы. Зорка –
гэта знак на ілбе звера,
а сонца – дно возера ці крыніцы.

Дык, калі я скажу, што
твой твар як скрылік сырой рэпы,
валасы твае колеру дна возера,
а ў зрэнках тваіх вачэй
знак звера, гэта таму, што
я хачу кахаць цябе паводле Дайніна.

Оскар Ўайлд/ Oscar Wilde

Сімфонія ў жоўтым

Як жоўты матылёк, паўзе
Праз мост вялікі омнібус
Трывожны, крыху стомлены,
То тут, то там нехта прайдзе.

А баржы з сенам залатым
Плывуць ля цёмнага прычалля.
Хоць шоўку жоўтага нямала,
густы туман навіс, як дым.

Лісточкі жоўтыя злятаюць,
Кружляюць па-над рэчкаю,
І быццам жоўтай свечкаю
нефрыты ў Тэмзу рассыпаюць.

У лесе

З краю, дзе лес глыбокі,
Туды, дзе святло трымціць,
Прыгожы ды цёмнавокі
Мой файны фаўн ляціць.

Праз гаі гучыць песня,
І цень танчыць за ёй.
А мне – ну хоць трэсні:
За чым гнацца? Вой, вой!!

О паляўнічы, дзе твой цень?
О салавейка, дзе твой слых?
У палоне музыкі, стары я пень,
Ой, не знайсці мне іх!

Шэймус Хіні/ Sheamus Heaney

Капальнікі

Між пальцамі маімі самапіска
Уселася ўтульна, зусім блізка,
Пад акном, лапата скрыгоча –
У грунт гравійны лезці не хоча.
Бацька капае. Гляджу ўніз –

Сярод кветак стракатых на клумбах
Ён напружана сагнуўся, шмат гадоў
Таму ён і бульбу так капаў,
Рытмічна працуючы ў баразне.

Гаматны бот націскаў на рабро
Лапаты. Ручка ўпіралася ў калена.
Выкідаў бульбоўнік, глыбока ўтыкаў штых,
Каб ляцелі халодныя бульбіны,
Што радасцю лашчылі нашы рукі.

Дальбог, стары ведаў, як варочаць лапатай,
Ня горш за свайго бацьку.

Дзядуля вырабляў за дзень больш торфу,
Чым хто йншы на нашым балоце.
Прынёс я яму аднойчы малака.
У бутэльцы корак з паперы. Выпіў
І зноў за працу – апланоўваў,
Наразаў, кідаў праз плячо дзярніну.
Усё глыбей за добрым торфам.
Капаў.

Свежы водар бульбянішча, хлюпат каранёў
Параненых – усё як жывое ў памяці.
Але няма ў мяне лапаты.

Хіба што між пальцаў маіх
Самапіска.
Буду ёю капаць.

Балотная зямля

У прэрыях
вечаровае сонца
згарае за небасхілам,
а ў нас цьмяныя зоркі

тонуць у зрэнках азёраў.
Іх колер з'ела ймгла
нашых лагчын і долаў.
У музеі захавала зямля

поўны набор шкілета
Ірляндскага Лася, канструкт,
Які трымае паветра.
Адны косці. А такі прадукт,

Як масла ў занядбаным склепе
ляжала не год, а гадамі,
ды не страціла ні смак, ні колер.
А зямля, прабітая прамянямі –

цярпліва пладавітая, вечная
прэла мільёны гадоў
і засталася зямлёю. Таму
вугаль тут ніхто не знайшоў.

Тут ёсць рэшткі траў
і дрэў, перагніўшых у торф.
Навуковец беражліва зразаў
Соты культурны слой

І ціха знаходзіў той,
дзе чалавек зрабіў стаянку
На беразе бяздоннага возера
З яго некранутай глыбінёй.

Ліхтарык глогу

Хоць глогу ваганёк і прыпазніўся,
Гарыць ён шчэ зімою ў кустоўі,
Не вельмі слепяць зрок яго ўзоры,
Ды заклікае кожнага захоўваць
Свой сціплы кнот супраціўлення.

Марозным днём, калі клубамі пара
з вуснаў ён набывае вобраз
Бадзягі Дыягена, што днём з агнём
Шукаў паўсюдна чалавека.

З цікаўнасцю глядзіць на вас,
Падняў на кволым дубчыку ліхтарык.
І вы ў дрыготках ад гэтага пагляду,
Ад бадзяка, што вам вось з пальца
Возьме крыві ён пробу, ад экрану,
Што вас наскрозь прайме – і годзе!

Іан Мак А' Гобхэйн/ Iain Mac a'Ghobhain
Іан Крычтан Сміт/ Iain Crichton Smith

Ссылкі

Шмат караблёў адплылі з краіны
белакрылай у Канаду.
Яны, як хустачкі ў памяці.
а мора, як слёзы.
На мачтах маракі пяюць,

Як птушкі на дрэвах.
Майскае мора сіняе-сіняе,
уначы поўня, днём сонца.
Месяц, як жоўты яблык,
Як талерка на сцяне,
да якой цягнуць рукі,
як срэбны магніт
з прамянямі,
што пранізваюць сэрца.

Сава і мыш

Сава ляціць дамоў, у дзюбе мыш.
Высока ў небе поўня дзіўна свеціць.

Залаты камень, цьмянае святло.
Лупатая сава сядзіць на дрэве.

Усё здаецца вечным, каб не мыш
Парваная струна ў гармоніі

аркестра, які ўмела грае
бязгучную мелодыю сваю.

Ales Rasanau / Алесь Разанаў

ON THIS LAND

Some people ask me to show the way to the East,
Other people – the way to the West....

As if at crossroads, I show the way to all of them,
but I myself remain in the same place,
on this very land, under this blue sky.

I'm too light to go deep into the depths,
too heavy to fly high to the Heavens.
Too spiritually balanced to go
in any direction...

This is my left hand, and this is my right hand...
I throw a seed into soil, and it gives birth to a tree:

one bough is shining in the smiling sun,
the other is moonlit,
and many rich-voiced melodious birds from all over the world,
sitting on the boughs, sing their sweet songs and make their nests...

Here's my West, here's my East.

***

Images constantly tempt me to follow them,
but as soon as I try to do that, they are like birds
which keep those who are going to leave
their hidden nests from doing the dreadful thing.

The long winding paths lead to the East,
and to the West, but at every step you make, everywhere
there appears a steep loftiness above them, and,
rising over itself, it immediately turns
into the mind of the body; rising over itself,
the mind turns everything into understanding, which
like water-bearing vessels, imbue and nourish every word
you say, every step you make, with their vigour.

A human thing means two men, who are like two
palms, which, together, make a snowball or
throw it over, from hand to hand, to keep the heat:
one of them is a start, the other is an end,
one of them is a source, the other's a confluence,

one is a cause, the other is its result,
one of them is a question, the other is an answer;
between them are the words, rising
out of them and flowing into them.

Everything that moves me to tears, is just like myself.
The day of creation isn't yet over: again and
again the Man shapes his better future and destiny.

Stop, linger, wait, let your desire be free,
and you will not be a small creature, antogonistic
to everyone, and the birds will come back to you,
the birds that you cannot catch, when you set snares,
the birds that hide somewhere, when you search for them,

and you will hear: each bird or birdie
sings like you, and you will see:
each bird looks like you.

Nil Hilevich / Ніл Гілевіч

***

Late at night the rain
is whispering something
to the apple tree.
And I will stay out of doors
and remember all I can.

***

Flower after flower.
have faded and withered
in my little orchard.
I feel sad. My sun will soon
stop shining brightly to me.

Mikhas Skobla/ Міхась Скобла

***

Rain was running aslant to the sea,
It couldn't run straight because of the shoal.
The sward of the bar was tempered like steel
In the foamy waves that rose and rolled.

The wind was wiping its face with the fog.
The light had dimmed. Two shadows departed.
Shaking its head like a big hedgehog,
An old chestnut tree suddenly startled.

Translated by ***Alena Tabolich***

Філіп Ларкін/ Philip Larkin

Дні

Навошта нам дні?
У днях мы жывём.
Яны абуджаюць нас
Кожным ранкам.
Дні нам патрэбны для шчасця:
Дзе яшчэ жыць, як не ў днях?

Адказ на гэта пытанне
Нясуць нам святар і доктар
У сваіх доўгіх плашчах,
Спяшаючыся здалёк.

***

Цяпер і я кажу:
„чвэрць стагоддзя"

ці „трыццаць гадоў таму”
аб сваім жыцці.

Ад гэтага займае дых,
бы ўверх нясе
і зноў кідае долу
ў бяздонным небе.

Усё, што яшчэ здарыцца, –
нехта памрэ (і я таксама).
Калі і як гэта будзе,
пакуль невядома.

Недасягальнае

Між зорных выспаў ёсць
Пустэчы змроку, дзе
Рой цьмяных светлякоў
Бы ў паветры плыве.

Ім не далі імёнаў.
Вандроўнікам ўначы
Не радуюць вачэй,
Не кажуць шлях яны,

Бо іх няўлоўны бляск
Людскому воку:
Хавае невядомае
Пустэча змроку.

Вада

Каб веру ізноў
Мне шанц прапаноўваў
Стварыць, я б успомніў ваду.

Наведванне храму
Было б як пераапрананне
ў новую, сухую адзежу.

Імша ўключала б у сябе
Вобразы адданага,
Шчырага аблівання,

А на Ўсходзе б я ўзняў
Шклянку з вадою,
Бы светлы сабор,
Дзе бясконца сыходзяцца
промні.

Сумны дом

Дом застаецца – сумны, бы ўспамін
Пра тых, што будавалі для сябе,
А потым адышлі. А вось адзін
Дом змен цураецца і ўсё заве
Назад звярнуцца сведкаў тых часін.

Калі яшчэ ён поўніўся жыццём
І ведаў, што і як павінна быць.
Мінула ўсё. Ды след пакуль відзён:
Глядзі – карціны, посуд ў шафе; спіць
Нямое піяніна. Стары вазон...

***

Першае, што я
Добра зразумеў:
Час – бы сякеры звонкі стогн
У целах дрэў.

На золку
Прачнуцца ды пачуць

Ад пеўня спеў далёкі,
У вакенца зазірнуць –
А там плывуць аблокі, –
Так дзіўна, калі ў цябе
Абыякавы золак на сэрцы,
Як той, што ў вакенцы.

***

Усё, што кожны дзень
Мы робім для сябе,
Знікае, быццам цень,
Або далей жыве.
Вось дзіўная павязь:
Чаго прычына – мы
Вярнецца праз гады,
Спрычыніцца да нас.

Пераклады з ангельскай – ***Зміцера Занеўскага***

Томас Транстромэр/ Tomas Tranströmer

До-мажор

Калі ён вяртаўся ад любай свае,
снег віраваў навокал.
Зіма паспела прыйсці,
пакуль былі яны разам.
Святлом зыходзіла ноч.
Ён не чуў ног ад шчасця.
Горад застаўся ўнізе.
Людзі, што йшлі насустрач –
кожны ўсмешку хаваў за каўнер.
Было вольна!
І ўсе пытальнікі спеў пачалі аб прысутнасці Бога –
так падалося яму.

Вось узнік вольны напеў
і доўгім крокам памкнуў
праз буйны снег.
І ўсё няслося да гуку „до”.
Компасу стрэлка – дрыжэла на „до”.
Гадзіна без смерці ды болю.
Было лёгка!
За кожным каўнерам хавалася ўсмешка.

Біргер Норман / Birger Norman

Чужынец

Не думай, што свабода не можа памерці.
Шмат хто ўжо бачыў дзень яе смерці.
Яны ведаюць, бо яны лілі слёзы.

Дык не вярзі ж глупстваў пра ідэалы.
Мо й табе шчэ прыдзецца ісці за труною свабоды.

І вось, калі апасля напаткаеш чужынца,
Злаві яго позірк.
Зазірні глыбей у ягоныя вочы.

Ёста Огрэн/ Gösta Ĺgren

Жыццё і плач

Бязвольны
ўсё жыццё
глытае слёзы.

А моцны
іх глытае
ўсім жыццём.

Спадчыннасць

Іспытамі на разумнасць
бароніць сябе эліта
ад простых. Дзеля таго
іх дзяцей адвучаюць ад
думак перад іспытам.
Гэта нялёгка. Ды
толькі разумныя вучацца,
а вось дурныя –
ніколі.

Бруно К. Ойер /Bruno K. Oijer

***

Ён Так моцна Жадаў Цябе, Што
Узяў І Адсёк Сабе
Усе Пальцы

А Твой Нумар Набраў Языком

Цяпер Увесь Час Чуе
Ён Твой Дзівосны Смех

Петэр Курман/ Peter Curman

Што ж на самой справе адбываецца?

У кожным з нас
гучыць маналог
думкі за шклом
амаль няўлоўныя

але непазбыўныя,
бы паветра, якім дыхаеш
ці вада, якую п'еш.
Усюды з табою,
нібы недарэчны шлягер,
які не спяваецца,
ад якога ніяк не адчэпішся.
А ноччу,
калі ява раствараецца ва ўяўнасці,
ты бяжыш,
нібы апантаны
ўкруг, ўкруг
па сваіх уласных слядох.
Што ж на самой справе адбываецца
глыбока ўнутры нас,
у тым нямым пласце,
што ёсць самае
дно жыцця?

Дыялог

Вітанні! Як маецеся?
(боль! боль! боль!
бессань! бессань! бессань!
хвароба! хвароба! хвароба!
бездапаможнасць! бездапаможнасць! бездапаможнасць!).
Дзякуй, нічога. А самі?

Стыг Ларсан/ Stig Larsson

Багі

Два багі стрэліся – і здзівіліся,
Бо кожны лічыўся адзіным.
І вось

стала двое адзіных. Вось стала двое
багоў.
Што ім рабіць? Яны разважаюць.
„Я – дэман таксама," – кажа адзін
амаль самазадаволена.
„А я – толькі бог," – адказвае другі.
„Тады мы маглі б разысціся," – думаюць абодва.
(Не пайсці ў розныя бакі, не,
а проста адысці адзін ад аднаго).
Першы – вельмі добры, ў памкненнях
і памылках. Другі –
добры не менш,
але з дэманічнай усмешкаю,
быццам прапаленай тоўстай цыгарай.
Ім не разысціся,
яны побач заўсёды.
Часам яны размаўляюць, але часцей
проста думаюць,
маўкліва думаюць.

Ларс Люндквіст/ Lars Lundkvist

Паездка

Пакуль я гашу вогнішча
там, каля возера, Карын кажа:
„Я хутка страчу зрок,
Так сказаў лекар."

Ёй адзінаццаць,
зрок – 0,3.

„Але гэта нічога,
я амаль усё бачыла."

„Учора я бачыла ў снезе
сяміканцовы лісток."

„Ён гэтую ноч, у хусцінцы,
Правёў пад маёю падушкай.”

Сонца і лёд.
Канькі, што пабліскваюць у промнях.

Бертыль Петэрсан/ Bertil Petersson

Двое

Чалавецтва –
гэта проста сінонім
калектыўнай самотнасці.

Хай адзін –
яшчэ і не лета.
Двое –
гэта ўжо не зіма.

Гунар Экелоф/ Gunnar Ekelöf

****

Каханне – той жа хірург,
яно рэжа цябе, нібы нож,
заўсёды ля самага сэрца.
Яно можа нават абрэзаць…
Ты мне не верыш?
Дарэмна! Каханне змяняе
тваю скуру й твае валасы,
ты нат не пазнаеш свае хады.
Ад кахання няма ратунку,
хіба што – хірурга нож.

Пакутаваць – цяжка.
Пакутаваць не кахаючы – цяжка.

Кахаць без пакут – немагчыма зусім.
Кахаць – цяжка.

Урбан Торнхамн/ Urban Tornhamn

Бы цёплы румянец шчакі

Адкінь усе гэтыя сымбалі!
Мы адчуваем тое, што нябачна нікому.
Мы бачым тое, што не адчувае ніхто.
З тваіх таямніц
нараджаюся я.
З маіх таямніц
нараджаешся ты.
Таямніца ў тым, што адзін аднаму
мы непарыўна належым.

Бы цёплы румянец шчакі
належыць заўсёды свайму твару.

Пераклады з швэдскай – ***Зміцера Занеўскага***

Алена Таболіч *– дацэнт Мінскага лінгвістычнага універсітэта, лектарка і перакладчыца. Яе кнігі „Срэбны дождж": пераклады з англамоўнай паэзіі (1999) і „Таямніцы мастацкага перакладу" (2004), адна з аўтараў Англійска-беларускіх слоўнікаў (1989, 1995, 2004).*

Зміцер Занеўскі *– выпускнік Мінскага лінгвістычнага ўніверсітэта, перакладчык. Стажыраваўся ў Швэцыі. Перакладае з ангельскай і швэдскай моў. Дыплом прысвяціў паэтычным перакладам.*

БЭРТАЛЬТ БРЭХТ
Bertholt Brecht

Пра спакушэньне анёлаў

Анёла альбо не чапай, альбо лапай хутчэй,
З налёту ў пад'езд валачы і лезь пад хітон,
Заткні яму рот языком, пакуль не ачухаўся ён,
І ўвінчвай, шуруй, а як з лытак яму пацячэ,
Рачком да сьцяны прыхілі, задзяры фартушок
І, як з горла ягонага вырвецца здушаны стогн,
Трымай яго моцна і двойчы яму запістонь,
Ня даўшы экстазу ператварыцца ў шок.

Хай юрзае дупкаю спраўна, анёлу скажы,
Яечкі табе хай пальцамі перабірае,
І толькі калі між зямлёй і раем ён залунае,
Бясстрашна валі дагары і ад шчырай душы
Пярдоль яго ў душу, ды толькі, калі затрапеча,
У твар не глядзі і крыл не зламай, чалавеча.

Саўна і спалука

Сьпярша ў нас ябуцца, а лазьню прымаюць пасьля.
Чакаеш, калі над балейкай нагнецца, і вось
Любуешся голенькім задам, і лёгенька коўзь!–
Па кульшачках, як бы жартуючы, ненаўмысьля,

Трымаеш яе ў пазыцыі, потым здабычай
Хай будзе ёй гер: хай сама на яго садзіцца.
Калі ж ёй прысьпічыць спачатку падмыцца,
Уваж,– хай, як вучыць нас продкавы звычай,
Паслужыцца ў ваньне. Хай кіпнем ліне на каменьне,
Клубамі ў шыпеньні каб пара ўвышкі ўзьляцела,
Адхвошча пяшчотна цябе бярозавым вецьцем,
Бальзам уліе ў душу, і на гэтым сьвеце
Адкрыецца рай, і прыме твой дух асьвяжэньне,
І прыйдзе чысьцец, і змые аб'ёбіны зь цела.

Спанатры каханьня

Ня так яно, каб асалодай зноў
Не спакушаўся наш юрлівец гер,
Ён паўстае і свой сьвяты намер
Увасабляе ў вобраз вабных сноў.
О, гэты лёгкі цік твайго задка,
Даўно чаканы знак, – хітруе плоць!
Раскоша той, якую самахоць
Удабралашчыць надзіцца рука .

Развод каленцаў! О яна – спалучка!
І дрогкасьць – знак, што мускулу пара
Спатоліць юр зноў прагнага нутра!
О кволы выгін! Лена гладзіць ручка,
З усьмешкаю!..
О еднасьць нашых цел!–
Тым лепшая, чым лучыш нас часьцей!

Ёган Вольфганг Гётэ
Johan Wolfgang Goethe

XXIII

Вось запаведнік чароўны, я кветак любові чакаю,
Музы дагледзелі сад, мудра пасеялі тут.
Я ж чаранок пладаносны, ствол залаты існаваньня
Радасна сам пасадзіў, шчасьця чакаю цяпер.
Службу нясі, мой прыапе*! Чаго мне баяцца дарэмна
Злодзеяў! Сей і зрывай кветкі цудоўных уцех.
Толькі ханжоў ня пускай, зласьлівых і кволых няздольцаў;
Прыйдзе каторы, зірне ў засень любві, аплюе
Чыстай прыроды дарункі – сьмела кладзі на яго
Сьцёгнаў праведны гнеў – кроўю наліты ражон!

Пераклаў ***Дзядзька Васіль***

**) Рэліктавы чарвяк, што ўсьвідроўваецца ў грунт. Нагадвае penis.*

Марні Вудроў
Marnie Woodrow

САБАЧАЕ ЖЫЦЬЦЁ

У Ідэн Хавард ёсьць адзін яркі ўспамін зь дзяцінства. Зьвязаны ён з сабакам. І хаця гэты сабачы досьвед быў зусім непрыемны, ён усё ж не абверг ейнай любові да сабак. Было ёй тады пяць, ці шэсьць, і была яна здурэўшы па суседзкай нямецкай аўчарцы – псіне з дзікаватымі вачыма па мянушцы „Лінда". Яна аж шалела за гэтай Ліндай з ўсімі яе блохамі, слінявым носам і сьмярдзючай поўсьцю. І ўжо калі дзе і можна было яе знайсьці, так гэта ля сабакі, дзе яна, седзячы на карачках, будзе шаптаць яму нешта бясконца пяшчотнае. Сабака ведаў усё, што толькі можна было ведаць, з жыцьця няшчаснай Ідэнавай сям'і.

– Не чапай сабакі, калі ён есьць, – сказалі Ідэн рослыя постаці дарослых.

– Лінда любіць мяне! – заўпарцілася Ідэн. Ну й, вядома, яна тут жа павярнулася й ляпнула Лінду па сьцёгнах – акурат калі сабака, звычайна рахманы, пад'ядаў сваю вячэру – наўмысна дзеля доказу, што Лінда любіць Ідэн безумоўна.

Ненавідзела Лінда таксама безумоўна і адказала на сяброўскую Ідэнаву тузанку скрыгатам зубоў. Пасьля шаснаццаці швоў Ідэн атрымала першую „а-што-я-табе-гаварыў" дозу ад тых самых дарослых. Але яе любоў да Лінды, як і павага да яе пэрсанальных межаў, толькі паглыбелі. Зрэшты, гэта, напэўна, і стала пачаткам яе дзівацкай жарсьці, і нават апантанасьці, да сабак.

Ідэн не дазвалялі мець свайго сабаку. Яе бацькі валодалі глыбокім ахоўным пачуцьцём у вадносінах да белага калматага дывановага насьцілу ў іхнай хаце і адмовіліся прымаць жывёл якога б там ні было віду, уключаючы і homo sapiens, абутых у чаравікі. Ідэн узьненавідзела гэтыя дываны, таму што яны паўсталі паміж ёй і магчымасьцю мець свайго собскага любага шчанючка. Сабакі, як сказала мама, толькі то й робяць, што жаруць, нагаўняюць і згрызаюць анціквар зараз жа, як толькі ты да іх сьпіной.

– Я буду сачыць за ім, – абяцала Ідэн, але маміна рашэньне было канчатковым.

– У твайго бацькі алергія, – сказала мама, хаваючы вочы.

– А што, Лінда багата нагаўняе? – спытала Ідэн дзядзьку. Таго, што карміў Лінду і гуляў зь ёю і меркаваў сябе ейным гаспадаром.

– Халера, яшчэ як! – адказаў дзядзька. – А ты думаеш, чаму мы больш ня робім барбікю на заднім дворыку? – ён затыкнуў нос і вымавіў глыбокае „фу-у-у!".

– А можа, мы маглі б завесьці сабаку, які ўмее карыстацца лазёнкай? – упрошвала Ідэн маці.

– А можа ты магла б уцямяшыць у сваю галаву штосьці іншае, акрамя сабакі! Далібог, Ідэн, не дуры мне галавы ўсёй гэтай сабачай балбатнёй. Сабакі ня ходзяць у лазёнку! І не хачу я ніякага сабакі ў маёй купальні. Яны сьмярдзяць!

Ідэн успомніла пра парфуму, што маці вылівала на сябе кожны дзень, – тую, ад якой у Ідэн цяклі сьлёзы і запірала ў горле, і толькі дзіву давалася, як гэта можна ўважаць, што сабакі сьмярдзяць.

– Нам, відаць, ня варта хадзіць зь ёй на „Лэсі вяртаецца дамоў", – сказала неяк маці свайму мужу, лежачы ў ложку. – Яна ж апантаная за гэтымі сабакамі.

Містэр Хавард перавярнуўся на бок і ўздыхнуў:

– Будзь яшчэ рада, што яна ня з тых „конскіх дзяцей", Мэдлін.

– Ты гэта пра што?

– Ну, ведаеш, – ён пазяхнуў у падушку, – тыя дзяўчынкі, што носяцца вакола галопам, і думаюць, што яны – коні. У Фрэда Конара вось такое дзіцё, і яму каштуе цэлую вязанку грошы, каб угаварыць яе зьесьці што-небудзь іншае, акрамя яблыкаў і цукровых кубікаў. Кажа, яна нават набыла сабе нейкія „жавальныя зубы" і больш нічога ня хоча рабіць, адно што іржаць. Ідэн проста ў такой фазе, яна перарасьце гэта. Гэта мая чарга шампуняваць дываны заўтра ці твая?

– Твая, – буркнула місіс Хавард.

„Конскія дзеці"? І дзе ж гэтта ён пабачыў хоць адно такое?

* * *

Ідэнава дзяцінства цяпер далёка. Ёй трыццаць два. Ні дзяцей, ні мужа, толькі псыхіятар.

Некалі яна спрабавала быць вэтэрынарам, але калі прафэсар паклаў перад ёю здохлага пудзеля і заявіў, што яны зараз будуць дзяліць ягоны мозг, яна зьбегла з унівэрсітэцкай лябараторыі і больш туды не вярнулася. О, вядома, яна магла б стаць сабачым цырульнікам ці фатографам, але ж ня кожны можа пераплавіць свой боль у кар'еру.

Ідэн была прызнаная непрацаздольнай і жыла на псыхіятрычную пэнсію ўжо даволі часу. Хаця яе выпадак незвычайны і, напэўна, беспрэцэдэнтны (ці прынамсі іншыя такія ж не былі задакумэнтаваныя, як гэта бывае), ейны псіхіятар сочыць, каб даглядалі за ёй добра. Ён – стары сябар сям'і і ведае інтымныя падрабязнасьці аб белых калматых дыванах, якія, як ён падазрае, і сталіся прычынай Ідэнавага трывожнага сімптому. Сам аднойчы быў брутальна выгнаны з Хавардавага дому за тое, што пасьмеў не зьняць галёшы, і цяпер віну за свой выніковы страх перад прэзэрватывамі ён ускладае менавіта на Хавардаў.

Цяпер, урэшце жывучы адна, Ідэн, вядома, магла завесьці сабаку, што яна і зрабіла. Яна знайшла Дэбі ў мясцовым SPCA*. Дэбі – нейкая помесь колі – нагадвала ёй ейную ўлюбёную старую Лінду. Любоў была кароткай, бы „палёт зьнічкі" (як Ідэн потым называла гэта), таму што Дэбі напаткала хуткая сьмерць. Праз тры тыдні, як яна прыйшла жыць разам з Ідэн у яе кватэру ў цэнтры гораду, Дэбі ўзяла і сіганула з балкона. Яна б яшчэ выжыла ад падзеньня, каб раптам на ходніку не зьявіўся маньяк на роліках і не прыкончыў яе, перарэзаўшы, калі яна, ачумелая, ляжала, скуголячы, на бэтоне. Забітая горам і зусім ачмурэлая, Ідэн лічыла, што менавіта тое, што яна не купіла сабачага корму ў прыгожанькіх абгортках, спанукнула Дэбі да сабачага самазагубства. Боль згубы быў такім невыносным, што яна паклялася больш ніколі не заводзіць сабак. З тае пары яна задавольвала сваю любоў да сабак толькі збоку, вачыма, адорваючы усёй сілай сваёй вялікай пяшчоты і тым, што яна ўяўляла сабе як „тэлепатычная сабачая размова", кожнага сабаку, з якім сутыкалася.

– Як справы, Ідэн? – пытаецца доктар Гелбер.

Сёньня аўторак, пасьля палудню. Доктар сядзіць, ёмка ўладкаваўшыся ў сваім вялікім фатэлі "хлопчык-лайдачык", на ягоным твары – фотаздымак жоўтага лабрадора. Гэта іхны мэтад – „прымер-павер" тэхніка, на якую яны аднаго дня выпадкова трапілі.

**SPCA (The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) – Таварыства аховы жывёл.*

Было тое ў нейкую даждлівую сераду, і доктару Гелберу тады хацелася паддаць настрою Ідэн. Весяліць пацыентаў не ўваходзіла ў ягоныя прафэсійныя абавязкі, але яго гэта не абыходзіла. Ягоная спагадлівасьць да Ідэн часам рабіла яго непрафесійным. Ён дурасьліва прыклаў да свайго твару часопіс „Сабачыя фантазіі" і прамовіў радасным тонам:

– Прывітаньне, Ідэн! Я – Барні Жоўты Лаб! Як маешся сёньня?

Ва ўпершыню за гады, Ідэн адказала на гэтае пытаньне шчыра. Што было б подзьвігам для любога, калі над гэтым задумацца.

– Поўны гамон, – буркнула яна суха.

Утаропіўшыся проста ў вочы Барні Жоўтага Лаба (доктара Гелбера, пра якога яна ўжо забылася), яна працягвала:

– Часам я не хачу быць тут.

Здагадаўшыся па той бок часопіса, што прабіў-такі пралом у муры, доктар Гелбер зрабіў наступны крок тым жа вясёленькім лабрадорчыным голасам:

– Што ты маеш на ўвазе, Ідэн? Ты ня хочаш быць тут, у гэтым габінэце?

– Я маю на ўвазе – у гэтым сьвеце, – ціха сказала Ідэн, ня зводзячы вачэй ад Барні. Яе ахапіў такі парыў любові, што яна ледзь уседзела ў сваім „лайдачыку". – Я ні з кім не магу гаварыць, ні на кога не магу глядзець. Гэта жахліва.

– А чаму ты ня можаш ні на кога глядзець? – зацікавіўся Барні/др.Гелбер.

– Я не выношу тое, што бачу ў людзкіх вачах, – закруціла галавой Ідэн. – Я шалею ад усёй іхнай нудоты ...і падазронасьці ...і злоснасьці.

– І гэта табе некага нагадвае? – настойваў Барні.

– НЕ! – ускрыкнула Ідэн жарсна. – Гэта доктар Гелбер увесь час пхнецца скіраваць мяне так, каб я вінаваціла сваіх маці і бацьку ў тым, што са мной нешта не так. Але я ведаю, што ён – проста мяшок гаўна, які абчытаўся Фройдам ў сваім коледжы.

– Тады чаму ж ты лічыш, што ня можаш ні на кога глядзець? – напіраў Барні, намагаючыся забыцца на тое, што доктара Гелбера, які быў па другі бок ад яго, толькі што вэрбальна абразілі. Цярпець гэткія паскудствы БЫЛО ягоным прафэсійным абавязкам, таму ён вытрымаў Ідэнаву крытыку, усьцешаны тым, што яна думае, што яго тут няма.

– Я хачу пацалаваць цябе, – раптам сказала Ідэн, ускочыла са свайго „лайдачыка" і ўляпіла буську ва ўсьмешлівую папяровую Барневу пысу. Потым заплюшчыла вочы і аддалася пацалункам. Доктару Гелберу аж запёрла дых па-за нумарам „Сабачых фантазіяў", і ён паабяцаў сабе, што зробіць тлумны запіс адразу, як Ідэн пойдзе.

– Я люблю цябе, Барні, – прастагнала яна, падаючы зноў у свой фатэль.

Гэтая знаходка, як вы здагадваецеся, пацягнула за сабой іншыя, і доктар Гелбер ужо цешыўся прадчуваньнямі „новых земляў" у псыхіятрычным сьвеце. Нічога так не задавальняе, як адкрыцьцё новых формаў мэнтальных хвароб.

Сёньня, з сабачай пысай на сваім месцы, доктар Гелбер цярпліва чакае на Ідэн, каб пакончыць з пацалункамі самога Барні. Яна не спазьняецца на прыём. Урэшце. На тэрапэўтычнай мове гэта называецца – Прагрэс. У яго ёсьць новая ідэя, але ён хоча дачакацца, каб Ідэн дала ёй хады сама.

– Ну, як прайшоў тыдзень? – спанукае ён.

– Два мопсы, чатыры джэк-расэл тэр'еры і два шы-тсу, – ківае Ідэн. – Мы мелі глыбокія зносіны. У парку. Мы размаўлялі аб палітыцы.

– А як выглядалі іх гаспадары? – адважваецца доктар Гелбер хрыпатым Барневым голасам.

– Адкуль мне ў дупу ведаць? – пытаецца Ідэн па-сапраўднаму напалохана.

– Ну-у... э-э... Слухай, Ідэн, мне прыйшла адна добрая ідэя нядаўна ноччу, калі я грыз сырамятную костку... Хочаш паслухаць, якая?

– Вядома, Барні, безумоўна хачу. Я люблю цябе.

– І я цябе, Ідэн. Вось мая ідэя: бачыш гэты партрэт сабакі – ён мой сябра, між іншым, – цудоўны стандартны пудзель, з усімі прышчэпкамі. ...Бадай што вазьмі яго з сабой і трымай ў сваёй клумцы.

– Навошта? – трохі бянтэжыцца Ідэн. Ці не пытаецца ён гэтым нешта сказаць? Можа, ён больш ня хоча яе? Яна замірае ў сваім фатэлі, стаіўшы дыханьне, чакае.

– Бач, ты казала, што ў цябе ёсьць некаторыя цяжкасьці ў тваіх побытавых справах... Вось я і падумаў, што, каб ты насіла ...здымак Бандэра з сабой. Ты магла б карыстацца ім, каб ...праходзіць праз трывожныя моманты...

– Бандэр? – пытаецца Ідэн, беручы здымак, які працягвае ёй Барні/др. Гелбер. Ён плястыкавы, якасны, з усялякімі аздобамі. Яна запіхвае яго ў сваю клумку. І пасьля таго, як Барні тлумачыць ёй, як Бандэр будзе дапамагаць ёй заходзіць у аўтобус, рабіць пакупкі, – яна просіць, ці не маглі б яны проста трошкі пасядзець ціха.

– Можна пачасаць табе жывоцік, Барні? – з надзеяй прамаўляе яна. І па той бок часопіса доктар Гелбер толькі кхеркае, запнуўшыся на паўслове. А што, к чарцям сабачым, мусіць ён адказаць на гэткае запатрабаваньне? А што калі Бэна, ягоная сакратарка, хавае відэакамэру дзесь у прыёмным пакоі і тады засудзіць яго на дзесяць мільёнаў даляраў? Аднак Ідэн чакае на адказ, і доктар Гелбер мусіць вярнуцца ў Барневу пэрсону. Барні – не з панікёраў, гаворыць сам сабе доктар

Гелбер. З часопісам на твары ён кладзецца на падлогу свайго прыёмнага пакою і чакае, калі Ідэн падыдзе і пачэша яму жывоцік.

”Госпадзе! Няхай бы той Бэне было не ў галаве... ” – думае ён сабе, вымушаны асалоджвацца Ідэнавым шкрабаньнем па ягоным жываце.

* * *

Ідэн рухаецца да касы супермаркета разам са сваімі закупкамі, што ляжаць на стужцы канвэера. Ёй не падабаецца, калі ейныя ўважліва выбраныя тавары зьбягаюць ад яе наперад. Доктар кажа, гэта называецца ”комплекс пакінутасьці”, і што ў яе выпадку гэта дзіўнавата, бо місіс Хавард, Ідэнава маці, амаль што ніколі не пакідала свайго дома. Яна сядзела ў хаце, як на варце, – сачыла, каб Ідэн не рабіла шкоды і не хадзіла па тых казачных дыванах. На самой справе, у тыя рэдкія гадзіны, калі місіс Хавард рабіла вылазкі за прадуктамі, Ідэн была свабодна. На ейны розум, гэта было доказам таго, што доктар Гелбер поўны гаўна, але не таго, які можна сабраць у плястыкавы мяшок*. Вось Барні, ён жаж насупраць, – сьвяты і мудры.

Назіраньне за сваімі прадуктамі, якія ўцякаюць ад яе па чорнай гумовай стужцы, напаўняе Ідэн трывогай. Але яна робіць глыбокі ўздых і працісквaецца да іх. Касірка пачынае пералічваць тавары, а Ідэн не адрывае вачэй ад сваёй клумкі.

– Цудоўны дзень, га? – заводзіць размову касірка.

Ідэн пачынае пацець.

– Так, – выціскае зь сябе Ідэн і вырашае, што зараз самы той выпадак, каб паспрабаваць выкарыстаць фатаздымак Бандэра. Выцягвае яго з клумкі. Яна прычапіла ззаду да яго гумовую стужку – так, як наінструктаваў Барні.

– Будзе дождж заўтра, – працягвае касірка, заглядваючы Ідэн у вочы.

– Ці б вы пагадзіліся, – пачынае Ідэн, працягваючы касірцы фатаздымак, – надзець гэта на сябе?

– Хэх? – дзівіцца касірка. Яна паглядзела на гумовую стужку ззаду, акінула вокам краму: ці ня сочыць дзе мэнэджэр, паціснула плячыма:

– Добра. Чаму не? – і нацягвае карцінку з Барні сабе на твар. – Так?

Ейны голас прыглушаны кардонкай, але Ідэн ўздымае вочы, марудна, уважліва. Сэрца яе ўзьнімаецца.

Уставіўшыся ў вочы Бандэра, Ідэн гаворыць ясным, агрэсіўным тонам:

– Вось гэтая бляшанка тапіокі – пагнутая. Будзьце ласкавы, скідку!

**У Канадзе гаспадары прыбіраюць на вуліцы за сваімі сабакамі (Заўв. перакл.)*

* * *

Жыцьцё Ідэн зьмянілася.

Вядома, некаторыя адмаўляліся надзяваць маску Бандэра. Працаўнік хімчысткі – той дакладна ўпарты, так што Ідэн прыйшлося вярнуцца да прасаваньня сваіх блюзак самой. Але, ў асноўным, людзі былі даволі спагадлівыя. І яна рада паведаміць Барні/др.Гелберу, што пасьпяхова зьдзейсьніла два паходы ў аптэку, адзін да хірапрактара і тры візіты да "Малочнай каралевы", і што яна глядзела кожнаму проста ў вочы. З дапамогай Бандэра, вядома.

Але Ідэн зноў напалохана, калі Барні бярэцца за старое:

– Ну, цяпер, Ідэн, – гаворыць ён ласкава, – як наконт сяброўства, спатканьня?

– НЕ, – трасе яна галавой. – Не напірай на мяне, Барні: ты дзейнічаеш, як адступнік. Я задаволена ўсім, як ёсьць.

– Хіба ты не самотная? – настойвае ён. Ідэн трыццаць два, і яна цнатлівая. Гэта, вядома, добра. Але доктар Гелбер упэўнены, што брак сэксу можа прывесьці да мэнтальных парушэньняў. Калі б у яго спыталі доказаў, ён бы паказаў на сваю жонку, Хілары.

Ідэн утароплiваецца ў Барні.

– Ты запрашаеш мяне на спатканьне?

– Э-э... не, Ідэн, я баюся, у мяне ужо ёсьць нехта дарагі ...жонка. У нас ...у сабак нават ...яны ёсьць, разумееш.

– А дзе яна жыве? Як яе завуць? – пытаецца Ідэн усхвалявана. – У цябе ёсьць яе фота, каб мне паглядзець?

Думай хуценька, кажа доктар сам сабе. Пракашліваецца на самы лепшы сабачы манер, на які ён здольны, і кажа:

– Яна жыве за некалькі дзьвярэй ад мяне па маёй вуліцы. Яна ...балонка, завуць яе Тві – Твіты-Пай.

– Я хачу ўбачыць ейнае фота! – настойвае Ідэн.

– Ну ...няма ў мяне з сабой, – заікаецца доктар.

– Ты носіш з сабой фота свайго лепшага сябра Бандэра, а жончына – не? – кпіць Ідэн. – Доктар Гелбер назваў бы гэта дзіўным. Падаўлены гомасэксуалізм, сказаў бы ён.

Яна хмурыцца і адкідываецца на спінку "лайдачыка".

– Усе сабакі бісэксуалы, – кажа раптам Барні/др.Гелбер і скурчваецца за сваім часопісам. Якую халеру ён тут вярзе?

– Я меркавала, – усьміхаецца Ідэн.

– А ты як? – парыруе Барні.

– Не-а. Я – ніякая. Чыстая і свабодная ад сэксу. Дзякуй за пытаньне. Успрымаю сэкс так жа, як мая маці брудныя чаравікі, – уперыўшыся ў столю, круціць вялікімі пальцамі. – Бадай што, я пайду. Хачу паглядзець, ці ўдасца ўгаварыць хлопца, што працуе ў "Відэа Відэа", надзець маску Бандэра. Ён даволі прыемны такі, на чалавечы манер.

– А як ты гэта ведаеш? – пытаецца Барні/др.Гелбер, стрымліваючы хваляваньне. Часам праломы бываюць і напрыканцы прыёму, і ўжо няма часу разважаць, нашто гэтта ён ляпнуў наконт сабачай сэксуальнасьці.

Ідэн ужо каля дзьвярэй, забірае сваю клумку.

– Я, бач, здалёк магу глядзець на людзей. Гэта толькі калі яны побач, тады я панікую. Добрага табе дня, Барні. І не забудзься наступны раз прынесьці фота сваёй Твіты-Пай.

* * *

Калі ўвечары Ідэн цішком украдаецца ў "Відэа Відэа", там ужо нікога няма. Ён працуе сёньня, той прыемны. Яна робіць выгляд, што разглядае замежныя фільмы, і ўпотай кідае на яго позіркі. Калі ён уздымае вочы, яна – апускае.

– Вам памагчы? – пытаецца ён лагодна.

О чорт, ці – так, думае Ідэн. У жываце нейкае дзівачнае цягуча-пякучае адчуваньне. Яно пужае яе, і яно ніяк не зьнікае, і яна мяркуе сабе, што гэта, напэўна, глісты. Яна выбірае дацкую палітычную мэлядраму пра трыкатажную фабрыку і, намагаючыся дыхаць нармалёва, накіроўваецца да касы.

– А я ўжо глядзеў яго, – разглядае ён скрынку.

Замацаваўшы свой пагляд на касе, яна вымаўляе:

– Не маглі б вы?

Сэрца ейнае забухала, быццам бы яна ганяла мяч цэлы дзень безь перапынку.

– Э-э... – запінаецца ён і паварочваецца, каб знайсці касэту да скрыні.

Калі ён паварочваецца назад, у Ідэн ужо ў руках фота Бандэра, і не падымаючы вачэй, яна амаль што бязгучна прамаўляе:

– Ці не надзелі б вы гэта на сябе?

Хлопец разглядае маску, пазірае на Ідэн і ўсьміхаецца.

– Гы, звычайна я неяк больш нямецкая аўчарка, але сёньня я зраблю выключэньне, – нацягвае на твар маску і кажа прыглушана: – Ну як?

Ідэн узьнімае вочы і шырака ўсьміхаецца. Нізкім голасам – голасам, пра які Ідэн нават не меркавала, што ён у ёй ёсьць, – яна прамаўляе, чуючы саму сябе нібы збоку:

– Слухай... Маркус, – курлыча яна, вышпіёніўшы ягонае імя на ярлычку,

– а чаму б табе не закрыцца і пайсці да мяне. Мы будзем прыкідвацца, што глядзім кіно і піць віно.

– Э-э... безумоўна, – ківае ён. Гучыць прыглушана, як таямнічае ”мурр”.

* * *

– Прывітаньне, Ідэн! – кажа Барні, намагаючыся прыхаваць раздражненьне. Ідэн адмяняла прыёмы чатыры тыдні запар, і цяпер спазьняецца без усялякіх тлумачэньняў. Трэба будзе зноў насварыцца на яе за гэткія гульні з мэдыцынай.

– Ну, як ты сёньня?

– Цяжарная, дзякуй за пытаньне, – радасна паведамляе яна.

Доўгая, доўгая паўза.

– Га, – кракае Барні/др.Гелбер, – Як... цікава.

– Ага. Я знайшла сабе сапраўднага нямецкага аўчара і БУМ! – цяпер сьвет для мяне зусім іншы! – яна сядзіць на ўскрайку ”лайдачыка” і ўсьміхаецца Барні. ”Сабачыя фантазіі” трымцяць, як лісцё па ветры. – Што такое, Барнічка? Цябе трасе! Бедны хлопчык!

Доктар трасецца ня ў жартачкі. Яго бярэ жах, што Ідэн стала ягоным монстрам Франкештэйнам. Ён ужо бачыць загалоўкі газэтаў: ”ЖАНЧЫНА ПАНЕСЛА АД НАПАДЗЕНЬНЯ САБАКІ Ў МЯСЦОВЫМ ПАРКУ”. Ён шлёпае на стол часопіс і ўтароплiваецца ў Ідэн, якая нечакана не адводзіць-такі вачэй.

– Та-ак... Як яго завуць, гэтага нямецкага аўчара? – доктар намагаецца гаварыць, як звычайна, спакойна. І псыхіятры могуць час ад часу адчуваць шок і агіду. Гэта якраз той час.

– Маркус, – усьміхаецца Ідэн і пляскае ў далоні. – Мне аж ня верыцца, нарэшце ў мяне будзе свой собскі шчанючок!

Доктар губляе прытомнасьць. Якую такую халеру ён зрабіў, што спанукнула яе бачыць людзей сабакамі і сабак людзьмі? Пот цячэ градам па ягоным ілбе, а сэрца зараз проста выскачыць зь ягонай дыхаўкі. Цяжка дыхаючы, ён пацягнуўся за гарлачом з вадою.

– Расслабся, док, – варкоча Ідэн. – Маркус – гэта мужчына. А ты што падумаў?

Тут яна здагадваецца, што доктар падумаў, і выпальвае:

– Ісусе, лячыцца трэба, док! Я люблю сабак, безумоўна – люблю, але ж божа мой, як ты мог падумаць пра мяне такое! – заходзячыся ад злосьці, яна падымаецца з фатэлю. – Ня ўпэўнена, што магу працягваць гэткую тэрапію, калі яна ідзе такім чынам!

– І я ня ўпэўнены, што магу, – задыхаецца доктар.

– А я толькі хацела сказаць табе, як здорава яна дзейнічала, твая ідэя. Я хацела расказаць, як гэта было з Маркусам, як ён пагадзіўся надзець маску Бандэра першы раз, калі мы кахаліся, і як я папрасіла яго зьняць яе, і ўсё было цудоўна. Як дзякуючы самому факту, што ён захацеў надзець яе дзеля мяне, я ўбачыла, што усе людзі не такія страшныя... Як ён часам надзявае маску нямецкай аўчаркі, каб пасьмяшыць мяне, калі я прыходжу з працы. Так, між іншым, я цяпер працую – выгульваю сабак для вечна занятых япі... Я хацела падзякаваць табе і усякае такое. Купіць табе "малочных костак" дзеля пацехі. Але цяпер – ні за што!

Ідэн торгае ручку дзьвярэй і кідае апошні гідлівы позірк на доктара.

На ягоным твары ізноў "Сабачыя фантазіі". Хрыплым голасам Барні/др.Гелбер усхліпвае:

– Віншую, Ідэн! Найлепшыя зычэньні!

Яна мякчэе.

– Дзякуй, доктар Гелбер. Дзякуй і Барні. Прабач, што набрахала на цябе так.

Прагледзеўшы сваю квітанцыю, Ідэн хіхікае. Узмахвае рукой і падыходзіць да стала доктаравай сакратаркі Бэны, упэўненая, што яна, верагодна, чула ўсё, што крычала Ідэн доктару. Кіўнуўшы Бэне, Ідэн пераможна ўздымае кулак і выгукае:

– Няхай жывуць сабакі ва ўсіх нас!

Бэна ўсьміхаецца. Таму што гэта – яе работа.

– Лекар, дапамажы сабе сам, – жалобна прамаўляе доктар Гелбер ў сваім фатэлі "лайдачык", усё яшчэ з сабачым часопісам на твары. Шырака расчыненыя дзьверы даюць Бэне магчымасьць разгледзець рэальную асобу Барні/др.Гелбера.

– Абы дапамагала, доктар! – адгукаецца Бэна, і доктар урэшце прыбірае часопіс з твару.

– Бэна, – кліча ён.

– Ессэр? – яна падымаецца з-за стала, падыходзіць да адчыненых дзьвярэй і, склаўшы рукі на грудзях, нэрвова ўсьміхаецца. Доктаравы вочы злёгку шклянеюць – яна ведае, што гэта ён пагружаецца ў сваю асаблівую "мэдыцыяцыю".

– А ці ведала ты, што ўсе сабакі бісэксуалы, нават гэты Барні? – ківае ён на часопіс у руках.

Крыху памарудзіўшы, Бэна бярэ „Сабачыя фантазіі", абыякава гартае старонкі.

– На сёньня усё, – кажа доктар, гледзячы проста, міма яе, як быццам нічога такога асаблівага на гэтым месцы няма.

– Усё? – ціха выдыхае яна. Адыходзячы, яна зачыняе дзьверы неяк шчыльней.

Доктар Гелбер патрос галавою, адкінуў часопіс і нахіліўся да магнітафона:
– Заўваж для сябе: Барні сумуе па Бандэры больш, чым па жонцы. Гаў, гаў.

З ангельскай мовы
пераклала ***Ірына Варабей***

МАРНІ ВУДРОЎ (MARNIE WOODROW) нарадзілася ў 1969 годзе ў г. Орыла (Orillia), што ў Антарыё, у Канадзе. Выкладае курс прыгожага пісьменства ва Ўнівэрсітэце Таронта. Марні выдала дзьве кніжкі апавяданьняў: Why We Close Our Eyes When We Kiss (Чаму мы заплюшчваем вочы, калі цалуемся) у 1991 г. і In The Spice House (Дом з перцам) у 1996 г. Яе першы раман Spelling Mississippi (Як Micicini варкоча) – гісторыя каханьня дзьвюх дзяўчын – выйшаў у 2002 г. і атрымаў Першую прэмію ад кампаніі Amazon.ca.

Марні Вудроў (як яна гаворыць пра сябе на сваім вэб-сайце www.marniewoodrow.com) жыве, пэцкае паперу, глытае кнігі, фатаграфуе, і наагул свавольнікуе дзе толькі можна па Таронце, што ў Антарыё, у Канадзе. Да свайго 40-годдзя яна зьбіраецца выдаць сваю новую кнігу.

ІРЫНА ВАРАБЕЙ – празаік, журналіст. Сакратар Беларускага Інстытуту Навукі і Мастацтва ў Канадзе, сябра рэдкалегіі газеты „Беларускае слова”. Нарадзілася ў 1959 г. у Менску. З 1999 г. жыве ў Таронта, Канада. Піша па-беларуску і па-ангельску, перакладае (www.irynavarabei). Публікуецца ў „Беларускім слове” (Канада), у „Беларусе” (ЗША), у „Дзеяслове” (Беларусь).

Ryhor Baradulin
Рыгор Барадулін

KIEDY WITAJĄ SIĘ DUSZE

Kiedy witają się dusze,
Kończy się mroku przygoda
I ranek wybacza nocy
Jej piekielne ciemności.
W trzepotliwym bezruchu
Aniołkowatość młoda
Powierza nam klucze swoje
Od kuferka szczerości.
Szczerością ułaskawione
Żyją marzenia wysokie.
Zauroczone niebytem
Dni nasze krzepną w trwałości.
Myśli się rodzą w niewoli
Jak pod żywą korą soki
I życzą wierzchołkom drzew,
By dotknęły dna wysokości...

LIST PIERWSZY

Wejdź na ziemi ojczystej
Do swej dawnej chaty.
Pochyl głowę skruszony
W modlitewnym pokłonie.
Czeka cię tu wędzidło
Tęgie, łykowane,
Które twą niecierpliwość
Uzdało jak konia.

Siądź przy stole, gdzie twoi
Dziadowie siadali,
Gdzie Wigilia siankiem
Pachniała na Gody,
Kiedy spojrzenia ciepłem
Mróz ciepleć zmuszały.
A na niebie gwiazd stada
Pasał miesiąc młody.

Wybłagaj przebaczenie
U łzy zobaczonej,
Pomyśl, że śmiechu warte
Są twoje kłopoty.
Tu ciebie na pokuciu
Czekają ikony,
Cienie w kątach wystygłych,
A w progu – samota...

5 kwietnia 2000

LIST DRUGI

Wciąż bardziej obce nam kąty rodzinne
I my wciąż bardziej obcy sobie sami,
I łan pamięci porósł burzanami,
Stopy nam ranią kolczaste ożyny
Na tamtych ścieżkach, które z zachwyceniem
Biegły polami w rumiankach i rucie.

I jedno mamy własne: to westchnienie
Po tym, co było i co już nie wróci...
14 lipca 2000

LIST TRZECI

Odjeżdżamy, aby tu powrócić,
Przejeżdżamy, by odjechać znów
Pocieszeni, że coś się wymłóci
Z naszych marzeń obfitych i snów.
Trzepotliwi kruchością motyla,
Na ten dziwnych staroci pchli targ
Zajechaliśmy ledwie na chwilę
I żegnamy bez żalu i skarg...
27 lipca 2002

LIST CZWARTY

Potrzeba tworzenia jest
Jak zamach
Na prawo należne
Stwórcy jedynie.
Zastanów się nad tym,
Ziemianinie,
Nim wyciągniesz rękę
Po żebro Adama...
Cierpieniem okupić
Licencje trzeba,
Lecz nie dla konkurencji,
Tylko gwoli złudzenia,
Że twoje to wszystko,
Poczynając od nieba,
A kończąc na tym,
Co rodzi Ziemia.
2 sierpnia 2002

LIST PIĄTY

Nie zedrzesz z siebie, jak z drzewa korę,
Dla ciebie przeznaczonej kary.
Błogosław Najwyższego Kreatora,
Za tę iskierkę żywego pożaru,
Z której zapłonął w tobie
Płomień
Niemej żądzy i rozpaczy głuchej.
Idź za losem,
Jak cień za słoniem,
Zanim ścieżka do Boga
Porośnie rzeżuchą.

18 sierpnia 2000

LIST SZÓSTY

Dnieje zmierzchanie, ciemnieje świtanie,
Południe głębi swej już nie słyszy.
Cienie, przywykłe do chybotania,
Przedwieczerzowi przydają ciszy.

Ciasno jasności dnia w zaobłoczu.
Strachem powiew kruka skrzydło kare.
Tak starzeją się nasze oczy,
A nam się zdaje, że to światło stare.

25 sierpnia 2000

LIST SIÓDMY

Krewniacy i sąsiedzi
Pozaludniali cmentarze,
Wyschły z pragnienia krynice,
Chmury mają żylaki,
Zdarzenia się poodbywały,
Pomarły w cieniu wydarzeń,
Owce się poprzemieniały
W alkowiane futrzaki.

Wyrosła dla duszy
Nietutejsza melodia.
Niebo i padół
Z sobą się dogadały.
I tylko żeby
Dawny smutek odmłodniał,
Znajome drzewa
Czekać do dziś nie przestały...
1 lipca 2001

LIST ÓSMY

Na zbolałej rodzinnej ziemi
Zniemożenie panoszy się śmiało.
Odpomniały, co swoje, wspomnienia
I wzruszenie już społudniało.

Na zranionej krzywdami ziemi
Prawdzie czarno, a rozpaczy biało.
I czekania nie ciąży już brzemię,
I ślad po nas zastygły zawiało.

Czas nasz na tej ziemi odwiecznej
Patrzy na się z jawnym przerażeniem:
Nasze grzechy — na odyńców wiecznych,
A spóźniona spowiedź — dla sumienia.

Niech zieleni się człowiek i trawka
Na tej ziemi, która nie przeminie.
A Ojczyzna — od chmury łaskawsza —
Będzie czekać nas.
Bez nas nie spłynie.
20 lipca 2001

LIST DZIEWIĄTY

Już zapomniany głos Peruna
I słowa burzy sponad Uszy.
Lecz mam je, drogie, żyją w duszy
I dźwięczy w nich pradziejów struna.

Tu nawet chmury powracają,
Żeby nad Uszą się odrodzić.
I nawet wiatrom, nawet wodzie
Ciche uszackie śnią się gaje.

I strzecha nas powita pierwsza
Ze ścieżek naszych, dróg przepastnych.
I stadko dni z wieczornych pastwisk
Powraca do dom bez pasterza.

Jaryle dzięki śle jarzyna,
A Eliaszowi — włókno lniane.
... Nad krajem mym niezapomnianym
Już zapomniany głos Peruna...

23 lipca 2001

LIST DZIESIĄTY

Smutek milkliwy jest.
I stary jak świat.
A radość — beznadziejnie gadatliwa.
Zostały dzieci i przyjaciele
Sprzed lat.
Chociaż wszystko
Jak i życie
Upływa.

Dzieci zostały,
Żeby rodzice
Nie nudzili się bez biedy i bólu.
Będą rdzewieć starzy

W uścisku życia
Jak gwoździe
W opustoszałym ulu.

Przyjaciele
Hen, na rozdrożu
Milczą czekając
Na huczną biesiadę
W odwiecznym niesmołowanym
Borze,
Gdzie cień ustępuje
Ścieżynę śladom.

Dzieci i przyjaciele zostaną,
Jak długo my pozostaniemy sobą.
Dola wciąż patrzy
Jak mądra sowa,
Gdzie już opłakać
Drzewa okorowane...

30 lipca 2001

LIST JEDENASTY

Młode obłoczki z białymi baczkami
Ich
Aż całe dwie pary,
Próbują polatywać nad Byczkami,
Pragną ocienić
Stepiejące popary..

Pierwszy wyraj
Już nie za górami.
A zamorze —
To nie zajezierze
Tuż za jeziorem,
Też nie za górą,
I wiatr północny

Zimnymi podmuchami
Młodą jesienią
Studzi pióra.

A gnieździsko na słupie z betonu,
Niczym słoneczko,
Patykowate.

I, jak to gniazdo przez skon upatrzone,
Próżno głosów wyczekuje chata.
31 lipca 2001

LIST DWUNASTY

Czy Ojczyzna twa bardziej skłonna do kochania,
Czy do zazdrości?
Nie wiem. Jestem w kropce.
Miłość wyziębnie pewnie
W zawiei rozstania,
A zazdrość cię napomni:
Nie bądź mi jak obcy.

Charakter nasz,
Z ojczystej mąki ulepiony,
Pokrętna dola nasza
Wypieka przaśnik.
Sikorka — wierna,
Żuraw — zniewierzony
Nawet we snach próbują
Przaśność nam objaśnić.

By listowiu na wietrze starczyło
Młodości,
Rozkruszy w błyskawicach gałęzie cieniste
I póki nie przygarnie do siebie —
Zazdrości
Obcym ziemiom swych synów

Twa ziemia
Ojczysta...
16 sierpnia 2001

LIST TRZYNASTY

Myśmy krywicze,
Myśmy sobie krewni,
Chociaż przybłędy
Krew nam rozwodniły.
Strachy ni baty
Nas nie odmieniły.
Starczy nas dla nich
I my siebie pewni.

Myśmy krywicze.
Pan bóg nam pozwolił
Ofiarą korną
Sławić Jego świętość
I dusze nasze
Pozrywały pęta:
Śpieszymy do dom
Z tysięcznych niewoli.

Nie licz nas, czasie,
Bo za nic nie zliczysz.
Póki dni będą
Nocami się zmieniać,
My mamy klucze
Od smutków jesieni,
Ona nie złamie nas,
Bo my — Krywicze.
16 sierpnia 2001

LIST CZTERNASTY

Ruiny zwykle długo się trzymają
Jak napomnienie,
Że wszystko prochem w świecie.
Zmieniają się plemiona, państwa,
Kraje,
A nieodmiennie
Strach nas tylko gniecie.

O życie własne strach,
O życie cudze,
O dni radości
I żałoby noce.
Okrutny strach o jutro
Zatruwa życie słudze.
Strachowi się nie oprze
Nawet mocarz.

Ruiny pewnie wiedzą, lecz boją się
Objawić nam, jak przyszłość będzie
Biegła.

By w podmurówce,
Na której świat stoi,
Nie drgnęła ani jedna cegła.

26 sierpnia 2001

LIST PIĘTNASTY

Oprzeć łeb o pień chatniego wiązu,
Objąć kostropaty ramionami.
Nic nie pytać. Nie czekać responsu,
Słuchać, jak w nim kipi głód sokami.

Myślą się spokrewnić z korzeniami,
By o zmroku się sensu doczekać.

Z obłokami podzielić się snami
I powrócić do siebie — z daleka.
29 sierpnia 2001

LIST SZESNASTY

Nie patrzymy w oczy chatkom starutkim,
Co wciąż czekają gospodarza swego.

Żyją jak mniszki
Samym smutkiem,
Głuchych podwórek niebytu strzegąc.

Kołyski skrzypiały,
Siekiery tępiały,
Parowało w skopkach mleko z udoju,
Oczy się pasły bieleniem białym
I mżawką złota
W sosen ostoi.

Ale wierzą chatki
Do ostatniej krokwi,
Że gospodarze kiedyś zawitają.
Dziury im w strzechach
Łatają obłoki
A na noc drzwi im
Wiatry zamykają...
2 września 2001

LIST SIEDEMNASTY

Powrócić na ojczystą ziemię,
By odczuć, żeś znów obcy tutaj.
Nie czuje ramion już krzyż pokutny.
Za dalą skryły się wspomnienia.

Głazom się grzbiety pogarbiły,
Z miedz poznikały gdzieś zwidzenia.
Węże zwinięte jak pierścienie,
Ścieżki ptaszęce drżą z bezsiły.

Dusza z samoty
Jak z wygnania
Powraca —
Śladem grudy lecą,
Które zagniewane mżawy miecą,
Że twój w nich grzech
Wciąż bez skarzenia...

31 lipca 2002

LIST OSIEMNASTY

Jak gniazda jaskółcze, z oblicza ziemi
Znikają zrujnowane chaty,
A z nieba — chmury wydeszczone.
Na widnokręgu ruń nadziei
Marnieje w tobołach łaciatych.
Tabuny dni się pasą
Na niwach wiatrami zwichrzonych.

Chata żyje dopóty,
Dopóki młode w niej życie.
Chmura żyje, dopóki
Grom podrasta w niej żwawy,
Aż rozkopawszy pieluszek
Przedwieczorne spowicie
Przeciągnie się pioruniątko,
Że aż zatrzeszczą stawy.

Powrót to nie ratunek.
Kołysanka senna do ucha
Trakt brukowany przepływa.
Na suchej stronie głucho.

Żal? Czy zawieja podwywa?
Chmury wciąż jeszcze żywe.
Żywe...
Jeszcze...

3 sierpnia 2002

LIST DZIEWIĘTNASTY

Osłonić oczy zorzą złotą
Od zwad, od zdrad,
Od szaleństwa i świństwa
Zawrócić i pobiec
Z powrotem
Do ogrodów dzieciństwa.

Odwrócić się od siebie samego.
Nie oglądać się i pośpieszyć,
By zdążyć jeszcze
Do pnia młodego,
Policzkiem przylgnąć do niego,
Serce ucieszyć.

Pochwycić światło poranka,
Co otworzyło oko,
Ledwie się zbudziło
I jeszcze się nie utrudziło
Oraniem i sianiem do kolki w boku.

Lecz wszystko nam zalewa
Powszedniości ołów.
Puch naszych marzeń
Jak ze skrzydeł aniołów
Z mgłą się rozwiewa.
A czart rogaty bogate
Twoje zasługi opiewa.

Wyliniał widnokrąg.
Jeszcze przed Kolędą
Kładki wszystkie,
Mostki pozrywało.
Ogrody dzieciństwa
Powymarzały.
Kogo pytać,
Jak tam zawitać?

17 sierpnia 2002

LIST DWUDZIESTY

Psy głodnawe, pełne ochoty
Szczerze szczekają,
Szanując łańcuchy.
Nadenerwowała się do zimnego potu
Młoda noc —
Spadkobierczyni
Wieczornych podmuchów.

Dokoła każdy kół
Częścią jest częstokołu.
Wiatrowi coś się przywidzi
W biegu od ręki.
Pomarzyć, by dotknąć nieba,
Po ciemku nie wstyd tym z dołu.

U węzgłowia spłyciałej rzeki
Rada łeb swój ochłodzić
Niedotykalska spiekota.
Żeby zważyć tumany,
Chude jak kij bezmiany
Pudów mają za mało.
Chociaż odgłosy lat,
Co odbieżały,

Zwraca, by ogrzeć
Dusze i siebie
Samoto...

19 sierpnia 2002

LIST DWUDZIESTY PIERWSZY

Kominowi nudno bez dymu cichego.
Przypieckowi śni się ogień w szczapach.
Każdy człowiek tęskni do kraju swego,
A każdy kraj
Ma swój posmak i zapach.

Ojczyzna pachnie drogą sanną,
Płacze i żali się płozami,
Ale jest piękna nawet, gdy zalana
Łez ulewnymi strumieniami.

Ucałujesz kopczyk zarosłej mogiły
I posmak samotności zniknie w okamgnieniu,
Bo oto schodzą się twe niebokresy byłe
Jak zjawy przywołane przypomnieniem.

Idą,
Żeby się pokłonić nad padołem,
Z którego wyrastają twoje niebiosa.
Ojczyzna oddycha tchnieniem anioła,
Który losu ścieżkami stąpa
Nogą bosą.

21 sierpnia 2002

LIST DWUDZIESTY DRUGI

Jak kiedyś Newtonowi —
Nie było śladu —
Jabłko na łeb mi
Spadło nie wiedzieć skąd.

I dokonałem odkrycia:
Tu właśnie jest mój kat.
I żal ogarnął mnie,
Że wkrótce stąd odjadę.

Z pełnego krzywdy garbatego sadu,
Gdzie jabłonie mamę pamiętają daleką,
Przez pogruźlone palce czas przecieka
Nieczuły na nęcące jabłkopady.

Może nie dojrzało jeszcze
Jabłko niezgody,
A może przejrzało
Jak meteoryt boleści
I spada w ciszę,
A pręgami pieści
Bezgłośnie brew
Ziemskiego obwodu.

A żeśmy —
Marnotrawcy lat biegnących urody
Zapomnieli na chwilę swe łby posiwiałe,
Za nas się nasze sady postarzały.

Na tej ziemi jedynie strach
Jest wiecznie młody.

22 sierpnia 2002

Przełożył z białoruskiego – ***Czesław Seniuch***

Рыгор Барадулін *(1935) – вялікі беларускі паэт сярэдняга пакаленьня. Перакладчык твораў Шэкспіра, Байрана, Рэмбо, Лёркі, і інш.*

Łarysa Hienijuš
Ларыса Геніюш

NOC

Noc, věčné temnoty tajemná paní
vychází, krade se z neznámých plání
vystřídat den s jeho vznešenou září.
Žádný ji zastavit nedokáže.

Ještě se sluneční paprsek blýskne,
mile se usměje, naposled výskne.
Bílý den šíji v červáncích skloní
a gilotina sjede mu po ní.

V teskný čas smrti celá zem ztichá,
vrány jsou v hnízdech. Všechno co dýchá,
lidé i zvěř a velcí i malí
do chalup, do nor se poschovávali.

Slyšíš jen chechtot a skuhrání výra
- noc má jen jednoho kavalíra.
Nepevná srdce paní Noc zmámí;
rozžíhá světla hvězd: briliant samý.

V důvěru lidí se jako stín vkrádá,
svedená duše v bezedno padá.

Zmizel smích. Zástup šel za černou paní,
netušil, že slunce za svítání
pohasí čadící lucerny hvězd
a věčnou pravdou zaplaví svět.

*

Každému září jiný horizont,
po svém se každý raduje i stará.
Nemůže slavík zpívat podle vlčích not,
ten pěvec jara.

Bílý sen

Bílý sen.
Tam vysoko na nebi
bílý mák rozsypal se.
A pod nohama skřípe sníh,
na mraze
psi vyjí v dálce.

Luna se toulá
sem a tam,
pole jsou zářivě bílá.
Na čísi pokyn
noční tma
pod vìtve sosen
se skryla.

V mìsíèním svìtle rozptýleném
jdu soustjedìnì s vírou:
životní zákon je nekoneèný.
Nevidím svých sil míru.

... Prolétla léta...
Nepohody...
Bolest se do srdce vryla.
Jsou dobří lidé... To se mi zdálo,
když ještě silná jsem byla.

*

Ne, nesevře mé srdce úzkost
a jediné si nedám vzít:
Když žít, pak pro mé Bìlorusko.
Žít jinak - to přec není žít!

Sbohem

Sbohem buď, Praho má drahá!
Jíním ses okrášlila,
když u vltavských břehů
má loďka zakotvila.

Odvahy málo mi zbylo,
bylo mi smutno a úzko.
A tys tu stála tak bílá
jak plátna běloruská.

Sněhové vločky jak hvězdy
vìtrem se roztanèily,
v bílý šat oblékly mìsto,
cizinku potìšily.

Tvé vìže míjily k nebi
tak jako uprostřed polí
topoly na našich mezích.
Vítr je neohnul dolù.

Když jsem tu o květech snila,
pláè polykala stìží,
skazky mi vyprávìlo
kamení staletých vìží.

Má zlatá Praho, buï sbohem!
Teď moje plachty směr mění.
Vzpomínat budu v dobrém
kamenů vyprávění.

Za všechny kryvičské syny,
za přízeň starou i novou
díky dnes, Praho, přijmi
od vnučky Skarynovy!

Sbohem buď, pozvedni hlavu,
cti jak vždy Václava světce...
Shlížej se ve Vltavě,
své stříbropěnné řece.

Пераклала на чэскую мову
Францішка Сокалава

Ларыса Геніюш *– выдатная беларуская паэтэса (1910-1983). Нацыянальная дзяячка; шматгадовы вязень савецкіх лягераў у Сібіры. Харызматычная постаць у беларускім руху супраціву і адраджэньня.*

Маладыя гады пражыла ў Празе (Чэхія).

Eva Ściepaniuk
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BITTER CHOCOLATE

Even though Cimoch is more than ninety years old, he sticks to women like a leech.

„He's hot for womenfolk," people in N. mock him but you can hear envy in their words.

Once a month, usually on the day the postman brings pensions, Cimoch S. puts on a clean shirt and socks, dons a sports hat (in addition to a padded work jacket and a pair of felt-and-rubber boots), buys a bar of chocolate in the shop and, as they say in N., strays into damage.

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How to look into such a delicate matter? I call a friend of mine who lives in N.

„Come by the end of the month," says Hala S. (in N. almost all names begin with S), „the old man will be in the money then, and he will be *mating* or drinking in the bar...

I am suddenly seized with fear — there were around thirty burials in the past three months in the parish to which N. belongs; folks die like flies there.

My friend whoops with laughter:

„The devil won't take him until then!"

Although there is an asphalt road leading into N., it is hard to get to the very spot by public transport. I have to walk three kilometres, with a wall of forest on one side. A herd of cows is grazing on the frozen winter crops; from a distance the cows resemble a herd of wild animals, possibly bisons.

There are nine widows, eleven bachelors, two divorcees, two widowers, twelve married couples, two girls, three young men, five kids, and a crazy former schoolmistress in N. The crazy schoolmistress is how people call Hala. The village has thirty houses and a shop with a bar. A village club has an iron padlock on the door.

„If it had not been for the pension, all of us would have capitulated,"Hala admits. Hala has been drawing a pension for three years. She was treated in the psychiatric hospital in Choroszcz. She lives with her pious mother, also a pensioner.

„The worst thing is that we don't have any culture here," my hostess complains at coffee with Delicje cakes. A television set is showing a program about impressionism but Hala misses the high society and good-looking men.

„We have been left only with those who somehow avoided to be finished off by hail storms," she says, and adds: „I'm not interested in sex. Truly!" Then she shakes theatrically, as if in a grip of fever.

„They are like those guys from the 'Down and Dirty' film," she says about the local boys.

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„You neighbour, Sławik S., is quite a nice boy," I say. Hala's mother clutches her head in bewilderment.

„It's better to tie a stone round your neck and get drowned than marry such a man," the old woman flutters with her hands. „He becomes mad when he's drunk. One time he chased his mother round their house with an axe to get her pension for a booze.

Sławik is sober today and very glad that we are going to write about him in our newspaper.

„Much depends on women," says Sławik, a confirmed bachelor and an unfulfilled musician. When he used to play at dances, girls clang to him of their own will. He dressed fashionably for them, cleaned his teeth every day. And he drank reasonably then, wary of not rolling about in dirt or pissing his pants.

Nowadays Sławik does not complain, either.

„When some widow comes up, I have no heart to drive her out. Especially when

she comes with vodka and eyes me like an angel. Or when she hugs me and shows compassion. Then I may give her a shot without thinking much, that is, thinking about some chick from television."

Sławik lives alone (his father died and his mother fled their house to stay with his sister in Bialystok) and television is his only entertainment. The sexual urge of the unsuccessful musician „howls" from pornographic posters plastered on the walls of his room. There is an accordion lying on the floor and a guitar with broken strings in the corner. He keeps pictures of his erstwhile fiancees on the bookshelf, next to a Belarusian songbook, „A Bonfire Is Flaming." Sławik says he knows all the songs in the songbook. To support his claim, he takes up the accordion and begins to play and sing melodiously „The Belarusian Girl."

„There was one from Hrodna living with you for some time," Hala takes a poke at him. „What was her name — Kacia, wasn't it?"

„If I had won in the lotto," the player muses aloud, „she would have been here even today...

The memory of Kacia gnaws at him, his red nose turning purple.

„Bad girls," the accordion player and unhappy farmer reproaches us. „You should better help me fill in papers for the union."

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The chat with Sławik is part of our plan. After another cup of coffee we go out for a breath of fresh air, which means going hastily to the bar Amazonka. A woman in N. should avoid going to the bar unaccompanied.

„Cimoch S. sexually harasses our shopkeeper," Hala laughs. „He likes standing behind the counter and giving her his dribbling kisses. What can she do against this apart from slapping his kisser with a mop from time to time?"

„He must be toothless at his age, isn't he?"

„He has false teeth."

A television set in the bar is going full blast. Dishes stick to the tablecloths. „Cimoch was here but already left... I think he went to Šurka," says the red-haired shopkeeper, Alka. „He didn't get very far here."

No customers today. Only Vladek Maksimkau is snoring at a table. The tablecloth lies on the floor, but it is impossible to pick it up because he stepped on it with his boot.

„How has Cimoch made advances to me?" Alka S. giggles. "He bought a bar of Milka chocolate and kept on repeating that he had not seen a more beautiful woman

in his life. Politely. He asked only once that I have sex with him. I'll pay you a hundred zlotys, he said. And I asked him if he could not have one from an escort agency. But he only spat with disgust and said: I need a woman of our native breed.

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Sławik S. wants to be neck-deep in my story. Let's go to Cimoch! We'll say we've come to see his grandson, Romek.

„For example," Sławik thinks up, „we'll ask him if he has already filled in his papers for Brussels."

„Coffee or tea?" Romek S., a little frightened, greets us in Polish. „Or perhaps something stronger?" (People in N. sometimes speak Polish in a company of strangers.)

„And where is your grandpa?" cones a circumspect question from our guide.

„Mating," the grandson snaps angrily. Romek, a bachelor himself, looks at a cuckoo clock. „He may be back tomorrow or in a week. After he drinks his way through his pension. True, he does not take the whole sum with him, he leaves a half at home."

There are pots with flowers in the windows of Cimoch's neat house. The old man lives with his son's family. He has a small room of his own. He has gone astray, as he told me later, out of necessity. After his dear Ulana left him. That is, after she died. „A man without a wife is worthless, as a threshed sheaf. He lies night and day and grumbles. He does not want to eat or sleep, or to do anything at all."

All in the family of Cimoch S., even though eager for lovemaking themselves (Hala recounted me a lot of relevant rumours), admonish the old man.

„He keeps on roaming around as if he were eighteen years old! He could sit by the stove and weave baskets instead," complains the son of Cimoch S., a pensioner, too.

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At last we are in the house of Šurka, an alcoholic widow. The dark force of intemperance has taken possession of Šurka after the death of her Kola. Her husband left her when she was forty five, and she has already been carrying on alone in this world for twelve years. The only son, her joy and hope, has left for America. Her grandchildren, when calling her, jabber in English.

There is a broken window pane in the widow's kitchen. The hole is plugged with a soiled pillow. The kitchen's dirt-coated floor, which resembles a threshing floor in the barn, is covered with feathers and bones. Šurka resembles a witch, even though there are traces of former beauty on her face.

„Cimoch? He has gotten tired, poor man," the woman screens the door to the living room with her body. „Let the man sleep."

„Or maybe he is drunk?" Sławik tries to force his way into the living room. I and Hala pull him back by his sleeves (people in N. say that Sławik and Šurka have been drawn to each other a long ago).

"Let's go home, that is, to Amazonka," we lure Sławik to go out. He eventually gives up and, after having a beer in the bar, purportedly sets to steer home.

In the morning, when I walk to my bus, I see two figures trudging along the street. They are Sławik and Šurka. To avoid passing me, they veer off to someone else's yard.

I notice that red-cheeked Cimoch S. is already in Amazonka.

„What a lovely girl!" he smiles to me with a face of Jan Kobuszewski. I see a Milka bar sticking out of his pocket.

I smile back to him — I'm finally lucky to have got a chance to talk to the main hero of my story.

Translated from Belarusian by ***Jan Maksymiuk***

Эва Сьцепанюк *– маладая журналістка беларускага тыднёвіка Ніва у Беластоку (Польшча).*