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LITHUANIAN PHILOSOPHY IN EXILE

Summary

This book – the 11th in the series “The History of Lithuanian Philosophy. Monuments and Inquiries” – has been prepared by the initiative of the members of the History of Lithuanian Philosophy department in the Lithuanian Culture Research Institute. It aims to present the contemporary thinking of Lithuanian philosophers in exile as well as the investigations into the main ideas, theories and discussions which had appeared there. This book composes an important part within the series of books devoted for the History of Lithuanian Philosophy, makes us acquainted with a corpus of works of modern Lithuanian philosophers which hasn't been yet thoroughly analyzed. There is no lack for the advance acknowledgement of the value of the philosophy created in exile, it rather misses for more deep and broad understanding, while we would be helpful with more of the creative dialogue with the colleagues in exile, with the understanding of their ideas as the continuation of Lithuanian philosophical tradition. The exceptional feature of this collection within this series is that it is devoted for the history which is still alive, for the field of philosophical studies where some of the authors are still working on, also reflecting on the earlier philosophical ideas of their other exiled colleagues.

The first part of the book contains the articles of prominent contemporary philosophers in exile. The article of Kęstutis Skrupskelis “Pragmatism and Naturalistic Concept of Human Being” could be divided into two parts: philosophical autobiography and the naturalistic account on human being based on the interpretation of internal human freedom and responsibility. Not without a light irony the author tells us about his studies in Fordham and Toronto universities, about his professors and fellow students, his choice of further studies, about the philosophical works he had composed, and his reflections. The article distinguishes the peculiar features of the constructive naturalism, analyzes the emergence, content and meaning of the theory of William James, where based on an introspective analysis of the experience and its combination

with the data of empirical psychology, the supposition of the existence of soul is denied. Pointing out that there are no philosophy in Lithuania which would accommodate the achievements of contemporary biology, Kęstutis Skrupskelis provides the arguments that following the statistical theory of causality there is a possibility to explain internal human freedom as a capacity – dependent on his/her experience and efforts – to choose among a huge variety of options the optimal reaction.

Another methodology in explanation of human phenomenon is applied in the article of Algis Mickūnas “Something Essential”. The questions of justice and human essence are considered here from the phenomenological point of view. The article perfectly demonstrates the particular thinking manner of this philosopher – starting with the consideration of everyday matters, the most complicated conditions of the existence of the phenomena are examined, the premises which contemporary sciences do not reflect are revealed, the shortcomings of popular philosophical arguments are indicated. This time philosopher investigates the existence of “something more” what is irreducible to sensual experience. This “something more” is explained as some standard, providing a limit determining what is something, and what this something is not, and this standard becomes clear through the variety of phenomena. This invariable standard in human being should be thought not as composite but as the wholesome form of human being, which becomes actual when individual, in the process of learning and other relations with the environment, discovers and extends his/her abilities, realizes his/her potential, obtains the human rationality, and adds to the manifold goodness of history and community. After demonstrating why various communities under different modes of government are lacking in justice, Algis Mickūnas looks for its fundamental criterion, as if extending with his concept of justice that one of Plato, just considering in his mind the current affairs of the world.

The article of Mykolas Drunga “Nor do kill yourself, nor anybody, yet why to give a birth?” considers the problem of meaning of life and death as if from two temporal perspectives. The author tells about his early excitement in the ideas of existentialists about the death, testifies that the book of Girnius “The Man without God” is parallel in its agile thinking to the best texts of existentialism ever translated into English, explains how he himself and other members of Santara-Šviesa used to consider existential interpretations of the problem of death few decades ago. As if another temporal perspective

is composed of Mykolas Drunga own ideas on the right to give birth, which first appeared some four decades ago and have been elaborated until present. The long term experience of the author in analytical philosophy demonstrates itself in the analysis of the question whether it is moral to give a birth, knowing what absurdity of this world is welcoming the newborn. Philosopher thoroughly considers all possible arguments for and against giving the new birth, and finally provides Christian ideas about the order of the world as the basis for his pro-natalistic determination.

John Knasas a philosopher of Lithuanian origin teaching in Houston, St. Thomas University contributes to the collection with his article “Why Philosopher Can and Must Read Saint Thomas Aquinas”, where he describes the basic of his philosophical position and also formulates suggestions for other contemporary philosophers. Philosopher presents the Thomism as the actual and universal background for philosophical thinking and looks for the arguments why other philosophers should also find this out. In the article he presents his own interpretation of the Thomistic concepts of direct realism and *actus essendi*. Defending St Thomas from the criticism coming from Cartesian and empiricist epistemology, John Knasas acknowledges that part of the processes of perception depends on the ideas, and that sensual perception doesn't always supply a perfect knowledge, yet he insists that it also happens to be direct, that its relativity doesn't deny the assurance that our senses deal with real features, real processes, and real things. Explaining an existence as a necessary feature of real being, the author enters into polemics with analytical philosophers who blame metaphysics and suggests a line of consideration where substances are neutral towards the existence, that they become beings only together with *esse* – as the very first and fundamental feature of any existing subject.

The article of the philologist Sandra Petraškaitė-Pabst “How Lithuanians Reconsider their Identity in Emigration? Discursive Analysis of Concepts and Metaphors in Naming the National Identity” starts another part of the collection. She started her scientific career and successfully carries it on at the University of Stuttgart. Applying the method of discursive linguistic analysis the author investigates the particular understanding of national identity exhibiting itself in the discourse of Lithuanians in exile. It features the determination “not to disappear”, expressing itself not only through feelings but also through diverse constructive activities. Revealing the tensions of self-consciousness of Lithuanian people who had to leave their country at the end of the Second

World War as well as their successful strife to connect their Lithuanian identity with other cultures where-in they had been deeply involved, the author also projects the perspectives of self-reflection of present day emigration.

The analysis of political philosophy of Lithuanian exile is presented in the articles of Algimantas Jankauskas and Laurynas Peluritis. They are devoted for the discussions of wholesome democracy and non-worldview politics as the principles for the creation of Lithuanian state, which had started already in the interwar period and has been developed in exile.

In the article of Algimantas Jankauskas “The Wholesome Democracy: The Vision of Lithuanian State in Exile” the problem chosen for the analysis unites the major themes of political thinking in exile: considerations of the freedom of conscience and personal freedom, the relations between individual, society and the state, the principles of democratic state. The philosopher reconstructs the main democratic attitudes, its institutional grounds, and argues for the proposition that the ideas suggested in the program of the wholesome democracy: the decentralization of government, the autonomy of economic, social and cultural associations, the enhancement of their political role could be actualized even now. The article is based on the analysis of very broad corpus of sources of political thinking in exile which also includes texts published in hardly accessible editions; therefore this work may also serve as a good ground for those who would like to further develop these investigations.

The article of Laurynas Peluritis “Non-worldview Politics – the Project of New Political Thinking” contains a detailed analysis of one of the main programs of wholesome democracy. The author reconstructs the concepts of man, worldview and politics of Antanas Maceina and Juozas Girnius, with a particular interest given to differences between the person and individual in the framework of non-worldview politics. The article also analyses critical arguments of Vytautas Bagdanavičius, who tries to demonstrate the shortages of the non-worldview approach in political theories. The author finalizes with a shifting of his attention to current discussions and evaluates the ideas of non-worldview politics in the political context of present.

Three articles in the collection analyze the methodologies of our most prominent exiled thinkers. In the first called “The Concept of Society of Vytautas Kavolis” an author Alvydas Noreika tries to submit his arguments about the philosophical grounds of the concept of sociology of Vytautas Kavolis. The author reconstructs the specific methodology of the thinker and

stipulates that the major unifying theme of Kavolis is the collective emotionality and its symbolic expression. The philosopher investigates in what respect the structural-functionalist concept of society of Kavolis, and particularly the determinations of the nature of society, of its organization and dynamics, matches with the outlook of American sociologist Talcott Parsons. He also demonstrates the differences between them. It is indicated in the article that otherwise than Talcott Parsons, Kavolis saw the positive potential of the dysfunctions in the society.

Naglis Kardelis in the article “Classification and Interpretation of Old European Symbols in the Works of Marija Gimbutas “The Language of the Goddess” and “Senoji Europa” (“The Old Europe”)” presents perhaps the first philosophical investigation into the methodology of scientific works of Marija Gimbutienė (Gimbutas). Taking into account the importance of this investigation, which goes beyond the boundaries of investigations into the history of Lithuanian philosophy, the collection also includes a separate English resume of this article.

The article of Nijolė Keršytė “The Semiotics of A. J. Greimas in the West and Lithuania: the Old Fashion or Long-term Project?” analyzes the concept of semiotics through the reconstruction of the context of its historical emergence and distinguishes the particular Greimean features of semiotics. The author considers the prejudices which affect the one-sided understanding of semiotics as well as its skeptical evaluation, and foresees the perspectives of the development of semiotic analysis. The article also depicts the reception of the semiotics of Greimas in Lithuania and states that if to conceive the semiotics reflexively, to understand the texts of its creators as an invitation for a creative discussion, it still retains its potential for the development.

The polemics on the importance of social engagement of art which took place in exile has been studied in the article of Pille Veljataga “The Autonomy of Art and Humanistic Values: the Aesthetic Attitude of Jonas Grinius and Vincas Natkevičius”. The author examines the discussion on the autonomy of arts which sprang from the reaction of the researchers of younger generation to the concept of worldview oriented evaluation of art, propagated by Jonas Grinius. Pille Veljataga analyzes the question of the legitimacy of the worldview based criterion of art criticism, presents the arguments of Vincas Natkevičius and Dalija Valiukėnaitė, – a bit less known literary critic in Lithuania of Anglo-American line, – defending aesthetic criteria of the evaluation

of art. The analysis of the polemics between these three exile scientists displays the ideas and values which used to dominate the aesthetic thinking in exile on the attitude of the artist towards his/her Catholic and national identity values.

The last article in the collection “Inquiries into the History of Philosophy in Exile” is a review. Rūta Marija Vabalaitė presents us with a panoramic view of the historical inquiries produced in exile, discerns the dominant philosophical trends within these analyses, and exhibits thematic connections between various works of Lithuanian exiled philosophers.