

Foreword

However, it would be necessary to gather urgently around the President of the Republic a group of competent people who are not interested in a daily political action and haven't personal ambitions – but for God's sake, do not create "posts" and a new bureaucracy – and instruct them: to imagine an ideal, utopian model of the future of Lithuania, as we want it to be, and to try to identify ways and means for developing different scenarios that march with the mid-range, let's say, a ten-year time period indicating how to approach this model.

Algirdas Julius Greimas

After the proclamation of the restoration of an independent State of Lithuania, Algirdas Julius Greimas, who was named a great seeker of meaning, in the autumn of 1991 has prepared a preliminary document titled "Pro memoria. The Issue of Lithuania's Future Projection", addressing it to the President Vytautas Landsbergis. Thinking about the future of the nation, he has chosen a format of private initiation. This preliminary vision, as though do not pretending, according to Greimas, "neither to a completeness nor a firmness of thought" could have become a meaningful national manifesto, "a premise for deeper reflection" that more than twenty-five years aspires to open up possibilities for new ideological changes.

Preparing for the centennial of the restoration of the Lithuanian State, the challenges that face politics, society and culture can attest to the crisis of the current time. Lacking means to create a positive and meaningful basis for the commemoration, we are demonstrating a lack of national maturity. Lost in the infinity of publicly declaring centenary ideas, we find ourselves in the universe of endless imagination. Obviously, it is difficult to choose, as previously thought, from three, five or seven ideas that could be funded. An intellectual vacuum can be evidenced by the excess of ideas and (non)ability to realize meaningful ideas, as well as by getting lost between ideas and reality.

Considering contemporary quest for meaning, in the discussion "State and Culture: Meeting the 100th Anniversary of the Restored State of Lithuania", that took place in the Vilnius Book Fair, the researchers of the Lithuanian Culture Research Institute – philosopher Naglis Kardelis, cultural researcher Rita Repšienė, cultural critic Vytautas Rubavičius and art critic Skaidra Trilupaitytė – talked over the difficult situation of statehood celebration, our choices and understanding of festivity, asking what legacy we will pass on to future generations? What is our vision of celebration,

when there is very little time left for the preparation, and what type of traditions we initiate?

By invoking contemporary value orientations in his article “Communicative Challenges for the 100 Years of Reconstruction of Lithuania’s Statehood” Vilnius University professor Rimvydas Laužikas focuses on the heritage communication as an important issue for contemporary society. Through a wider approach to communication and information studies he analyzes the narratives of non-dialogue and dialogue and the ways of constructing communicative messages in Lithuanian heritage communication. In a form of discussion he tests the theoretical scheme exploring “The Program of Commemoration of the Centenary of the Restoration of the State of Lithuania” as communicative phenomena, and highlighting an apparent cognitive dissonance between the narratives of non-dialogue (nationalist) and dialogue (liberal), as well as “curatorial” and “participatory” attitudes. Then associate professor Rita Repšienė in the publication “The Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Restoration of Lithuania: Reality, Visions and Value Dilemma” explores the peculiarities of statehood rhetoric in the context of Baltic States – Latvia and Estonia, emphasizing that the priority of the present should be given to the young generation – it should be the main accent of the centenary celebration, providing a unifying platform, an expression of our consciousness to give meaning to freedom, giving hope and faith, and the main actor of every event taking place in every city, town, and village community.

The section “From the History of Culture” contains the final part of the study “Nation and National Loyalty” by an outstanding philosopher Juozas Girnius, in which the essential and multidimensional ideas about “the principles of national loyalty” are outlined, and the importance of having unity, creativity and loyalty is especially appreciated. “The exiles also should *live in a nation* by regretting its problems and contributing to its achievements. Without such a lively connection with the whole nation it is impossible to maintain a national life”. A nation is in a constant need of spiritual maintenance – the maintenance of creative life promotes unity, fostering the sociality dominated by a brotherly principle of “One for all, all for one”. The basis for unity lies not in “a general line”, but in the tolerant ability to “work together unitedly, regardless of all possible differences.”

Assessing the links between life and art, reality and memory, meaning and survival, in the section „Ars longa, vita brevis“, doctor of Humanities, who has defended the dissertation “Prussian Semba’s Place Names” (2007) and the habilitation “Prussian Place Names as the Object for Substantive Investigation” (2011), language historian Grasilda Blažienė reminds us of her childhood friend, photographer, traveler, orientalist and poet Paulius Normantas who went to his eternal rest in 2016. Once he said: “My home is the eternal path”, and he faithfully propagated, with great love and samogitian persistency, the truth as one of the most important creative claims

by testifying and documenting the reality of the world. The other friend Alis Balbierius wrote, recalling precious moments from the past: “Yes, Paulius and I, we both were on the road. And on this road, we were meeting each other illuminated by the same spiritual light, in the spectrum of which dominated a freedom of life. We were getting distant and close again. I will never forget our first meeting – that took place in the last millennium, in the last century, in another epoch, when in October certain stranger with his backpack and camera came to the famous 31st meeting of bird ringers and explorers in the Curonian Spit”. Through his lifetime being on the road and calling himself a professor of vagabondage, he remained true to himself observing “people live differently, and he was fleeing from European madness to the bustle of the East longing for silence. He needed for like-minded individuals, understanding, justifying, believing and supporting his vagrancy. In Lithuania he was longing for his freaky friends who were wandering around the East, while hoping that “every return would be a feast for others”, and never would settle down, believing in fate and saying: “When in the infinite sea one wave will overtake another, I will stop” (Grasilda Blažienė).

In order to reveal a broader identity horizon, a possibility of analogies and different perspectives in cultural studies, there are published several articles based on papers presented at the conference “Interaction of Cultures: Issues and Perspectives of the XXth and XXIst centuries” that took place at the Lithuanian Culture Research Institute on 19–20 September 2015, summing up the observations of inter-cultural interactions and experiences. Associate professor Loreta Poškaitė in the publication “Chinese Communities and Chinatowns in the West: the Intermingling, Coexistence or Confrontation of the Cultures?” reveals the consequences of globalization, historical changes, transformations and emigration. The author overviews the centres of Chinese communities that have been created in various metropolitan areas all over the world known as “Chinatown” that has become an universal and, at the same time, a highly controversial symbol of foreign culture and community in the West, which perfectly reflects the peculiarities of orientalist discourse. Cultural interactions and conflicts, from a methodological point of view, are also analysed in the study by associate professor Stanislovas Juknevičius, exploring the psychological sources of conflict between the West and Islam, as well as the adversaries and opponents of globalization. He claims that the main psychological causes of conflict between cultures lie in the nature of collective sub-consciousness, and in this context the conflict between the West and Islam should be regarded as a conflict between traditional and modernist cultures, when Islam grounds its structures on the basis of faith, while the West – on the basis of reason. The author also discusses another important aspect of the expression of collective sub-consciousness – the complex realities of globalization and nationalism.

“Visual Delirium: Dramaturgy and Vision of World Accidents” as a consequence of the cultural effects of the world today, is the theme of associate professor Odeta Žukauskienė, revealing an increasing power and impact of images. “Turned into a weapon, visuality produces pseudo reality, visions of war and conflicts, manipulates images and visual perspectives”, visuality becomes a tool for political, ideological battles and terrorism, thus it is important to study not only the intensive production of images, but also social viewing practices and perceptions. It is given as an example the media coverage and public reception of terrorist act in the *Charlie Hebdo* that exposes the necessity to reflect critically on our viewing practices, voyeuristic gaze, desire of images and aesthetic effects stimulated by new technologies, as well as all-embracing passive, cynical, and consumerist attitude.

The Reviews section discusses the monograph “Chinese and Turkish Immigrants in Lithuania” by Karolis Žibas published in Vilnius by the Lithuanian Social Research Centre in 2014, assessing this attempt to fully disclose the problems of Chinese and Turkish immigration in the most comprehensive way from a variety of perspectives (that of immigrants, majority society, the integration politics of Lithuanian immigrants), what is considered as one of the advantages of this book, all the more since it is the first study of these immigrants in Lithuania. The author also sought to investigate two different immigrant communities providing a comparative analysis of immigration network, revealing not only similarities but also differences that are seen in the individual and collective factors of Chinese and Turkish mobility.

Facing the dilemmas of globalization, European integration, refugees and immigrants, and, on the other hand, the realities of emigrating Lithuania, it is worth to remember “Pro memoria. The Issue of Lithuania’s Future Projection” by Algirdas Julius Greimas, published in the number 8 of *Baltos lankos* in 1997. When rebuilding Lithuania, it was initiated a vision embracing creative initiatives and good intentions, thus all-encompassing, but without claiming to completeness this study, whose type-written version is stored in the archive of the Vilnius University Library, remains a testimony of those good intentions. *Sic transit gloria mundi...*