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The Apparatus of Writers and Four Generations of Writers in Soviet Lithuania

VILIUS IVANAUSKAS

During the Soviet years, artists were affected by the ideology of the time and political demands, so an author's autonomy was limited. The artistic unions, together with other institutions of ideology and inspection, carried out the regulation of the artists; they performed the function of propagating the ruling priorities and supervising the artists. The creative class was formed through membership, privileges, and the supervision of creative works. With the collective conditions of the time, individual artists experienced pressure; however, specific group statutes frequently helped cover an artist (if he was established) if he had deviated slightly from the direction of the government's forbidden "formalism" or "lack of principle." The creative unions of the time and their requirements can be seen as a specific creative apparatus that artists attempted to accommodate themselves to, to adapt to changing circumstances. The Soviet creative apparatus was fairly stable and the cultural processes were stationary; however, this institutional solidity was only one side of the coin. One must look beyond merely the relationship between the artist and the system; different networks and groups of artists, that is, the social circumstances,

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assist in understanding the importance of these groups in the apparatus of art. In examining the effect of these groups, it becomes clear that separate chains of artists formed the dynamic of creation. The apparatus adapted to several chains, and the ideological boundaries slowly changed.

This article utilizes the standpoint of historic and literary sociology (the insights of Evgeny Dobrenko and Ilja Kalinin), in which more attention is paid to separate generations of writers in order to more clearly see the development of their works. The basic thesis is that the generational factor assists in understanding the creative dynamic in the writers' apparatus and in authors' works, as well as the maintenance, discipline and balance between the differing chains. The article examines four of the outstanding generations of writers in the Soviet era and their relationship with the establishment of that era, evaluating their ability to act or to deviate from the priorities of that time. The article relies on studies such as *Rašytojas ir cenzūra* (Writer and censorship) or *Nie vienareikšmės situacijos: Pokalbiai apie sovietmečio literatūros lauką* (Ambivalent situations: a conversation about the field of literature during the Soviet era) and the published insights of literature scholars, taking into account the dictates of the system and observations of people's reactions to them, as well as the specific maneuvers of writers and material collected by the author.

Institutional Control

After Stalin's famous 1932 speech in Maxim Gorky's house about writers as "engineers of the soul", a unified Writers Union was promptly founded on the basis of the entire Soviet Union, and a motley of writers' organizations disbanded. The principle of Soviet Realism, which writers were required to follow, was established. When the Soviets occupied Lithuania, this unified system was applied to Soviet Lithuania as well. The structure

of the institutions surrounding Lithuania's writers was made up of several layers: at the center was the Writers Union; on the top, various formulators of cultural policy; on the bottom, the Writers Union employees or organizations that were obviously experiencing its influence (journals and publishing houses); on the side, controlling institutions without policy formation functions. On the level of the Republic, several local institutions had a voice: the Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee (LCPCC) (particularly the cultural section) as well as the Cultural Ministry or local ideologues with personal influence, such as the Central Committee secretary Kazys Preiškas and the long-time editor of *Tiesa (Truth)*, Genrikas Zimanas. The latter had a great influence in the field of cultural policy and its supervision. The dependent organizations were those the Writers Union supervised directly, who frequently combined their activities with the Writers Union and responded to its management's decisions at meetings, plenums, and conferences.

The table below offers the structure of the institutions surrounding writers' works.

Table 1. The Institutional Structure of the Literary Field

Organization	Functions / responsibilities
Writers Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encouragement of writers' work ▪ Formation of literary field ▪ Protection of prioritized areas ▪ Forming and strengthening writers' authority ▪ Material support of literature
Printing and book publishing administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formation of prioritized areas and themes ▪ Organization of publishing process ▪ Publication and distribution of works
Editorial departments at journals and newspapers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spread of writers' works and authority ▪ Literary criticism ▪ Organization of public criticism

Scholarly institutions (VLU, Lithuanian Language and Literature Institute)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formation of the literary field ▪ Literary criticism and analysis ▪ Strengthening writers' authority ▪ Setting connections with Lithuanians/Lithuanian culture
Radio and broadcast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spread of writers' works and authority
Other cultural institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaboration ▪ Participation in understanding priority areas
Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requirements for priority areas ▪ Defining critical points ▪ General ideological supervision
Glavlit (censor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supervision of publication process and censorship ▪ Supervision/censorship of other processes of creative works and approaches

The relationship between all of them was not just regulated and controlled, as the controllers were in the creative organizations as well, e.g., sometimes the internal censorship appeared stronger. This control was diverse; it had many junctures and was sometimes particularly depersonalized and bureaucratic. Here Vytautas Kavolis's concept of the "factory procedure" can be applied to explain the ideological and political context of the time.¹

Administration Networks

The administration of the Writers Union and the editorial staff of the publications belonging to it or other related organizations was fairly clearly a part of the cultural nomenclature. Most often it was people trusted by the government who also had authority among writers.

¹ Kavolis, "Tvarkos paradigmos: gamta, fabrikas, menas," 183–214.

Table 2. Leaders of the Writers Union and Associated Offices

Writer's Union chairmen	"Literatūros ir Meno" editors	"Pergalės" editors	Lithuanian Language and Literature Institute directors
Kostas Korsakas (1944–1945)	Jonas Šimkus (1946–1949)	Juozas Pajaujis (1942)	Kostas Korsakas (1952–1984); 1946–1952 – Lithuanian Literature Institute Director
Petras Cvirka (1945–1947)	Vacys Reimeris (1949–1969)	Kostas Korsakas (1943–1944)	Jonas Lankutis (1984–1992)
Jonas Šimkus (1948–1954)	Vytautas Radaitis (1969–1975)	Petras Cvirka (1945)	
Antanas Venclova (1954–1959)	Osvaldas Aleksa (1975–1985)	Juozas Baltušis (1946–1954)	
Eduardas Mieželaitis (1959–1970)	Antanas Drilinga (1985–1988)	Jonas Šimkus (1954–1958)	
Alfonas Bieliauskas (1970–1976)	Leonidas Jacinevičius (1989–1990)	Vladas Mozūriūnas (1958–1964)	
Alfonas Maldonis (1976–1988)		Algimantas Baltakis (1964–1976; 1985–1990)	
Vytautas Martinkus (1988–1994)		Juozas Macevičius (1976–1985)	

It would be appropriate to single out the two most important periodicals that were the channel for the dominant line of literature (or even of other artistic areas) or the strengthening of ideological boundary markers. The periodical *Literatūra ir menas* (Literature and Art) began publication during the war years in Moscow (for some time the Writers Union published it to-

gether with the Art Council). In 1968, *Literatūra ir menas* became the common publication of all the republic's creative unions, although the writers' influence was decisive, particularly since its editors were usually writers. Another important publication of the Writers Union was the journal *Pergalė*, which also began publication during the war years and became an important platform for trying out new ideas, for pulling young or beginning artists into literature, and for the filtering of risky works.

The Processes of Publication and Censorship

In 1980, the writer Juozas Baltušis admitted the danger lurking in literature:

...working in literature, particularly when taking your first steps, you must be careful to not write about what you don't know well, what you are not deeply convinced of. Too much daring brings as much misfortune as cowardice. Caution, and rather a great deal of it, is needed, not just in your work, but also when confronting creative failure.²

It wasn't just ideological reasons, a writer's talent, or the nature of the relationship between writers and the leading writers or publishers that had an influence on the process of publication; there were purely bureaucratic reasons as well. For example, it has been observed more than once that while there was various bargaining going on, explanations of the circumstances, and self-protection, it frequently happened during the year-long publication process that the manuscript was actively worked on only approximately twenty percent of the time, and the rest of the time the manuscript would lie around while the editors and reviewers created a "self-protection" situation, and the writers themselves

² Lipskis, *Interviu su rašytojais*, 75.

went along with them and agreed to corrections, as they wanted their work to be published. For this reason, besides the institutional structure, it is important to see the processes of inspecting the work, which actively exerted pressure on the writer and his control, and which, incidentally, occurred in a constantly changing ideological-cultural space, particularly in the post-Stalin time period.³ Inquiring into the publication of a work as the most basic process, for example, reveals the institutional structure's division of responsibilities, the basic points of inspection and its scale, the question of writers' status, the variations working on the dynamics of the distribution of the work, and the following Soviet criteria for works raised during the entire process: 1) the question of ideological content, 2) the work's urgency and 3) the work's quality and the artist's talent. As time goes on these criteria changed.

It is appropriate to characterize the stages of the publication's process. 1) The preparation of the text occurs at the author's own initiative, however, in different time periods the authors would feel varying pressure, sometimes stronger, sometimes weaker. To announce a work and to write was required not just because of the necessity of justifying a writer's status as a member or candidate for membership in the Writers Union, but also because of the required understanding of works as a means of ideology. The practice of preparing and printing at least one significant work (a collection, story or novel) per year became established. Under the conditions of totalitarianism, authors were inclined to carefully investigate the allowed boundaries, so they frequently undertook self-censorship. The journalist and poet Aleksas Dabulskis remembered self-control this way:

Since I had consciously decided not to return to the labor camps in Mordovia, my INSIDE labored mercilessly, never closing its eyes. When some sharper word sprung out, the text was imme-

³ Dobrenko, Kalinin, *A History of Russian Literary Theory*, 187.

diately destroyed, crossed out or thrown away. The editors of publishing houses and periodicals pretty much had no need to dirty their hands. If some little discussion occurred, I wouldn't jump in their face; I would give in with a laugh. My creative ambitions had long since been crushed.⁴

When an author would present a manuscript to a publisher, the editorial staff was assigned to an "inside" review, and offered observations about how to improve it. However, the reviewer could be the person who began a concrete oppression of the author and the escalation of "errors" if the work appeared "dangerous." There would be an effort to keep ideological requirements in mind; authoritative writers, poets and critics were assigned to be reviewers. The editor and censor essentially continued the "inside" reviewer's work of evaluating the work's appropriateness in the ideological and artist sense. The editor also evaluated how the writer handled the observations from the inside review. If the author and editors had a good relationship, the observations enabled him or her, in certain cases, to refrain from publishing the work. As the writer Vytautas Bubnys said:

The editors at *Pergalė* or *Vaga* (I cannot say about any of them that they were very benevolent) knew very well what was allowed and what wasn't, and when they wanted to edit out a little ideologically "sinful" spot, they often cleverly took to proving that it wasn't artistic, that it didn't suit the context, and that everything was clear as it was without that paragraph or couple of sentences.⁵

The editor of the journal *Pergalė*, Algimantas Baltakis, described his feelings of responsibility and psychological difficulty at the time in a letter to his colleague Eduardas Miežalaitis in 1969:

⁴ Dabulskis, "Ir smaugiamas pripranti," 37.

⁵ Bubnys, "Basom per aštrius akmenis," 16.

Dear Eduardas! That chair is not for me. I actually feel it physically. I can learn anything, a dog gets accustomed to being hung, but I'll never manage to coerce another person, particularly my fellow writers, even though I've had to do this more than once. For some reason, it's unbearable—and it's over. Even more so, since I don't always have business with people I could undoubtedly call our ideological enemies. It wouldn't be hard to work and make categorical decisions, if you could divide everyone into just two categories: here's an enemy, and here's a friend, although there have been cases like that. Unfortunately, most people are so mixed, and you carry such contradictory things within yourself, that you often start doubting if you acted correctly in making one or another decision. And when it happens that I have to reject some work all the same, I ruin my mood for a long time. The thought that I've caused another person xxxx in the soul.⁶

The literature critic Solveiga Daugirdaitė has observed that in post-Soviet research and in the memoirs of the writers themselves, images of the editor as "the cowardly hand of censorship" and the "brave writer" are not always justifiably distinguished, although many situations show that this is a too-schematic, one-sided evaluation.⁷ In reality, editors (or publishing houses' directors) were very different; some actively took on the role of supervising ideology (for example, Icchokas Gurvičius, Algirdas Pekeliūnas, Aldona Mickienė), others were more flexible and carefully coordinated proof-reading with the author (Aleksandras Žirgulyš, Dominykas Urbas, Aldona Liobytė, Aušra Sluckaitė, Jonas Čekys, Donata Linčiuvienė), helped them improve the professionalism (the structure and composition) of texts with an ideological standpoint.⁸ In other words, the writers themselves were, not infrequently, inclined to make compromises. The literature critic Petras

⁶ Baltakis to Miežalaitis. September 29, 1969.

⁷ Daugirdaitė, "Draugas redaktorius," 31–56.

⁸ Ibid.

Bražėnas similarly characterized the unevenly formed connection between writers and editors in the post-Stalin years:

Imagine: some editor is sitting there, and he can pretend that he doesn't notice the Aesopian language, the hints, allusions or some other more obvious declarations—that is one variation, it will pass. Another [editor – author's note] is already on the scent, has this term like "inner censorship," and without even waiting for what the other will say, comes out with it first, just so nothing will go wrong. A third truly enjoys directing, to catch something Soviet, left over from post-war fields.⁹

Censorship was a unique selective intervention in the publication process that took place with differing intensities; some authors were checked more carefully, others, the more trustworthy, were censored less. The censors relied on specific established criteria and their own experience. In this phase, a work of literature could be edited or entirely thrown out. On the basis of the inner review, just as much as the editor's or censor's observations, an individual work could be discussed in a Writers Union committee or even a board meeting, as well as become part of the other material collected about a writer's activities.

However, the most important phase was the publication. The essential role here was played by the editorial staff of the publishing house, journal, or newspaper. The publishing system itself was supervised by the Publishing and Printing Trades Soviet, formed in 1945, whose function was taken over by the Press Committee in the 1960s, which was established to oversee book publishing, printing, and the book trade. Ten years later, this committee was renamed the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic's Council of Ministers Government Publishing, Printing and Book Trade Committee. Although this committee was important

⁹ Interview with Petras Bražėnas.

in the administrative sense, in the long run separate publishing houses such as Vaga (until 1965 called a literary publisher), Minties, which published scholarly literature, and others obtained a particularly strong influence; their directors determined the real direction of publishing. Besides these, some periodical publications – newspapers and journals – were also significant. Besides providing reviews of creative works, they also printed literary works. The journal *Pergalė* was particularly important, as it became a trampoline for younger authors and for trying out ideas, as well as a unique testing ground for trying out works the publishing houses planned to release, checking the reactions of readers, ideologues, and critics.

The next phase was the distribution of the work. A work's reach depended on the size of the edition, how it was distributed, if it was available in all libraries, and whether it was written about in cultural publications. Writers such as Eduardas Miežėlaitis, Justinas Marcinkevičius, Jonas Avyžius, Grigorijus Kanovičius, and Vytautas Bubnys had experts and propagators of their works beyond the boundaries of the republic and could also rely on the work of the Lithuanian literature commission of the USSR Writers Union.

The Censorship Environment and its Results

Soviet censorship was multi-staged; it began with an individual's self-control, was furthered by the editors at publications and crowned by the institution responsible for censorship, Glavlit.

Censorship could be applied to repeated verifications and analysis, to the removal of works from the distribution network, and to limiting the book's availability. The public reactions of Party ideologues and of other writers and critics after the work was published was also important. However, reactions to sharp criticism was particularly painful; periodically,

literary critics (for example, Vytautas Kubilius and Ričardas Pakalniškis) were themselves criticized in writers' meetings. A complicated situation would arise if a work was criticized from an ideological-Party position, noticing its "ideological errors." In the Stalin years, this meant complete marginalization, however, even in later years this kind of criticism (by the ideologues Zimanas and Albertas Laurinčiukas, for example) would have serious consequences. The most influential writers (Mieželaitis, Marcinkevičius, Avyžius, Baltušis) had their constant critics (Algimantas Bučys, Vitas Areška, Kazys Ambrasas, and others) who functioned more as propagators and publicists than as literary analysts. The system of control was constructed in such a way that other colleagues – writers and critics – would have their say first, and only then would be supplemented by criticism "from above." This many-layered system was revealed by Oleg Kharkhordin's research into the specific character of Soviet individualism and observations on the collective supervision formerly used.¹⁰ However, besides the control exercised by colleagues and critics, the work had still to go through serious bureaucratic censorship, embodied primarily by the Soviet Glavlit. It had a much wider field of province than just the appraisal of works. Censorship covered published books, journals, and the checking of other publication's contents, as well as applying renewed requirements to works that had already been published. In other words, there was no guarantee that today's suitable work wouldn't be recognized as unsuitable tomorrow, taken out of bookstores and libraries and turned over to special repositories (*specfondai*). The KGB and sections of the Central Committee also executed additional inspections; creative work experienced more than a routine control – writers would end up in separate campaigns of investigation or inspection.

¹⁰ Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia*, 287.

Four Generations of Writers and Their Ties to the Establishment

In spite of the official creative apparatus, the groupings of writers themselves and competing regulations were also significant, as they created additional control and the propagation of ideas, or else a mechanism for supporting creators. Using this point of view, it is possible to discern and investigate four different groups of writers from different time periods.

The First Generation

When the Soviet government took over, the nucleus of the *trečiafrontininkai* (members of the Third Front), along with additional literati who had matured in Moscow during the war, became the axis of the post-war Soviet Writers Union, which others then joined. The most influential and notable writers were Petras Cvirka, Antanas Venclova, Liudas Gira, Kostas Korsakas, and Jonas Šimkus, as well as Salomėja Nėris, using her cultural capital, and writers such as Juozas Baltušis and Valerija Valsiūnienė, or the young Vacys Reimeris, Vladas Mozūriūnas, and Mieželaitis, who also were among those who had retreated into the depths of the USSR; some had distinguished themselves before the war. It was the Third Front generation of Korsakas and Venclova, and those like the younger cohort of Baltušis and Aleksys Churginas who essentially joined them, who began to legitimize the Soviet government. Their grounds were the creation of a new socialist milieu. Other writers, those who had been recognized before the war but were of a more moderate outlook, were pulled into their circle. The ranks of the more influential literati who retreated to the West, or the writers who were arrested or whose output was otherwise restricted, were quickly filled by the younger generation or somewhat older, previously almost unknown literati, or simply people who had demonstrated activity in the literary field. The

Zhdanov campaign and the deaths of individual writers somewhat re-rated the influence of writers and escalated ideologists such as Aleksandras Gudaitis-Guzevičius, Teofilis Tilvytis, and Romas Šarmaitis. However, the leftists from the period between the wars, with Venclova in the lead, held sway until the end of the sixth decade, when leadership was shared with the intervening generation of Eugenijus Matuzevičius, Mieželaitis, Reimeris, and Mozūriūnas. They were dependent on their older colleagues until the middle of the 1950s, were relatively fragmented, and essentially bound themselves to the first Soviet writers' generation. It is rather difficult to say that the younger literati – younger than Mieželaitis – drawn in during the second half of Stalinism were a noticeably new cohort, although at the time they were called “the young ones.” In 1952, Venclova introduced them thusly:

An entire group of talented young writers have come into our literature: Mykolas Sluckis, Jonas Avyžius, Antanas Jonynas, Kazys Marukas, Antanas Pakalnis, Jonas Macevičius, Vytautas Kubilius, Alfonsas Bieliauskas, Vytautas Radaitis, Vladas Grybas, and others. The young writers are particularly active in developing the theme of collectivization in our prose.¹¹

Although at the end of Stalinism it appeared that this generation would be the “young wave” replacing the older writers, and at first famous for their belligerent activism, its members nevertheless did not occupy the ruling posts. For a certain time its members were informally known as the “red bohemians.”¹² Antanas Jonynas's son, Antanas A. Jonynas, remembering his father, maintained that the writers around him didn't just like the bohemian life; they were also injured:

¹¹ Stenogram of the meeting of Lithuanian Soviet writers. December 26, 1952.

¹² Interview with Algimantas Baltakis. July 21, 2010.

That bohemianism got in the way of developing their careers and earning trust. That generation came from very complex surroundings and were heavily broken. They had already managed to experience a number of trials. As a generation they weren't able to occupy important positions, you could call them the “broken generation.”¹³

One of the outstanding poets of this generation, Vladas Grybas, committed suicide in 1954 when he was barely twenty-seven years old. A part of these artists joined the older ones (for example, Jonynas and Macevičius), others (for example, Luckis, Avyžius, Bieliauskas) joined a slightly younger wave of artists, Justinas Marcinkevičius's “30th” generation, which shaped the post-Stalin cultural field.

The Second Generation

Khrushchev's “thaw” created a somewhat freer atmosphere, new rules and new priorities in the field of literature. As Dobrenko and Kalinin observed, in the post-Stalin period the new generation of authors were actively supported, while the old writers/bureaucrats were slowly pushed out.¹⁴ During this period in Lithuania, the “30th” generation and its representatives who emerged in the 70s – Marcinkevičius, Baltakis, and Alfonsas Maldonis – became the most influential. Their older colleagues practically identified with them, – Mieželaitis, gliding between several generations and for a period this younger generation's patron, and similarly Sluckis, Avyžius, Macevičius,¹⁵ Bieliauskas (who later skirmished with the others) or somewhat younger writers (for example, Bubnys) and other writers closer to them. In essence these two cohorts are a unique cipher for the field of the Soviet

¹³ Interview with Antanas A. Jonynas. April 16, 2015.

¹⁴ Dobrenko, Kalinin, “Literary criticism during the Thaw,” 187.

¹⁵ Mitaitė, “Juozas Macevičius: ištikimybė savajai kartai ir sau,” 93–107.

era's ideology and society's inclusion. The older generation had adapted to the Stalinist epoch, while the so-called "30th" generation became the generation of the thaw. If the older generation helped justify the Soviet rule, then the "30th" generation helped localize this system, to fill the local sphere and the channels of the "friendship of nations" with symbols of ethnic Lithuania, which the entire society identified with. This patriotic course became significant on the level of the Sajūdis movement.¹⁶

This generation was exceptional because of its experience, as well as because of the change in the system and the epoch, which shaped its sudden emergence at the top of the establishment. As a representative of the younger generation, Vladas Braziūnas, observed: "It doesn't always happen that way, that the work of your very youth becomes a unique classic, as happened to the generation of Marcinkevičius and Baltakis."¹⁷

The changes brought by the thaw and the recognition received also shaped this generation's ability to successfully maneuver in the system. Baltakis became the editor of the journal *Pergalė* and Marcinkevičius the deputy chairman of the Writers Union; Bieliauskas, the chairman of the Writers Union was their patron. He was later replaced by Maldonis, who was a close friend and classmate of Marcinkevičius and Baltakis. Because of the popularity of his historic dramas, Marcinkevičius in time became the dominant poet of the "Lithuanian people." The "30th" generation consolidated its position in the Soviet establishment and held this influence right up until the Singing Revolution of the 1990s. They dominated printed books and were included in syllabuses. A few years before the creation of Sajūdis, in 1986, the critic Ambrasas named the current established authorities: "At least for the time being, Baltušis or Avyžius, Mieželaitis or Marcinkevičius, seem unreachable to

¹⁶ Dobrenko, Kalinin, "Literary criticism during the Thaw," 193–195.

¹⁷ Interview with Vladas Braziūnas. May, 2014.

me."¹⁸ This generation, compared with the older one, could manifest itself on the level of the Union; they had friends in the other republics from their early years,¹⁹ and this made them practically untouchable.

The Third and Fourth Generations

To the third generation, born before, during, or after the war, the post-Stalin years were not the same as for the second generation. This generation never came to dominate the establishment, however, by the end of the Soviet years, through their fame and acknowledgement by the public they nearly equaled the second generation. It expressed its claims to a larger role beginning in the seventh decade. In 1986, Baltakis acknowledged that Sigitas Geda's debut was particularly outstanding.²⁰ The representatives of this generation (Geda, Marcelijus Martinaitis, Jonas Strielkūnas, Bronius Radzevičius, and others) had a considerable influence on the public's imagination, particularly in further extending the theme of ethnic nostalgia in more modern forms. This, Sigitas Geda's generation, although they frequently continued their older colleagues' direction in the sense of content, via means of rather modern poetic expressions varying between traditional and modernist forms, risked the tested boundaries. The critic Rimantas Kmita has observed that "Geda as a poet felt himself a unique instrument of tradition, rearranging the cultural world, creating out of a reserve of experience and recollections, memory, and a nearly platonic sense of beginning ideas."²¹ He also ascribed a frequently characteristic rebelliousness in his work and public behavior, which was frequently nevertheless

¹⁸ Inis, *Dešimt klausimų rašytojams*, 16.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

²¹ Kmita, "Pyktis kaip kultūrinė kategorija," 61.

accompanied by a hidden declaration of loyalty to the system, a unique maneuvering through the existing boundaries.²²

It is even more difficult to characterize the resemblance between them and a still younger generation. In 1986, Maldonis, the then chairman of the Writers Union, spoke at a conference about the new wave of writers and poets – those who had debuted with a first book in the last five years: Romas Daugirdas, Dalia Dubickaitė, Dalia Kudžmaitė, Gintaras Dabrišius, Jonas Liniauskas, Vladas Braziūnas, Julija Jakentaitė, Ramūnas Kasparavičius, Edmondas Kelmickas, Paulina Žemgulytė, Tautvyda Marcinkevičiūtė, Bronius Ribokas, Vytautas Venclova, Markas Zingeris, Vaidotas Daunys, Angelė Jankauskytė, M. Miliauskaitė, and others.²³ This generation of writers was even more eclectic, marked by a larger inner line and a plethora of creative discourses. Its most outstanding examples – Antanas A. Jonynas, Vytautas Rubavičius, Gintaras Patackas, Braziūnas, Ričardas Gavelis, and Saulius Tomas Kondrotas – were not so stressed, differed between themselves, and in their works were most often oriented not just towards the lost ethnicity and country life, but often towards a more organic psychology of the city than the older generation. True, the representatives of this generation were sometimes reminded that they had learned how to relate to a millennium of folk traditions from their older colleagues, and to avoid fragmentation, as purportedly youth lacked a feeling for the whole, an integrated world view that helped to orient themselves in the contemporary world.²⁴ They were reminded of the common characteristics of the second and third generation: “to delve into a concrete historical sphere and into the more universal mystery of man’s fate,” in other words, to see

²² Kmita, „Maištas „brandaus socializmo“ sąlygomis,” 80–98.

²³ Maldonis, Alfonsas reporting to Congress of Lithuanian Soviet writers. March 12–13, 1986, 62.

²⁴ Ibid., 63.

the nation’s present in a wider historical context.²⁵ As Kmita observed, some of the representatives of the fourth generation (Kondrotas and Gavelis) wrote their first works completely detached from tradition, as if they had been from Latin America or some other region and didn’t connect themselves with tradition and the need to lean on their roots.²⁶ Creative variety was characteristic of this generation. One of its representatives, Kondrotas, emigrated to the West. Asked about the influence that literary tradition had on him, he stressed that he did not orient himself towards local writers, but learned and was continuing to learn from world literature.²⁷ The literary scholar Imelda Vedrickaitė, analyzing Kondrotas’s novels, observed the surreal expression, characteristic of his work, taken from the West:

Delving into man’s downfall, repentance, the menace of the world justifying man’s animalistic element, the connection between eroticism and insanity, Kondrotas approached the thematic horizon of the surrealists. In his prose he opened a literary revolution against the socialist utopian “reality.”²⁸

In 1986, the Writers Union chairman Maldonis pointed out the searching apparent in the young writer Kondrotas’s writings (the novels *Žalčio žvilgnis* and *Apsiniauks žvelgiantys per langą*), which was a challenge to inert portrayals and at the same time marked by an excessive faith in a playful style.²⁹ The literary scholar Jūratė Čerškutė, relying on material found in Gavelis’s archives, concluded that the method of the nar-

²⁵ Ibid., 42.

²⁶ Interview with Rimantas Kmita. April 9, 2014.

²⁷ Inis, *Dešimt klausimų rašytojams*, 185.

²⁸ Vedrickaitė, “Siurrealistinė galios,” 101–126.

²⁹ Maldonis, Alfonsas reporting to Congress of Lithuanian Soviet writers. March 12–13, 1986, 32.

rative construction of this author's unusual and best-known work *Vilniaus Pokeris* was adapted from Akira Kurosawa's film *Rashomon*.³⁰ She noticed this connection while investigated Gavelis's archive and a letter to Leo Ray of Jan. 27, 1980, in which he mentions using the influence of *Rashomon*: "let *Vilniaus pokeris* be the quintessence of all of this phantasmagoria."

Incidentally, the fourth generation of writers differed in that they were considerably less combative than those before them. "You are all so friendly, united, and no one's climbing over one another," the poet Bražiūnas remembered an observation of the older generation.³¹ In addition, this generation was characterized by individual author's searchings together with a certain sense of commonality. The writers belonging to it had fewer encounters with the censors and control, although they didn't entirely avoid it, either.

The Typology of the Generations and its Influence on Literature's Dynamics

The typical characteristics of the generations are summarized in Table 3, presenting their relationship with the system and their contribution and place in the sphere of Lithuanian soviet literature.

Table 3. Typical Characteristics of the Generations.

Generation	Typical characteristics
"Bringers of Stalin's sun" / former Third Front	Had close ties to the period between the wars, but represented the leftist intellectual wing; looked rather positively at the USSR. Helped legitimize the Soviet system. Fell under the Zhdanov Doctrine.

³⁰ Čerškutė, "Ričardo Gavelio *Vilniaus pokeris*," 81–100.

³¹ Interview with Vldas Bražiūnas. May, 2014.

Lithuania's "Sixtiers" born in the 1930s (the "30th" generation)	Educated after the war; made their career during Khrushchev's Thaw. Presented a new stimulus to literature / guided Lithuanian literature out of a dead end. Actively joined in the positioning of Lithuanian particularism. Became the dominant generation up until independence.
Generation born during and after the war: the "young modernists"	Challenged the Sixtiers. More open to new forms of expression. Never became the dominant generation in the establishment, but with their fame and public acknowledgement by the end of the Soviet years almost equaled the second generation.
The generation born in the 1950s: the "worry-free searchers"	Writers who began their careers at the end of the Soviet years.

Every generation would find their own modernism, each sought to transform literature. Creative innovation was one of the elements that exposed the ability of authors, separate groups, or a generation of authors to have an influence on literature's renewal and revealed what kind of innovation could be supported and what kind would be marginalized. Changing time periods used to bring new innovators and waves of modernism, which, as time passed, would most often be normalized and brought into the system; the relationship between the generations would eventually heal.

During the Stalin years, the majority of cultural workers who wanted to remain on top had to demonstrate an obvious leaning towards the Soviet system, to avoid risky creative ideas, especially since all of the basic means necessary for carrying out Communist indoctrination were created during this period. In the meantime, the Khrushchev divide was important from the stance of new aspirations. The modernism of Mieželaitis's work *Žmogus* was considered a standard of innovation, a reflection of Soviet humanism, even Moscow writers praised it. For example, the Russian poet Robert Rozhdestvensky spoke of "the Mieželaitization of Russian poetry." Other influential innovators were presented

the same way, for example, the representative of the stream-of-consciousness direction, Sluckis. They, as well as Marcinkevičius's cohort, being at the top of the establishment, found it easier to express Soviet modernism because of their influence; however, the representatives of the younger generation collided with the limits more often. In spite of the context of the thaw, during the Khrushchev years it lacked a clear direction — the modernists' breakthroughs would encounter a response. For example, at the beginning of April in 1963 at a discussion of creative workers at the Russian Drama Theater, Lithuanian writers were criticized, particularly the writer Romualdas Lankauskas and the artists Saulė Kisarauskienė, Vincas Kisarauskas, and Birutė Žilytė. The modernist impetuosity of the younger generation is visible in the second half of the 1960s (for example, Geda's particularly outstanding debut). On the other hand, their younger colleagues themselves frequently did not avoid intensifying the tension. For example, Geda avoided some of his acknowledged colleagues:

Like a good strategist, Geda has not shown a single gesture of respect to the best poets, but at the same time has not avoided wrestling with them. [Genius] Strazdas, Antanas Baranauskas and [Kazys] Binkis were individuals with whom Geda's relationship was almost entirely positive. His reception of Maironis or Mieželaitis was much more complicated, but apparently it was most stressful with those poets whose position in the Lithuanian pantheon is still unclear and will unavoidably be adjusted in the near future: Alfonsas Nyka-Niliūnas, Tomas Venclova, Justinas Marcinkevičius, and others. Geda needed strong opponents because only in battle does power manifest itself.³²

The fourth generation was also marked by modernism. However, compared to the debut of the third generation, a cer-

³² Kmita, "Pyktis kaip kultūrinė kategorija," 67–68.

tain expression of modernism in the second half of the 1980s was already routine. There was also no striking tension or strain with the older generation. Radzevičius, a representative of the third generation, remembers:

Let it be forgiven if I somewhat nostalgically state that we, the middle and in part the younger generation, seemingly floundered in a large sea of life, knowledge, and undefined possibilities: the sense of the depths numbed and frightened us. (Who knows if that was characteristic of many people of the older generation?) But we had to imbue other feelings, too, that some of those younger than us already had (Rubavičius, Kondrotas): the depth is not that deep and the sea is not that wide. We had to acquire a sense of limits, without which we would sink and sink into history and mythology; a sense of the ground and reality, we had to shake off that beautiful nebulous fluffiness.³³

The third and fourth generations avoided tension between themselves (particularly since not a single one managed to take a dominant position in the writers' establishment); however, the boundaries remained. The somewhat older generation sought to emphasize their distinction, similar to how the second generation did earlier with the third. This is particularly clear in the case of Geda:

Geda dismissed the younger generation nearly in its entirety, upbraiding them for a lack of erudition, unfamiliarity with language, etc. <...> It seems that Geda's attitude and relationship with other players in the sphere of literature suits Mickūnas's words: "the fear to lose power and future significance."³⁴

Translated by ELIZABETH NOVICKAS

³³ Inis, *Dešimt klausimų rašytojams*, 295.

³⁴ Kmita, "Pyktis kaip kultūrinė kategorija," 56–72.

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that political oppression from without also placed restrictions on the expression of religious thought. It is no wonder that for many Lithuanians, political freedom was also understood as freedom of religious expression. Combining these spheres of life, Lithuanian architects during various historical periods created church architecture, incorporating into it Lithuanian national characteristics. Both the church exteriors and interiors were designed using ethnographic Lithuanian symbolism or using building forms characteristic of the Lithuanian building style. This tendency is especially noticeable starting in the beginning of the twentieth century. It remained popular during the interwar period, and continued even after regaining independence in 1990.

The Apparatus of Writers and Four Generations of Writers in Soviet Lithuania

VILIUS IVANAUSKAS

The creative processes of the Soviet years and the activity of writers was sharply defined by both institutional control and the social surroundings. On the level of control, it is important to see the institutional structure, which was made up of a number of institutions, from publishers and the Writers Union to Glavlit, the writer as a member of the Writers Union, the publication and censorship processes as well as the ideological control expressed through them. On the level of the system, a work's publication and distribution were planned, and that determined that more attention was paid to the work's ideological "suitability."

In spite of the monolithic effect of the system, the different characteristics of the generations or the tensions between the generations reveal that every generation sought not just

influence in the establishment, but also to shape and transform the common sphere of literature.

The first generation of writers took part in creating and justifying the Soviet system and propagating Soviet ideology, however, because of the rather excessive banality of their works, the public did not "buy" their works and they did not consolidate their position in society as well as later writers. The second generation (connected to the persons of Mieželaitis and Marcinkevičius) is considered the most successful of the generations. Consolidated in the literary establishment by the end of the 1960s, they held a dominant position for several decades. They offered innovative standards, were accepted in all of the USSR and Lithuania, as well as became accepted by both the public and the Soviet nomenclature. The younger generations did not occupy these positions, although they created their own variants of modernism.