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LITHUANIAN LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE 20th CENTURY: PLACE TOWARDS SPACE

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Summary. This article analyses Lithuanian landscape photography that reflects the cultural landscape of the 20th century, revealing not only the natural phenomena of the land, but also the historical development of the country, social memory and national identity. Landscape photographs are abundant with cultural codes implicated in visual structures of landscapes, which are read and distinguished with the help of the palimpsest model. An interdisciplinary methodological approach is applied to the understanding of the functioning of photography in the spatial and local planes and to the purposeful use of the concepts of *place* and *space*, combining the phenomenological insights of humanistic geography, the theory of spatial production of the sociologist Henri Lefebvre, and the art historical analysis of visual texts. This interdisciplinary study introduces the cultural layer that is characteristic of the 20th century landscape, provides a sense of historical time shifts, and clarifies the prevailing stylistic movements in photographic landscapes.

Keywords: 20th Century, Cultural Landscape, Place, Space, Lithuanian Landscape Photography.

INTRODUCTION

The object of this study is the natural landscape that is fundamental to unfolding the associative cultural landscape.¹ Certainly, it is more difficult to detect the traces of time in landscape. However, it is the landscape shaped by natural processes, despite anthropogenic and technogenic elements, that endows the profile of the country with sustainability, authenticity and uniqueness (Fig. 1). The approach of humanistic geography that defines the divergence of place and space is beneficial for the analysis of landscape photography. Photography does not only record the surface of the landscape of places, but also consciously or intuitively establishes the phenomenon of the landscape – of spaces the meaning accumulations of which are perceived interpretatively and are constantly changing and expanding in public communication. Above all these operate the ideological (individual and collective) provisions and experiences of associativity, which are nurtured not only by “wild” or anthropogenised locations that have been synthesised by nature and culture, but also by texts about them – both, verbal and visual.

Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward Relph, who laid the foundations of humanist geography, as well as other academics who pursued these ideas, have emphasized human relation to nature, their actions, feelings and ideas accomplished in places and spaces.² The principal methodology of Humanistic geography is orientated towards the pursuit of the universal human nature inherent in landscapes. It is true that theories of cultural materialism, feminism, post-structuralism, postmodernism and postcolonialism have influenced the development of humanistic geography research,³ but in seeking the phenomenological justification of the concepts of place and space, their primary insights remain fundamental.⁴

Tuan related the notion of place to the visibility of the objects in our field of vision.⁵ Place is a real matter, historically embodied in human experience, which emerges through the identity, spirit and feeling of a place, and which provokes people’s relationship with the place – topophilia.⁶ Meanwhile, space is abstract and transforms into a place when it takes on an anthropogenic character and becomes a meaningful place, i.e., part of the cultural landscape.⁷ Tuan’s consideration of place as visible time

or memory of past times is important.⁸ Relevant to the analysis of landscape photography is his observation that, “space and time have always been structured to conform with individual human feelings and needs; but in Europe this fact rose closer to the surface of consciousness at a certain period of its history and found expression in art. Photography in the last hundred years has strengthened and popularized the perspectival vision. Anyone with a simple box camera can now produce an image that melds time into pace.”⁹

Edward S. Casey, a philosopher who developed the phenomenological insights of humanistic geography, proposed a theoretical model involving the clarification of the distinction between the concepts of place and space at the intersection of the philosophical and geographical sciences. In his search for an answer to the question of what it means to be in the world of places, the researcher highlights the role of the subject – the geographical *Self*.¹⁰ According to Casey, a place is an arena of physical, social and cultural activity directly linked to human experience-practice.¹¹ A place can be culturally dense or sparse – a sign of glocalisation, which is more characteristic of the 21st century, when the boundaries of places are blurring and places are becoming more uniform and universal. According to the philosopher’s phenomenological model, the *Self* contains the intention, the body – physically connects the *Self* to the place, and the landscape emotionally connects the places where the *Self* manifests. It is the landscape that reveals the difference between place and space. Landscape is a set of real places. It may be expansive, but “no matter how capacious a landscape may be, it remains a composition of places, their intertangled skein.”¹² Space, according to the scientist, is a “volumetric void,” “endless, infinitized totality.”¹³ Casey illustrates the difference with the example of the horizon: when places are merged into a landscape, there is a horizon – the end of visibility, of presence, of accessibility – whereas space has no horizon. According to Casey, the landscape also reveals its “*sensuous display* – the panoply of features sensed on its surface that make it into a variegated scene of perception and action – and its atmosphere, the combination

of air and light that gives to a landscape its special luminescence or radiance.”¹⁴

That said, Relph did not accept this treatment of space as a “void”, but related the knowledge of space to experience.¹⁵ In fact, geographers have proposed various phenomenological interpretations of space that can be applied to the analysis of visual texts of the landscape.

In this article, the concept of *place* follows the geographers’ definition, but the notion of *space* as medium and result of expression is based on the sociologist Henri Lefebvre’s theory of the production of space,¹⁶ which adopts a rational cultural-historical relationship to this phenomenon, introducing the concept of social space as a product of society’s interaction with nature. Lefebvre proposed a threefold approach to the treatment of space: *spatial practices* – the practices inherent to each social formation dialectically interact with social space, create it, slowly and surely produce it, possess it and appropriate it; *representation of space* – spaces conceptualised by landscape professionals in relation to production relations and the established “order”, i.e. knowledge, symbols, codes; *representational spaces*, which the imagination seeks to replace and appropriate, covering physical space, by symbolically using its objects – these spaces are associated with art, which in this case is not a code for space but a code for the representation of spaces.¹⁷ Lefebvre assumes that “that spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces contribute in different ways to the production of space according to their qualities and attributes, according to the society or mode of production in question, and according to the historical period.”¹⁸

Lefebvre argues that space accommodates many intersections, including the influence of power (authority, ideology): “The representation of space, in thrall to both knowledge and power, leaves only the narrowest leeway to representational spaces, which are limited to works, images and memories whose content, whether sensory, sensual or sexual, is so far displaced that it barely achieves symbolic force.”¹⁹ In the broadest sense, space is an

accumulation of collective memory, and photography's contribution to these processes is important.

If art (painting, printmaking, sculpture) can penetrate and manipulate the deep historical and cultural layers of the landscape, photography can only reach the surface of the landscape – only 20th century photography can depict the 20th century landscape. This is why in the study of landscape photography it is useful to use the palimpsest, which can be used to clearly assess the multi-layered array of the cultural landscape and its dominants in the 20th century. Donald W. Meinig, who emphasised the landscape's ability to accumulate the cultural layers of the past, which, over time, overlay each other, in order to actualise the signifying codes of the present epoch, introduced the concept of the *palimpsest* to the field of geography.²⁰ The place becomes an intertext, linking past and present accumulations, ideological and material elements, where sustainable old "records" and contemporary expressions emerge. The metaphors of the palimpsest are essential elements of the cultural landscape, not only reflecting the history of the landscape but also marking its relativity.

Lithuanian landscape photography has not yet been comprehensively and interdisciplinarily studied. In fragmentary analyses of individual works or reviews of artists' work, art historians emphasise the aesthetics of the image, yet do not delve into the phenomenon of the landscape, its historical and geographical structure. One of the reasons for the lack of research is the heterogeneous interests of photographers, among whom landscapes are not the dominant field, and there are only a few 20th century photographers for whom the natural landscape was a preferred genre.²¹ Even though according to art historian Virginijus Kinčinitis, the landscape "is a zone of retreat, of rebalancing, it is depoliticised, neutral and ethnographic. For a Lithuanian, the landscape has always been a source of both national identity and spiritual awakening."²²

THE PHENOMENON OF THE 20TH CENTURY LITHUANIAN LANDSCAPE

The cultural geographer Denis E. Cosgrove has described how each societal formation creates its own landscape, destroying the symbolic values of



Fig. 1. Julius Miežlāiškis. *Glider Above the Dunes*. Neringa, 20th c. 4 dec. M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art

previous stages of political, economic, social, cultural and ecological development or replacing them with its own.²³ In Western Europe, the transition from one formation to another has been gradual, with transitions and related innovations taking decades. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe (occupied by the USSR or incorporated into the Socialist Bloc) experienced more dynamic and, in some places, more drastic processes in the 20th century, which have influenced widespread landscape metamorphosis.

Scholars who have studied the transformation of 20th century landscapes in Slovenia, Estonia, Poland and Hungary²⁴ as natural, historical, cultural, social and political phenomena argue that the 20th century has brought urbanisation, globalisation and other processes of modernisation of society, as well as rapidly changing social and economic formations, all of which have led to changes in values that result in the disintegration, loss or disappearance of some landscape elements. This has led, in turn, to the land's changed or new appearance and, therefore, to a shift in the meanings of the effected landscapes. Every change in the landscape takes time to be accepted, but even transcoding is temporary. For example, the former imperial landscapes of the countries that regained independence after the First World War were transformed into national landscapes, and the lost lands of some countries took on new identities; the representation of socialist values that was introduced after the Second World War, and the elements that were considered valuable during the period of the nation-states, were ignored during the Soviet period, whereas by the end of the century the turn to Western culture intensified and agriculture declined.²⁵ In discussing how to overcome the disconnection between people and the landscape, researchers have pointed out that for centuries there has been a natural disappearance and/or persistence of landscape elements, and it is only in the 20th century that the landscape has been recognised as a heritage site and started to be protected. Thus, "for comprehension of landscapes we need to acknowledge their historical layers and multitude of meanings that any landscape element as well as processes may have."²⁶

The "Study on the Diversity of the Spatial Structure of the Landscape of the Republic of Lithuania and Identification of its Types,"²⁷ prepared by scholars at Vilnius University, presents the scientific paradigm of the country's landscape "on the spatial integration of all abiogenic, biogenic, and socio-genic (anthropogenic, technogenic) components of the Earth's surface and on the spatial integration and the spatial manifestation of this process."²⁸ Lithuanian geographers describe the cultural landscape as "the result of the course and interaction of very complex and diverse natural (natural) and anthropogenic (cultural) processes,"²⁹ but the natural structure is still present, and is not only influenced by anthropogenic factors, but also has its own (via natural forces) influence on human-made structures.

The visual structure of the country's territory is relevant to the depiction of the Lithuanian landscape. In the Lithuanian landscape study, the criteria for structure identification were: vertical fragmentation determining the spatial despectivity of the landscape, horizontal juxtaposition creating the spatial openness of the landscape, and visual dominance providing compositional expression (vertical dominance of vertical landmarks, such as structures, mountains, and other tall objects, and horizontal dominance of horizontal landmarks, such as river strips, lake water surfaces, and other flat objects).³⁰ These criteria are complemented by qualities such as the visual intensity and harmoniousness of the spatial structure, aesthetic attractiveness, and its chaotic nature.³¹ Researchers of the visual structure of landscapes also draw attention to the psychological-aesthetic potential of the landscape, which is determined by the changes in colours and shapes in different seasons of the year (most picturesque in spring).³² Finally, an attempt has been made to typologise the spaces of emotional impact - sensotopes (videotopes and emototopes) - by applying the methodology of perceptual research (the sensory, mostly visual perception of the landscape and its representation in art), to create a map of the aesthetic potential of the Lithuanian landscape in terms of its picturesqueness.³³ The highest resolution of the structure is found in

the Curonian Spit, the deep river valleys and the hilly parts of the Samogitian and Baltic uplands, which accounts for up to nearly 8% of the country's territory.³⁴

The texture of Lithuania's cultural landscape is well suited for image composition, as is evident from the popularity of the landscape genre, but the "photogenic" nature of locations does not necessarily coincide with the aesthetic criteria applied by geographers. Most photographers have tried their hand at plein-air photography, and the main impetus, despite political regimes, has always been the inherited attachment to one's own land and, of course, the pull of nature. It is the theme of a close connection with the homeland that has become the main binding material of the work of the Lithuanian School of Photography.³⁵

The spatial configuration of the 20th century Lithuanian landscape was influenced by social, economic and political factors, which are periodised in this study by the stages of political rule.³⁶ During the period of the Russian Empire (up to 1915), the planning of homestead villages in the agrarian landscape formed urbanised hubs of individualised nature. The land reform and the establishment of the state forest management system during the years of the First Republic of Lithuania fundamentally changed the structure of land use (expansion of arable land, land melioration, etc.) and settlement structure (with the creation of more than 38,000 newcomers' farms, etc.), but the rural landscape has retained its ethnocultural distinctiveness. During the Soviet period, the proliferation of technogenic habitats was evident, as a result of the rapid

urbanisation of the landscape and the levelling of the natural and ethno-cultural features of the rural landscape, as well as the development of the road network, the collectivisation of farms and the concentration of production, total forest management, water management and land melioration, the creation of new standardised settlements and recreational hubs in the natural landscape, the intensive pollution and destruction of geosystems, and at the same time, the protection of the natural and cultural values of the landscape has been formed (Fig. 2–3). In the end of the 20th century, in the first decade of the restored independence of Lithuania, ecological landscaping was initiated and landscape protection was strengthened, but the consequences of the social transformation of the occupied Soviet republic in 1940–1941 and 1944–1990 followed by the industrialisation of production have changed the landscape irreversibly.

LANDSCAPE OF THE 20TH CENTURY DEPICTED IN PHOTOGRAPHS

Cultural landscapes, in which anthropogenic and technogenic formations are integrated into the natural fabric, are transformed by photography into meaningful visual texts, incorporating genius loci into the representative spaces of the site (according to Lefebvre). In the cultural landscape, geological, mythological, historical and physical time is at work, and the present is merged with the past. Photography captures the semiosis of the landscape and emphasises its meanings. At the same time, the visual schemes create a certain convention of the gaze – an attraction to one or another landscape, in



Fig. 2. Stanislovas Lukošius. Construction of Kaunas Hydroelectric Power Plant. 1957. Vytautas the Great War Museum



Fig. 3. Stanislovas Lukošius. Kaunas Reservoir Beach. 1975. Kaunas City Museum

which one can detect metaphors of the palimpsest, mythical spaces, or immerse oneself in the “emptiness” of space.

Tuan, who has discussed mythology in geography, draws attention to the impact of the landscape on human consciousness, which creates these mythical spaces that are directly linked to the world view.³⁷ The geographer offers a glimpse of Western society “when people in one neighborhood know their own area well but are likely to be ignorant of the area occupied by a neighboring group. Both groups, however, probably share a common store of hazy knowledge (myths) concerning a far larger field – the region or nation – in which their own local areas are embedded. Knowledge of this hazy field is not redundant. Though inaccurate and dyed in phantasms, it is necessary to the sense of reality of one’s empirical world.”³⁸

Photography based on geographic locations not only depicts the phenomenon of the natural landscape, but also reinforces the archetypal images of Lithuania that prevailed in the 20th century: the land of amber, an old European country with a glorious past, an agrarian country, and so forth. However, the photographers also trace traumatic

historical experiences in the landscape: the traces of the two World Wars, the Holocaust, the occupation of the Vilnius region, the struggles for independence, the levelled and Sovietised national identity, and ecological problems. The choice of location is determined by cultural stereotypes, circulating myths, prevailing current affairs, artistic trends and, of course, the individual attitude of the creators. Photographers see the same location differently, in their own way, their imagination and intentions present their own versions, layering reality into the meanings that can be captured, accepted, and familiar. However, myths unite the representation of places. According to ethnologist Gintaras Beresnevičius, “the mythology of the Lithuanian state, it seems, should not be limited to any particular period, but should encompass the entire past. It is so diverse that it can respond to the needs, psyche and soul of most diverse people. There is the paganism, the outpost of Catholicism, the ‘Land of Mary’, the tolerance or even patronage of the faith and of foreigners, the wars won, the flourishing of the Renaissance, the distinctive literature, etc.”³⁹

Since the early 20th century, photographers have been drawn to the Baltic Sea. Marinist landscapes were particularly popular among seaside



Fig. 4. Algirdas Šeškus. *Evening by the Baltic Sea, 2. 1985*. Lithuanian Photographers Association

photographers. The unfolding horizon, the legends cultivated by myths about amber and mythological creatures of the deep, the ethnography of the fishermen's lifestyle, and the curiosities of the resort's beach attracted the attention of photographers who were focused on the representation and promotion of the place (Paulina Mongirdaitė, Ignas Stropus). Representatives of the Lithuanian School of Photography (Jonas Kalvelis, Vaclovas Straukas) used water and sand abstractions, the atmospheric nature of water and clouds, and the expressiveness of the waves to create a modern poetics of form. One of the most attractive attributes of the seascape is the Palanga Sea Bridge, and the eternal local metaphor is the sun setting into the sea. The sea was also used to realise the ideas of avant-garde artists of the 20th century (Algirdas Šeškus, Virgilijus Šonta). Surrendering to the general emotional background, here by the sea, they usually suppressed their 'rebel' nature and descended into a melancholic, meditative state (Fig. 4).

A particular landmark of the Lithuanian landscape are the mounds. According to Beresnevičius, "without them, the landscape is less impressive and less 'recognisable', own."⁴⁰ The 20th century layer of palimpsest does not, of course, include the

wooden castles built by the ancestors (this is the field of archaeology), yet the hills made for them have survived. Strange terrain formations would often become focal points of photographic landscapes, not only for the historical value of the site, but also for their striking form, which enriches the landscape. Some photographers documented these objects intentionally (Balys Buračas, Julius Vaicekauskas), while others simply admired the plasticity and natural harmony of artificial mountains (Vytautas Augustinas, Algimantas Kunčius) (Fig. 5). A different story of the landscape is that of the cultural remains of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – the ruins of stone castles. Beresnevičius attributes the focus on these objects to the "epoch of the dukes" (according to Simonas Daukantas), a result of the preservation of a distinctive civilisation and the mythology of the survival of the nation: "The dukes became figures of real function, whose 'presence' in the present day was evident. Such obviousness was strengthened by the idea of 'perseverance in the midst of enemies.'"⁴¹ The symbolic expression of the idea is the Trakai Castle, or rather its ruins, which survived to the first half of the 20th century, and in the Soviet era – its rebuilt masonry. Its advantageous location (the castle is built on an island in the lake) allows a broader



Fig. 5. Vytautas Augustinas. Young shepherd herding cows and sheep. Kernavė, 20th c. 4 dec. M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art



Fig. 6. Jan Bulhak. Ruins of Trakai castle. 1912–1915. National Museum of Lithuania

landscape, which, with a romanticised historical object inserted into it, evokes nostalgia, betrays a longing for the grandeur of the former state (Jan Buřhak, Jerzy Hoppen) (Fig. 6).

The most vigorous and graceful elements of the cultural landscape are the sacred, referring to the triumph of Catholicism in Lithuania. The horizontals of the roads leading to the churches and the verticals of the towers seem to signify a continuous search and faith, an existential passage under the glowing or gloomy sky (Kazys Daugėla, Vytautas Balčytis). Other significant symbols that distinguish the Lithuanian landscape from that of other European countries are crosses. As artist Adomas Varnas, who called the works of cross-makers “our pyramids of a kind” noted that “in terms of originality, variety and richness of forms, wooden crosses might outlast our songs: Lithuanian cross-makers, deeply in love with nature and beauty, not only poured out their entire soul into this creative sphere, but expressed their deep religious worldview, their love for it, their attachment to it, and their ebullient mergence with it.”⁴² In

the interwar period, these sacred objects were still abundant in their authentic surroundings. People of art and culture (Adomas Varnas, Balys Buračas), who understood value and transience, did not miss an opportunity to immortalise them, thus ensuring the continuity of cultural memory (Fig. 7). After the Second World War, when the Soviet government was implementing the atheisation of society and destroying the pillars of Christianity, local ethnographers and heritage conservationists (Mečislovas Sakalauskas) photographed the small architecture in the landscape, in order to preserve, at least in the form of photographs, the memory of the declining identity of the Lithuanian region that was unimaginable without the presence of the crucifixes in the countryside.

The fact that in the 20th century, in the natural landscape of a multicultural country, it was almost impossible to detect ethno-cultural elements of other nations (only in occasional photographs, for example, of Tatar or Jewish cemeteries) (Fig. 8), indicates not the photographers’ ideologies or national closed-mindedness, but rather that other



Fig. 7. Balys Buračas. Cross by Vincas Svirskis with sculptures of the Crucified Christ, St John Nepomuk and the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Immaculate Conception in the fields of Kačergiai village. 1937. M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art

cultures were concentrated in towns and cities, while the countryside was more Lithuanian. Nevertheless, there are some exceptions, such as the spiritual centre of Lithuanian Muslims, the village of Keturiasdešimt Totorių, the surroundings of which were frequented by photographers (Jerzy

Hoppen, Alfonsas Budvytis). Photography accumulated ethnosymbolic resources, that were nestled in the countryside, in the fold of nature. As a matter of fact, one of the strongest images conveyed in the photographs is the vastness of the native land and the lives of the rural people taking shelter in it. As



Fig. 8. Jerzy Hoppen. *Tatar Cemetery near Vokė*. 20th c. 4 dec. Lithuanian National Museum of Art



Fig. 9. Algimantas Kunčius. *The Surroundings of Kražiai*. 1988. Lithuanian National Museum of Art

Arvydas Šliogeris has observed, “village is literally what Lithuanians call a homestead, a farmstead, a motherland, or a homeland.”⁴³ It is the photographs of the native land that fuse the places into a picturesque landscape, and the landscapes that break away from the routine of everyday life and create an illusion of all-encompassing peace, bliss and mystery (Stasys Vaitkus, Algimantas Kunčius) (Fig. 9).

The peculiarities of the 20th century are clearly revealed by the technogenic landscape: the expansion of the road network (Gerardas Bagdonavičius, Liudvikas Ruikas), the electrification of the country (Stanislovas Lukošius, Julius Vaicekauskas), the creation of new settlements in the regions, with their typical Soviet architecture (Zenonas Bulgakovovas, Romualdas Augūnas), and the expansion of the industry and its impacts (Marijonas Baranauskas, Jonas Kalvelis) (Fig. 10). The reckless exploitation of nature and the devastation of landscapes are evidence of an ecological crisis. Philosopher Česlovas Kalenda noted that “the 20th century scientific and technical revolution has multiplied the possibilities for influencing nature. The anthropogenic impact on the environment has become unprecedentedly widespread, and the negative effects of economic activities started to manifest themselves in areas that are not directly affected but are linked by the laws of material cycling.”⁴⁴ Unfortunately, 20th century photographers were not socially engaged – they were not sufficiently ecologically literate and did not express a critical stance. Whether observing the layers of land torn away by large-scale construction, villages flooded by artificial lagoons and submerged forever, or forests scorched by chemicals, they were, as Nicholas Mirzoeff would say, aestheticising: “The aesthetics of the Anthropocene emerged as an unintended supplement to imperial aesthetics – it comes to seem natural, right, then beautiful – and thereby anaesthetized the perception of modern industrial pollution.”⁴⁵ (Fig. 11).

Perhaps what landscape photography contains least of is direct reflections on the events of the 20th century. There are several reasons for this: the focus is on an event or its traces, leaving the contextual background irrelevant and “cropped”; the location

of the event is visually unattractive; the marks left by the event are short-term. Consequently, the creators of such landscapes are usually documentarians, not artists. However, although not for long, the landscape of the 20th century was marked by the scars of wars and battles, and these have been well documented: defence trenches, the demarcation line, mass graves of murdered Jews, burnt down farmhouses, destroyed churches (Otto Liessmann, Zvi Kadushin, Algimantas Mockus). Nevertheless, during the Stalinist period, socialist-realist landscapes



Fig. 10. Liudvikas Ruikas. Motorway Vilnius-Kaunas. 1972. Lithuanian Photographers Association



Fig. 11. Jonas Kalvelis. Forest near Jonava, 1. 1985. Lithuanian Photographers Association

glorifying the sovietisation of the country became widespread, and by manipulating the elements of the cultural landscape, they staged the Soviet prosperity – metaphorically speaking, the grass is greener, the sun is brighter, and people are happier in the Soviet republic.⁴⁶ That said, Lithuanian landscape photography was mostly created in black and white, and rarely did a photographer risk likening his image to nature, unless he was trying to express his own artistic painterly manner in colour (Povilas Karpavičius, Adauktas Marcinkevičius), or when executing commissions for representational publishing or advertising, such as “Lithuania – a Bird’s-Eye View” (Antanas Sutkus), or the illustrations of chocolate wrappers (Povilas Karpavičius). During Sąjūdis (the Reform Movement of Lithuania), photographers were captivated by the “Marches of Rock through Lithuania”, the ecological-political action “Let’s embrace the Baltic Sea” or the Baltic manifestation “The Baltic Way,” when they were most preoccupied with the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian people holding hands on the Vilnius-Riga-Tallinn motorway – not the fields behind their backs. Symbolically, these events were marked in the photoscapes by commemorative attributes – candles burning on the road or flags stuck in the sand (Julius Vaicekaskas, Gintautas Trimakas).

According to Lefebvre’s Spatial Triad, photography can be categorised as an asset for the creation of representational spaces, and it is important to note that “representational spaces, on the other hand, need obey no rules of consistency or cohesiveness. Redolent with imaginary and symbolic elements, they have their source in history – in the history of a people as well as in the history of each individual belonging to that people.”⁴⁷ However, in the oeuvre of 20th century Lithuanian modernists, there is a noticeable tendency to create abstracted images of landscapes (Romualdas Rakauskas, Irena Giedraitienė, Virgilijus Šonta, Stanislovas Žvirgždas) (Fig. 12). In photographs like these, universal space is unveiled, a space that has no identification codes, or else they have no significance. This is the meta-text of a place, an aesthetic visualisation or pure art, an immanent expression that is not influenced by the history of the place. It is photopoetry, which, like

pure poetry, draws inspiration from nature. In picturesque and musical landscapes, as in the poetry of Henrikas Radauskas, the landscape has no address, nor a reference to place.⁴⁸ Such spaces are made of clouds, waters and other natural elements, which generate a wide range of feelings. On the other hand, “only products of representational spaces are symbolic works. These are often unique; sometimes they set in train ‘aesthetic’ trends and, after a time, having provoked a series of manifestations and incursions into the imaginary, run out of steam.”⁴⁹

In her research, Finnish scholar Päivi Kymäläinen, who appeals to humanistic geography and applies a post-structuralist concept of place, suggests that the content represented in photographs should be treated with caution and not be equated with reality. According to Kymäläinen, photography can be used to see, remember, imagine and represent a place; it is taken as direct visual evidence, and it is believed that moments can be suspended in time and transposed into a visual form, in order to create the impression of a connection with the present. However, photographic images are already perceived from the perspective of the absence of reality. They are signs of its absence, and the relationship between the original (the reality) and the copy (the photographic image) is rather an intertextual than hierarchical one.⁵⁰

CONCLUSIONS

Paulina Mongirdaitė, Balys Buračas, Stasys Vaitkus, Kazys Daugėla, Gerardas Bagdonavičius, Vytautas Augustinas, Romualdas Rakauskas, Algimantas Kunčius, Irena Giedraitienė, Vytautas Balčytis, and other photographers used local landscape interpretation modes to create a field of familiar spaces of the 20th century. The landscape is a stage where nature and human traces unfold, the intersection of physical and spiritual life. Landscape photography is a monologue of an creator who takes over the stage, and visually expresses a feeling, a thought, a relation.



Fig. 12. Romualdas Rakauskas. From the series "Landscape". 20th c. 7–9 dec. Lithuanian Photographers Association

As the 20th century fades into history, photographs of landscapes help to relatively reconstruct the terrain of the country, to grasp a sense of the world-views and pulsations of the past, to get to know a landscape that has disappeared or has changed beyond recognition due to the influence of anthropogenic and technogenic factors on nature, the destruction of the landscape's cultural elements due to the wars and other historical transformations, and also due to the natural changes of nature itself, as well as to the processes of re-naturalisation. This research deliberately targets only works by well-known creators whose intentions are understandable or predictable. Material of this kind is favourable for art-historical analysis and typologisation of

the genre as several types of natural landscapes that dominated in the 20th century became evident: those that represent the archetypal and technogenic landscape of Lithuania, that testify to the country's historical experience, and that create universal aesthetic imagery. One obvious stylistic tendency has been observed – the photographers' expression of topophilia. Romanticisation, sacralisation, mythologisation, dramatisation dominate the photo-texts, and their totality resonates with the age, reflects the character of the epoch, and gives contours to the time.

Yet, in the reservoirs of individual and even collective memory, the *status quo* of the 20th century

vision will never crystallise, since it is impossible to emerge “in status quo res erant ante bellum” (Eng. “in the state in which things were before the war”). Thus, the 20th century as a landscape (as a whole) does not exist, and in the polyglossal panorama of visual texts (in photographic spaces) it unfolds like a mirage.

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Notes

¹ The category of associative cultural landscapes is addressed in UNESCO Convention documents, and the inclusion of these types of landscapes to the World Heritage List may be based on their obvious religious, artistic or cultural links to natural elements, as opposed to the tangible cultural heritage, which may manifest itself in a marginal for or even inexistent. “Cultural Landscapes, UNESCO World Heritage Convention, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/culturallandscape/>.

² Yi-Fu Tuan, “Humanistic geography,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66(2) (1976), 266.

³ Paul C. Adams, Steven Hoelscher, Karen E. Till, “Place in Context: Rethinking Humanist Geographies,” in *Textures of Place: Exploring Humanist Geographies*,

- ed. P. C. Adams, S. Hoelscher, K. E. Till (Minneapolis, MN, USA: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), xvi.
- ⁴ Almantas Samalavičius, "Vietos fenomenologija: nuo erdvės iki vietos koncepcijos architektūroje," *Logos* 110 (2022), 144.
- ⁵ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place. The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 262.
- ⁶ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974).
- ⁷ Tuan, *Space and Place. The Perspective of Experience*, 136.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 179.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 123.
- ¹⁰ Edward S. Casey, "Between Geography and Philosophy: What Does It Mean to Be in the Place-World?", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 91(4) (2001), 683–693.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 683.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 689.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 683, 690.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 690.
- ¹⁵ Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976), 9.
- ¹⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, translation by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991; orig. published 1974).
- ¹⁷ Lefebvre, 33, 38.
- ¹⁸ Lefebvre, 46.
- ¹⁹ Lefebvre, 50.
- ²⁰ Donald W. Meinig, "Introduction," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, ed. by D. W. Meinig (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 1–7.
- ²¹ E.g.: Jonas Kalvelis, ed. Stanislovas Žvirgždas (Vilnius: Lietuvos fotomenininkų sąjungos fotografijos fondas, 2010); Stanislovas Žvirgždas, *Lietuviški peizažai = Lithuanian Landscapes* (Vilnius: Vaga, 2004).
- ²² Virginijus Kinčinitis, "Kraštovaizdis kaip *genius loci*" (angl. Landscape as *genius loci*), in Virginijus Kinčinitis, *Fotoregos pratimai* (Vilnius: Lietuvos fotomenininkų sąjungos Fotografijos fondas, 2014), 12.
- ²³ Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (London, Sydney: Croom Helm, 1984).
- ²⁴ Mimi Urbanc et al., "Comprehension of rapidly transforming landscapes of Central and Eastern Europe in the 20th century," *Acta Geographica Slovenica* 44(2) (2004), 101–131, <https://doi.org/10.3986/AGS44204>.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 105.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 119.
- ²⁷ Lietuvos Respublikos kraštovaizdžio erdvinės struktūros įvairovės ir jos tipų identifikavimo studija. 1 dalis: Kraštovaizdžio supratimo ir jo erdvinės struktūros pažinimo nuostatos, darbo vadovas Paulius Kavaliauskas (Vilnius: Lietuvos Respublikos aplinkos ministerija, Vilniaus universiteto Geografijos ir kraštotvarkos katedra, 2005); Lietuvos Respublikos kraštovaizdžio erdvinės struktūros įvairovės ir jos tipų identifikavimo studija. 2 dalis: Lietuvos kraštovaizdžio erdvinės raiškos identifikavimo ir lokalizavimo analizė, darbo vadovas Paulius Kavaliauskas (Vilnius: Lietuvos Respublikos aplinkos ministerija, Vilniaus universiteto Geografijos ir kraštotvarkos katedra, 2006).
- ²⁸ Lietuvos Respublikos kraštovaizdžio erdvinės struktūros įvairovės ir jos tipų identifikavimo studija. 1 dalis: Kraštovaizdžio supratimo ir jo erdvinės struktūros pažinimo nuostatos, 4.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.
- ³⁰ Lietuvos Respublikos kraštovaizdžio erdvinės struktūros įvairovės ir jos tipų identifikavimo studija. 2 dalis: Lietuvos kraštovaizdžio erdvinės raiškos identifikavimo ir lokalizavimo analizė, 11.
- ³¹ Evaldas Ramanauskas, *Lietuvos kultūrinio kraštovaizdžio formavimo raida ir jo erdvinio optimizavimo prielaidos (1918–2008)*, Daktaro disertacija (Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, 2011), 14.
- ³² Violeta Vasilevskaja, Ričardas Skorupskas, "Esminiai kraštovaizdžio vizualinės struktūros vertinimo aspektai," *Geografija* 50(1) (2014), 21.
- ³³ In 1968–1981 Kazys Ėringis and Aloyzas Ramūnis Budriūnas carried out an assessment of the aesthetic resources of the Lithuanian landscape and produced a map; in 1985–2008 Paulius Kavaliauskas investigated the aesthetic potential of the Lithuanian landscape and also produced a map. Paulius Kavaliauskas, *Kraštovaizdžio samprata ir planavimas: mokomoji knyga* (Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2011), 80–81, [223–224].
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 78.
- ³⁵ Margarita Matulytė, *Creating Altnality: The Sovietization of Lithuanian Photography* (Vilnius: Lithuanian Culture Research Institute, 2021), 188.
- ³⁶ Lietuvos Respublikos kraštovaizdžio erdvinės struktūros įvairovės ir jos tipų identifikavimo studija. 1 dalis: Kraštovaizdžio supratimo ir jo erdvinės struktūros pažinimo nuostatos, 85–90.
- ³⁷ Tuan, *Space and Place. The Perspective of Experience*, 85–100.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 88.
- ³⁹ Gintaras Beresnevičius, *Ant laiko ašmenų* (Vilnius: Aidai, 2002), 56.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 51–52.
- ⁴² Adomas Varnas, "Lietuvos kryžiai," *Šešupės bangos* 16 (1925), 1–2.
- ⁴³ Arvydas Šliogeris, *Būtis ir pasaulis: tyliojo gyvenimo fragmentai* (Vilnius: Margi raštai, 2006), 434.
- ⁴⁴ Česlovas Kalenda, "Ekologinė problema: turinys, esmė, ištakos," *Problemos* 58 (2000), 43.
- ⁴⁵ According Nicholas Mirzoeff, an anaesthetic aesthetic weakens the notion of the Anthropocene. Nicholas Mirzoeff, "Vizualizing the Anthropocene," *Public Culture* 26(2) (73) (2014), 220.
- ⁴⁶ Matulytė, 21.
- ⁴⁷ Lefebvre, 41.
- ⁴⁸ Juozas Girdzijauskas, "Eilėraščio grožis ir prasmė," in Henrikas Radauskas, *Pasaulyu netikiu, o Pasaka tikiu*, ed. Juozas Girdzijauskas, Žilvinas Piličiauskas (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1993), 5–22.
- ⁴⁹ Lefebvre, 42.
- ⁵⁰ Päivi Kymäläinen, "Geographies in Writing. Re-imagining Place: Academic Dissertation," *Nordia Geographical Publications* 34(3) (2005), 158–159.

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XX AMŽIAUS LIETUVOS PEIZAŽO FOTOGRAFIJA: NUO VIETOS ERDVĖS LINK

Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojama Lietuvos peizažo fotografija, reflektuojanti XX amžiaus kultūrinį kraštovaizdį, atskleidžianti ne tik gamtinį krašto fenomeną, bet ir šalies istorinę raidą, socialinę atmintį, nacionalinę tapatybę. Kraštovaizdžio fotografijose gausu kultūrinių kodų, implikuotų į peizažų vizualines struktūras, kuriems pažinti ir išskirti pasitelkiamas palimpsesto modelis. Fotografijos funkcionavimo vietos ir erdvės plotmėse suvokimui bei *vieta* ir *erdvė* sąvokų tikslingam vartojimui taikoma tarpdisciplininė metodologinė prieiga, siejanti humanistinės geografijos fenomenologines išvalgas, sociologo Henri Lefebvre erdvės gamybos teoriją ir menotyrinę vizualinių tekstų analizę. Tarpdalykinis tyrimas pristato XX amžiaus gamtovaizdžiui būdingą kultūrinį sluoksnį, suteikia istorinio laiko slinkčių pajautą, išgrynina dominavusias fotografijos peizažo stilistines kryptis.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: XX amžius, kultūrinis kraštovaizdis, vieta, erdvė, Lietuvos peizažo fotografija.

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