

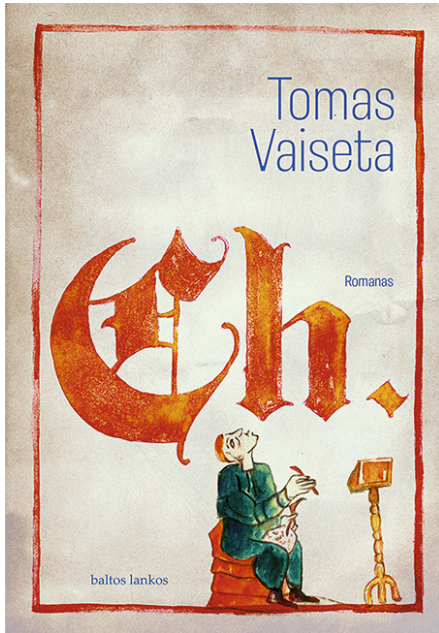
**2023
ADULT RIGHTS GUIDE**

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FICTION



Ch. (A Short History of a Guillotine)

by Tomas Vaiseta

LITERARY FICTION | A NOVEL

Published in 2021

240 pages; samples available in English, French

Rights sold:

France “Éditions Aux Forges de Vulcan”

- Nominated for the European Union Prize for Literature 2022
- Awarded the Jurga Ivanauskaitė Literary Prize 2022
- Included in the list of Top 12 Most Creative Books of 2021

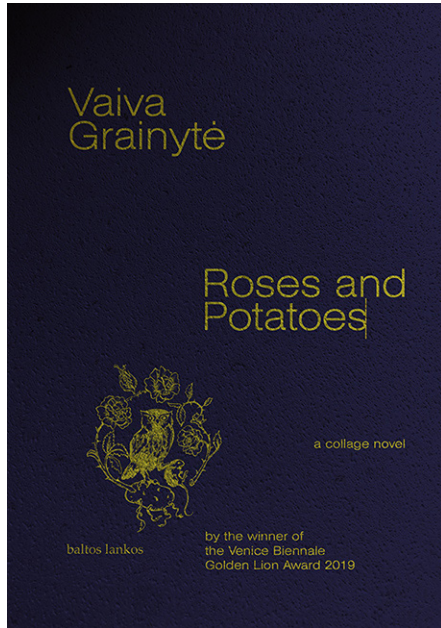
A feathered demon!

I haven't taken a step out of the theatre since the day I entered it and so you should understand that my recollection of things, settled at the bottom of my memory, after my passing glance at the building into which I had stepped without thinking too much about how I was linking my fate to its walls, its fabric and its spaces, can only be a splinter detached from reality. But if you allow me to base that recollection on imagination (and what memory, if we are to be precise, is not based on imagination?), I could try to guess how that feathered demon could have gotten inside. After all, I shan't be committing any crime if my guess turns out to be wrong, shall I?

The plot of “Ch. (A Short History of a Guillotine)” centres around the main character Charlie (or, as he calls himself, Charlemagne). A former librarian who, after his daughter gets kidnapped and burned alive in a car's trunk, decides to work as a stagehand at an unusual theatre where performances last until death. Such theatres are said to appear during the darkest years of tribulation to atone for the sins of mankind. Upon entering the stage, the actors reenact the story of the torture of Saint Denis, the bishop of Paris, as it used to be depicted in medieval performances: they are burned, whipped, fed to wild beasts.

This story can be read as an elegy of a father mourning his murdered daughter; an allegory of purgatory, created in Charlie's mind for the people who, in one way or another, were responsible for the death of his daughter, abundant in references to the Bible, Carolingian culture, and literary fiction; a warning of an imposter prophet about the end of European culture; an ode to cats, Charlie's greatest companions and allies who were sent to fight the Devil.

Tomas Vaiseta (b. 1984) is a writer and historian. He holds a doctorate degree in humanities and works as an associate professor at the Faculty of History, Vilnius University. His debut collection of short stories “Paukščių miegas” (“The Sleep of Birds”, 2014) and his novel “Orfėjas, kelionė pirmyn ir atgal” (“Orpheus: A Journey There and Back”, 2016) were included in the national list of top 5 books for adults in the “Book of the Year” selection. Three short stories from his book “The Sleep of Birds” were published in English in 2023 by “Strangers Press” in their chapbook series. Vaiseta has also written three historical monographs: “Nuobodulio visuomenė” (“Society of Boredom”, 2014), “Vasarnamis” (“Summerhouse”, 2018), and, together with historian Valdemaras Klumbys, “Mažasis o: seksualumo kultūra sovietų Lietuvoje” (“The Little O: Culture of Sexuality in Soviet Lithuania”, 2022).



Roses and Potatoes

by Vaiva Grainytė

LITERARY FICTION | UPMARKET FICTION | A NOVEL

Published in 2022

324 pages;

full English manuscript available

By the winner of the Venice Biennale Golden Lion Award 2019

Kevin and I were watching a silly comedy yesterday which featured a chimpanzee dressed in a butler's uniform: the animal smiles and laughs so much you'd think it actually liked being fondled and tugged by the characters in the film.

Animals smile – show their teeth – from terror, in order to frighten, defend themselves and ward off danger. So that furry film character was probably utterly terrified.

You know, in this land of forced smiles, I sometimes feel the same way.

The bilingual (Lithuanian and English) collage novel “Roses and Potatoes” playfully deconstructs the stereotypical concept of happiness embedded in contemporary culture. In a world that has ground to a halt due to the pandemic, the novel’s protagonists and allegorical figures each seek, reflect on and affirm happiness in their own particular way: Davis in Canada, agonising over his articles; Vika living in isolation; brothers connected by calculations and genetic tests; a woman suffering from cancer; a mouse searching for a morsel to eat; an owl disregarding ancient theories of warmth; a virus looking for a more spacious place to live; the country of Denmark, nominated as one of the happiest countries of the world.

The fragments of the characters’ everyday lives – letters, dreams, diary extracts, social media posts, alter ego passages – are all creatively combined with the rhetoric of essays, articles, and topical issues, juxtaposed with cultural and historical intertexts and surprising insights regarding sociology, psychology, zoology, and phrenology. All this intrigue – a surrealist mosaic of miniatures of happiness – is permeated by the themes existing on the fringes of melancholy: loneliness, burnout, forebodings of disaster, dictatorship of conventional norms, and longing for connection.

Vaiva Grainytė (b. 1984) is a writer, poet, playwright, and the recipient of the Lithuanian National Culture and Art Prize (2019), who, together with other co-authors, won the Golden Lion statue at the Venice Biennale of Contemporary Art in 2019, for the opera-performance “Sun and Sea”. Her two books – an essay collection “Beijing Diaries” (2012) and a poetry collection “Gorilla Archives” (2019) – were both nominated for the national “Book of the Year” award and were included in the list of 12 most creative books of the year. The author’s work has been already translated into more than ten languages.



Oder

by Dainius Vanagas

UPMARKET FICTION | A NOVEL

Published in 2021

272 pages; sample available in English

Take a bit of Orwell's pessimistic despair, a bit of Huxley's hedonistic desperation, add some of our own eternal wish to correct things to make it better, throw in loads of social experiments that already take place in our ever-changing world, and there you have it – the future that you wish would never come true. Chilling.

Aidas Puklevičius, a Lithuanian journalist, writer, and influencer

Please understand me properly: I like beautiful things. In the same way, I also like beautiful ideas. And the pricelessness of life, no doubt, is exactly that. A beautiful idea. And I like the idea, really, and if you were talking about my mother, my wife, or even me, I would say exactly that. These lives are priceless.

But does everyone see it this way? Absolutely not!

We put value on people on a daily basis because that is the essence of communication: valuation.

We sort each other into categories all the time: poor and rich, black and white, men and women, young and old, working class and elite, educated and simple, useful and useless.

The idea isn't very beautiful, of course. But it is realistic.

“Oder” is a dystopian novel set in a fictional totalitarian city by the same name in Central Europe in the near future, 2050. To solve the problems of immigration and ineffective policies, the authorities of Oder take on radical measures: they decide to build a giant wall around the city and keep in only those citizens who are economically utile. You can be a part of this prosperous world only if you can prove you are useful.

Written in sharp, short, even claustrophobic sentences, the novel comprises three intertwined parts that differ in style and narrator's perspective. One part is an interrogation of the city mayor, now imprisoned; the second part consists of short philosophical essays that explore modern life and the purpose of a human being; the final part is a story of Alan who is deemed worthless and, after being deported, has to find his way back to Oder and the society he once belonged to.

Dainius Vanagas (b. 1989) is a writer, literary translator, and senior editor at the national radio station “LRT Klasika”. He received his bachelor's degree in cultural history in 2012 and his master's degree in semiotics in 2014, both from Vilnius University. Since 2010, Vanagas has been writing for the national cultural press and has published over 130 pieces of literary criticism and prose, which are distinct for their experimental structure and dynamic, intense style. “Oder”, his debut novel, has been chosen by the readers of the nation's most popular news website “15min.lt” as one of their favourite books of the year 2021.

NON-FICTION



The Little O: Culture of Sexuality in Soviet Lithuania

by Tomas Vaiseta and Valdemaras Klumbys

NON-FICTION | HISTORY | CULTURE

Published in 2023

400 pages; comprehensive summary available in English

Offer received: France

Book of The Year 2023 (non-fiction category)

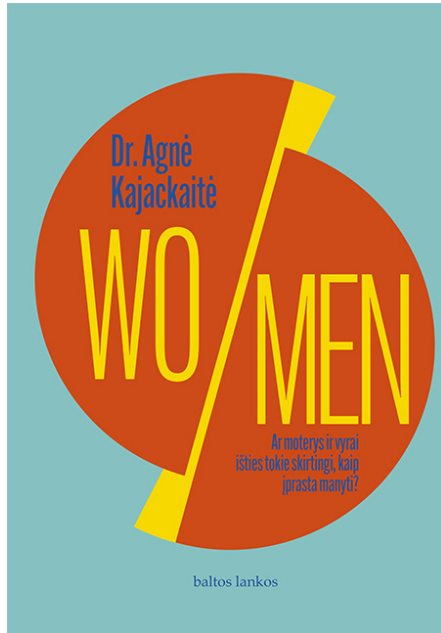
In the West, “The Big O” became the axis of the events of 1968, when public discourse welcomed the topics of sexual relationships, pleasure, and the importance of (female) orgasm, as well as its liberating and emancipating force, which brought on a cultural change that was nothing short of a revolution. Interestingly, at the end of the 1960s, notions of the sexual life and the issue of female sexual frustration also entered public debates in Soviet Lithuania. Yet, these questions (just like many other issues related to sexuality) were restrained, their importance lessened. Instead, these issues were framed within glorified discussions on love, family, and the relationships between sexes; the vital issue of women’s sexual frustration was unsolved. Therefore, the sexual culture of the time had to develop around “The Little O”.

Probably the first monograph in Lithuanian publishing history that bears the disclaimer “only for adults”! With it, historians Valdemaras Klumbys and Tomas Vaiseta have entered a territory in which they were not supposed to find much – after all, the belief that sexual culture was non-existent in Soviet Lithuania is still quite pervasive. Yet, the authors reveal a very diverse and dynamic culture: the Soviet press apparently enjoyed publishing sexualized images of women, which could have led to a cultural revolution if it were not for the instant backlash from the government; with the advent of VHS players, groups of people used to gather to watch pornography; doctors patiently educated husbands who were unable to satisfy their wives.

Klumbys and Vaiseta ground their research on press archives, diaries, memories, interviews, and approach the sexual culture of the Soviet period through three perspectives: public images, texts related to sexual education and sexuality, and society’s behaviour. They claim that the Soviet period was marked by a dictatorship of love, which successfully repressed a sexual revolution, but then led to a sexual civil war.

Valdemaras Klumbys (b. 1979) holds a doctorate degree in humanities and works as a historian at the Lithuanian History Institute, as well as a lecturer at the Faculty of History, Vilnius University. He has been carrying out research on resistance movements during the Soviet period and the social as well as cultural history of Soviet Lithuania. Dr. Klumbys published a historical monograph titled “Having Stood Under a Tree? The Behavioural Strategies of Lithuanian Intelligentsia During the Soviet Period” (2021).

Tomas Vaiseta (b. 1984) is a writer and historian. He holds a doctorate degree in humanities and works as an associate professor at the Faculty of History, Vilnius University. For the past fifteen years, he has been carrying out research on the everyday life, psychiatry, memory and sexuality of Soviet Lithuania. Dr. Vaiseta published two historical monographs: “Society of Boredom: Lithuania in the Late Soviet Period (1964-1984)” (2014) and “Summerhouse: The Social History of Vilnius Psychiatric Hospital, 1944-1990” (2018).



WO/MEN: The Eternal Battle of the Sexes, or How Different We Truly Are?

by Agnė Kajackaitė

NON-FICTION | SOCIOLOGY | BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMICS

Published in 2023

208 pages; full English manuscript available

I can't think of a book that I'm looking forward to more than this one.

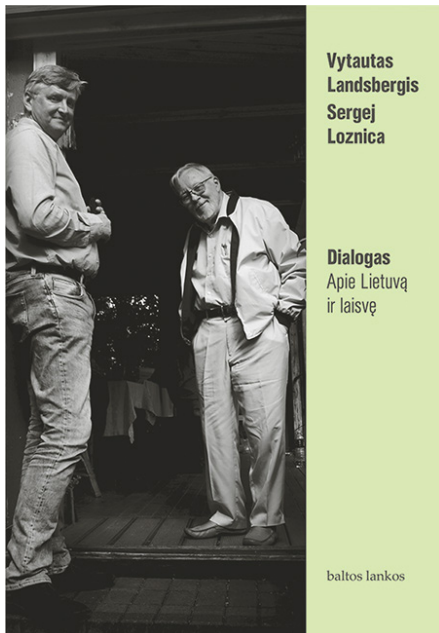
Prof. Uri Gneezy, Israeli-American behavioural economist, co-author of "The Why Axis"

Gender is an important and sensitive topic that is discussed often and almost everywhere. Policies are made around gender and around insights we think we have on gender. It is therefore quite harmful that the discussion about gender differences, gender roles, and gender equality is so often based on non-scientific knowledge and stereotypes. We need science to back up what we think we know about gender. We need it right here, right now, and we need it badly.

In the last twenty years, behavioural economics has become a subject that intrigues not only academics but general audiences as well. "WO/MEN" stands out from other titles in the field as it offers a completely novel perspective: a focus on the behavioural differences between the sexes. Here you will learn surprising answers to questions like: who takes more risks, women or men? Who tends to be more generous? Who believes in conspiracy theories more? Which gender is more likely to change their behaviour depending on the situation and social clues?

Before the publication of the book, dr. Kajackaitė's work became an overnight sensation: in 2019, her research on the effect cold temperatures in modern offices have on women's productivity (the so-called "war for the thermostat") was covered in news articles in more than 60 countries. "The New York Times" wrote: "The findings <...> add to a scientific rethinking of the spaces where we work and study, which sometimes have been devised with a limited set of physical requirements in mind." "Bloomberg" added: "Now there's evidence that women have had good reason all along to complain about arctic office air." Such precise scientific revelations and many more can be found in "WO/MEN", making us reconsider the ways in which we take things for granted in our day-to-day lives.

Agnė Kajackaitė is a senior assistant professor at the University of Milan. She was the head of a research group of ethics and behavioural economics at the WZB Berlin Social Science Center for 5 years since 2017. She has been collaborating with the best scientists in the field (Uri Gneezy, Joel Sabel, Tom Chang, among others) and contributed to important scientific journals, such as "American Economic Review", "Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization", and others. Right after its publication, "WO/MEN" reached the top 10 high-demand books list on the nations' biggest e-bookshop, "Knygos.lt", and one of the most popular physical bookshop franchises, "Vaga".



Dialogue: On Lithuania and Freedom

by Vytautas Landsbergis,
Sergej Loznitsa

NON-FICTION | POLITICS | HISTORY

Published in 2023

288 pages; unedited Russian manuscript available

Books like these have been and will always be necessary. A discussion that embarks on deconstructing evil, revealing the anatomy of it, and warning people about its threats to our future.

Arnas Ališauskas, Lithuanian poet, literary critic, editor of the book

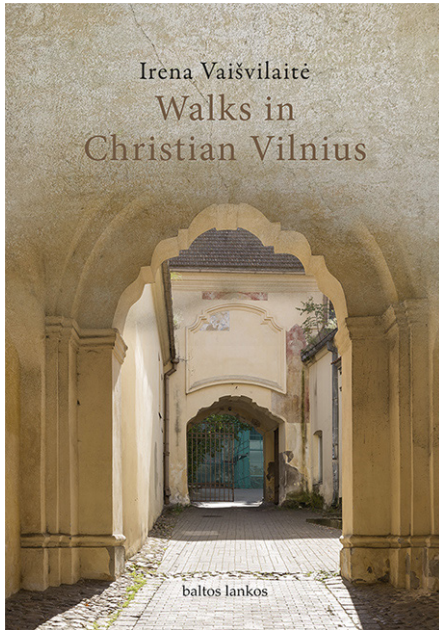
For the [Soviet] government, people didn't exist – only territories existed... Once, a high-ranking state official from Moscow [Nikolai Sliunkov] came to Lithuania at the beginning of the Lithuanian Reform Movement and explained the gist of the problem as he saw it. Supposedly, it was about the disagreements between the [political] center and the territories. He thought it was completely normal, reasonable, conceptual – the center and the territories – but we replied: “We're not a territory, we're a people, a nation”. It was extremely difficult for them to comprehend that. Even today they [Russian government] think along the lines of a political map: we're in charge of this many territories and that's great, but if the territories shrink, then it's a tragedy for humanity. Then they identify themselves not only with “the people” but with the entire human race.

In the summer of 2020, Professor Vytautas Landsbergis and the Ukrainian director Sergej Loznitsa met to have a talk for Loznitsa's film “Mr. Landsbergis”. Their discussion turned into a sixteen-hour dialogue which eventually became this book. A conversation of two Eastern European intellectuals: a Lithuanian and a Ukrainian, one an active participant, the other – a keen observer of history. A contemplation of a historical point of rupture that reverberated throughout Eastern Europe when Lithuania (as well as its Baltic neighbours) and Ukraine regained their independence and went off on different paths of political autonomy.

Creatively prompted by Loznitsa, V. Landsbergis tells the history of freedom in the Baltics from the first rallies of the Reform Movement of Lithuania in the late 80s to 1993, when the last Russian soldiers were withdrawn from the country. This story helps to better understand the fateful episodes of history that formed the foundations of contemporary Lithuania and its Baltic neighbours: Latvia and Estonia. “Dialogue” is simultaneously a personal account and a precise, intellectual cross-section of historical events carried out by one of the most important political leaders of contemporary Lithuania.

Vytautas Landsbergis (b. 1932) – the first official leader of the newly re-established Republic of Lithuania, one of the leaders of the Independence movement, politician, historian of art, music, and culture, writer, recipient of the National Culture and Art Prize (2011). He has published more than 150 books, initially mostly investigating the works of M. K. Čiurlionis, but later on also tackling the issues of Lithuanian and international politics.

Sergej Loznitsa (b. 1964) is one of the most prominent contemporary European filmmakers. He has created more than 30 documentary and feature films. In 2018, his drama film “Donbass” was awarded the prize for the best director in the Cannes Film Festival program “Un Certain Regard”. His documentary film “Mr. Landsbergis” (2021) won the Best Film Award at the IDFA film festival.



Walks in Christian Vilnius

by Irena Vaišvilaitė

NON-FICTION | HISTORY | CULTURE | RELIGION

Published in 2022

384 pages; full English manuscript available

I believe this book is a great starting point for talking about how different identities of people living in Vilnius determine their relationship with this city, how a foreign cultural context allows us to recognize some meanings that we might've missed, being too close; finally, to discuss whether we've succeeded in making the city speak and reveal its hidden stories during the epoch of Independence.

Aurimas Švedas, Professor at Vilnius University, Lithuanian historian, journalist, radio show host

The fabric of Lithuanian history and culture, which has been torn many times, has preserved these unbroken threads which, like the mythical threads of Ariadne, can help one find the way to the sources of life-giving water, without which Vilnius would not be what it is – one of the great cities of Europe. It is impossible to understand not only Lithuania but also Europe without the knowledge of the still-blossoming, multi-faceted Christian tradition in Vilnius.

“Walks in Christian Vilnius” is the first comprehensive cultural guide of the multiconfessional and multinational Vilnius. It is often emphasized that Vilnius is a city in which Christianity, Judaism, and Islam each found their place. But equally remarkable is the way in which Eastern and Western, or Greek and Latin, Christianity have closely co-existed in the capital of Lithuania over many centuries, which is an exceptional phenomenon in Europe. This book covers both the heritage and the present situation of Eastern and Western Christianity in Vilnius, explaining the long-forgotten meanings of cultural values distant from modern life and drawing their connections with contemporary experience.

An attempt to see in Vilnius not just the beauty of the city but also its meaning, the book is intended for walks that single out topics associated with the religious life of the city and its urban fabric, including the many fine artistic and religious forms that have grown deep into its culture, narratives, symbols and signs. The genre of walks also serves as an indication of another peculiarity of the book: it is not just a guidebook, but also a personal story with plenty of impressions, opinions and memories.

Irena Vaišvilaitė (b.1954) is a cultural historian and diplomat, a former Lithuanian Ambassador to the Holy See, as well as a Professor at the Faculty of History, Vilnius University. Her field of study is cultural history between the 17th and 20th centuries. She is particularly interested in the religious aspects of culture.