

KRISTIJonas DONELAITIS AND PETTER DASS – PARALLEL PIONEERS IN LITHUANIAN AND NORWEGIAN POETRY

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This paper aims to identify links between “The Seasons” and Scandinavian poetry. Contemporary connections are hardly demonstrable, but a striking older parallel is Petter Dass’ epic poem “Nordlands Trompet” (The Trumpet of Nordland, 1678–1696, published posthumously in 1739), the most important pre-romantic literary work in Norway. In many ways its position is parallel to Donelaitis’ “Seasons”: both poems mark the beginning of modern literature in Norway and Lithuania, respectively – demonstrating the literary potential of the poets’ mother tongues and paving the way for the national literature of future generations.

Conspicuous are also “The Trumpet’s” numerous parallels with “The Seasons” in moods and motifs, modelled by common aesthetic taste and literary modes. “The Trumpet” is a versified topographical encomium in anapaestic meters. Just like “The Seasons”, Petter Dass’ poem describes everyday life, natural and commercial conditions. It is a thematic description of the Arctic part of Norway, its location, astronomical and meteorological conditions, birdlife, fish and whales, agriculture, market places, and ethno-cultural peculiarities, i.e. manners and modes of living among the Sami or Lapp people. “The Seasons” and “The Trumpet” are both major contributions to European literature, describing nature, living conditions and culture in relative proximity in ways that show their close affinity in spite of considerable differences of life and conditions in Baltic fields and forests and on Arctic seas and shores.

KEY WORDS: *Parallels of Arctic and Baltic culture and nature, translations of Donelaitis into Swedish and Icelandic, translations of Dass into English and German, topographical, itinerant and picaresque literature, Kingo, baroque hymns and epics, Klopstock, Stenerson, Tullin, wedding poems, idyllic poetry, poets as subject of folklore, Edvard Grieg, agriculture, fishery, trade markets, Hanseatic merchants, Sami or Lapp people, shamanism, superstition, class distinctions, the Mosk maelstrom.*

Kristijonas Donelaitis' *Seasons* is no well-known piece of literature in Scandinavia and only experts of Baltic culture are familiar with its author. The poem was not translated into Scandinavian language until 1991, when Lennart Kjellberg's illustrated Swedish translation was published.¹ Parts of *The Seasons* also exist in an Icelandic translation from the 1980ies by the outstanding linguist Jörundur Hilmarsson;² unfortunately he was unable to finish it before his premature death and it remains unpublished.

The purpose of this paper is to identify links between *The Seasons* and Scandinavian poetry. As a preliminary remark it must be confessed that contemporary connections are hardly demonstrable, but there are striking older parallels, especially in Norwegian literature from the 17th century, i.e. before Donelaitis' lifetime.

CONTEMPORARY SCANDINAVIANS OF DONELAITIS'

The 18th century was a fertile period in Scandinavian literature, especially in Denmark, where neoclassical poetry, drama, and the essay flourished, influenced by French and English trends. The central author was the Norwegian born Ludvig Holberg (1684–1754), well known also in German states, and Donelaitis was probably acquainted with his comedies as well as with his historical and philosophical treatises. However, Holberg's literary genres have few affinities with *The Seasons*, although common features of universal character are easily found.

Two other prolific Norwegians on the Danish literary scene in the 18th century were Peter Christopher Stenerson (1723–1766) and Christian Braunmann Tullin (1728–1765). Stenerson was the leading ode composer of the century, decisively influenced by Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock. Following him, Stenerson promoted antique metres instead of end rhyme in contemporary poetry, an idea that similarly appealed to Donelaitis in his use of hexameters in *The Seasons*. One of the main merits of Stenerson's was the renewal of wedding poetry, especially with his brilliant "Ode til Brudgom og Brud" (Ode to Bridegroom and Bride, composed in 1754), inspired by Klopstock's "Die Braut" (1749), and a supreme contribution to Dano-Norwegian poetry in the 18th century.³ But the fact that it was not published until 1769 makes it unlikely to consider the poem a source of inspiration of the wedding section in Donelaitis' *Seasons*.

On the other hand, Christian Braunmann Tullin's internationally renowned wedding poem "Majdagen" (A Day in May, 1758) – admired by many, including Gotthold Ephraim Lessing – might have reached Donelaitis' ears, as it was published in a German translation immediately after the Danish original. Its vernal

mood and idyllic style can certainly be compared with the spring section in *The Seasons*, for example the euphoric description of the blackbird, the nightingale of the North, along with other winged messengers of light and lust. But these features are of more general than specific character, and may well be ascribed to Donelaitis', Stenerson's, and Tullin's common antique models and also their contemporaries, such as Alexander Pope, James Thomson, Albrecht Haller or Christian Gellert.⁴

The best Scandinavian parallel to Donelaitis' *Seasons* is, however, found in Norwegian poetry from the 17th century. Scandinavian literature was presumably not much known in the Baltics then, whether in original or in translation. Nevertheless, literary activity was considerable in all Nordic countries, but the publications were predominantly time-bound and occasional; few poetic works from that era possess lasting value. In fact, only a couple are still widely read and admired as masterpieces of Baroque poetry from the second part of the century: the Dane Thomas Kingo's numerous hymns and the Norwegian Petter Dass' great epic poem *Nordlands Trompet* (The Trumpet of Nordland, ca 1678–1696), published posthumously in 1739.

PETTER DASS AND *THE TRUMPET OF NORDLAND*

Petter Dass (1647–1707) was, like Donelaitis, a Lutheran minister and the foremost Norwegian poet of his generation, writing both Baroque hymns and topographical poetry. Petter Dass' poetic tribute to his native Arctic region – alias *Arctandria* – is the most important pre-romantic literary work in Norway. Its position is parallel to Donelaitis' *Seasons*: both poems constitute the beginning of modern literature in Norway and Lithuania respectively – Donelaitis in his native language, Petter Dass in Danish. Further, the two poems are closely related in mood and choice of motifs. Finally, the poets' common explicit purpose of their works is the praising of God's creation. Accordingly, a religious conception dominates the perspective, but piety is no obstacle to worldly pleasures, such as meals, social gatherings and markets, all of which contribute to the realistic impression of the poems.

In Petter Dass' lifetime Denmark and Norway made up a union; the two countries constituted a dual monarchy for more than four centuries until 1814.

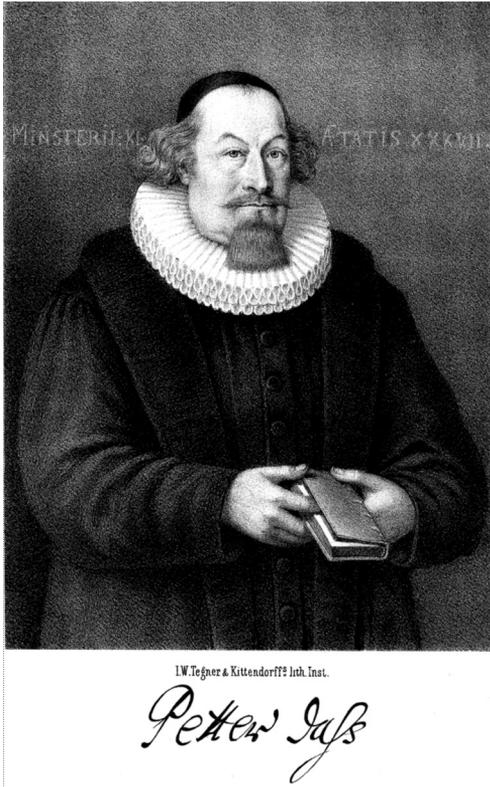
1 DONELAITIS, Kristijonas. *Årstiderna*. Svensk tolkning av Lennart Kjellberg. Göteborg, 1991.

2 AMBRAZAS, Vytautas (ed.). Jörundur Hilmarsson. In *Lietuvių kalbos enciklopedija*. Vilnius, 2008, p. 211–212.

3 BEYER, Edvard (ed.). *Norges litteraturhistorie*.

Vol. 1. Oslo, 1975, p. 546–551; BULL, Francis (ed.). *Norges litteratur fra reformasjonen til 1814*. Vol. 2. Oslo, 1958, p. 425–430.

4 NORENG, Harald. *Christian Braunmann Tullins samtlige skrifter*. Vol. 1. Oslo, 1972, p. 79–87, 221–227.



Copperplate engraving 1874, reproduced from painting by anonymous artist about 1690.

Photo: Petter Dass Museum, Alstahaug

Denmark was the dominating part of the union, not at least culturally, and after the Reformation Norwegian had gone out of use as a written language. It was replaced by Danish, which actually survived the Dano-Norwegian union as the leading publishing language in Norway until the beginning of the 20th century.

However, there were exceptions, from the late 17th century an increasing number of authors augmented Danish with Norwegian style, vocabulary and phraseology – in fact a natural amendment considering the consanguinity of the languages, comparable to the kinship between Lithuanian and Latvian. Modern Norwegian is the result of this prolonged process of lingual contact with Danish.

The pioneer of this process was exactly Petter Dass. His *Trumpet of Nordland* abounds in Norwegian words, names and expressions; a whole section is written solely in his local dialect.⁵ In this way he demonstrated – just like Donelaitis – the literary potential of his mother tongue and paved the way for the national literature of future generations.

Conspicuous are also *The Trumpet's* numerous parallels with *The Seasons* in moods and motifs, modelled by common aesthetic taste and literary patterns. However, there was no immediate affinity between the poets; Petter Dass lived and wrote more than two generations before Donelaitis, and although Petter Dass' *Trumpet* was published when Donelaitis was 25 years old, it is unlikely that he got acquainted with the poem, to say nothing of being influenced by it, since it was not translated in his lifetime.

The Trumpet was translated into German by the East Prussian author Ludwig Passarge⁶ in 1897 and into English by the Norwegian-American professor Theodore Jorgensen⁷ in 1954, the latter's translation is quoted in the following presentation. Passarge had already in 1880 introduced Petter Dass in Germany with

Nordlands Trompet

Forfattet

Af

Herr PEDER DASS

Sogne-Præst til Alstahaug

Udi

Nordlandene.



Kjøbenhavn, 1739.

Til Trokken befødret

Af Friderich Jacobsen Bruun, Kongl. Majest.
priviligerde Boghandler og Bogbinder udi Chris-
tiania, og findes hos hannem tilkiøbs.

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The Trumpet of Nordland

Composed

By

The Rev. PEDER DASS

Parson of Alstahaug

In

The Northlands.

Copenhagen, 1739.

Promoted to the Press

By Friderich Jacobsen Bruun, His Royal Majesty's
privileged Bookseller and Bookbinder at Chris-
tiania, and available for purchase at his.

PHOTO: Petter Dass Museum, Alstahaug

5 JAKOBSEN, Alfred. *Norskheter i språket hos Petter Dass* 1–2. Svorkmo, 1952–1953, passim.

6 *Petter Dass. Die Trompete des Nordlandes und andere Gedichte.* Aus dem Norwegischen übertragen von L. Passarge. Gotha, 1897.

7 *The Trumpet of Nordland by Petter Dass and*

Other Masterpieces of Norwegian Poetry from the Period 1250–1700. With the famous illustrations of the painter Thorolf Holmboe. Translated and edited by Theodore Jorgensen. Northfield, Minnesota, 1954.

an instructive monograph, still worth reading.⁸ His impressive translation of *The Trumpet*, introduced with a comprehensive presentation of the poet and the poem, is of particular interest in this context, as he three years earlier had published his translation of *The Seasons*.⁹ Passarge was the first – and so far the only one – to highlight similarities between the two poems.

PETTER DASS' VITA

Petter Dass' father, Peter Dundas, was a Scottish merchant of Dundee. He emigrated from Scotland to Norway about 1630 to escape the troubles of the Presbyterian Church. Dundas settled first in Bergen, then the commercial and cultural centre of the country, but established himself later as a fishmonger in the island of Herøy, on the north coast of Norway. The name *Dass* is a Norwegianized abbreviation of *Dundas*.

Dundas married a Norwegian woman, who gave birth to Petter Dass in 1647. In 1660 the son was sent to school in Bergen, and in 1665 he went to pursue university studies in Copenhagen, the capital of the dual monarchy. Due to poverty, he was forced to break off the studies after only two years. After his return to Norway, he became a tutor and later a minister near his birthplace, and got married there in 1672. In 1689 he was appointed as parson at Alstahaug, the wealthiest parish in the north of Norway, including several neighbouring districts. He remained there for the rest of his life with something of the honours and responsibilities of a bishop, brought up his two sons, and wrote a great many reams of verse. The materials for his biography are numerous; he was regarded with universal curiosity and admiration.

Petter Dass was a highly respected and beloved prelate, admired not only for his poetry, but also for innumerable hazardous crossings of open sea and stormy fjords to serve his distant parishioners. He was deeply mourned after his death; as a sign of grief many fishing vessels kept a black cloth on their sail for decades after his death.

A portrait, painted in middle age, shows him in canonicals, with a face full of fire and vigour. The accompanying copperplate engraving is a reproduction of this portrait. Several modern-day statues and busts of Petter Dass have been erected in Norway, including a relief in the Bergen Cathedral.

Petter Dass is probably the most legendary character among non-fictional Norwegians in folk tales and traditions from the 18th and 19th centuries. Hence he was a favourite subject of folklore; there is, for instance, a legend of how he fooled the devil to carry him to Copenhagen to preach for the king. Ludwig Passarge links

him to the Faustian tradition; like Dr. Faustus he possessed unlimited knowledge picked up from the Black Book, enabling him to conjure up spirits and ghosts.¹⁰

His writings passed in manuscript from hand to hand, only a few of them were printed during his lifetime. *The Trumpet of Nordland*, his greatest and most famous poem, was not published until 1739. Some of his hymns are still in use; the most popular is “Herre Gud dit dyre Navn og Ære” (Good Lord, Thy Precious Name and Glory).

Especially in Norway, but also in Denmark, his poetry had a broad popular appeal for centuries. In Passarge’s lifetime his position and popularity in Norway was comparable with that of Sir Walter Scott or Robert Burns in Scotland; Norwegian fishermen adored his songs with similar enjoyment as Venetian fishermen singing the stanzas of Tasso.¹¹

Nils Magne Knudsen argues that Dass has had a greater impact on the Norwegian people than most other poets. “For three centuries he has strongly influenced our imaginative range, our humour, our religiosity, our reservoir of images and expressions.”¹² His rhythms echo in newer Norwegian folk poetry, whose style and fashion point to Petter Dass as an ideal and a model. He has also inspired later poets and composers, including Edvard Grieg, who set music to several of Petter Dass’ poems.

A Petter Dass Museum was established at Alstahaug in 1966. A new museum building was opened there in 2007, 300 years after the poet’s death; a centre for information, study, research and inspiration for artistic creative work. Since 1983, the poet has also been honoured with a biennial Petter Dass festival at Alstahaug.¹³

COMPARISON OF *THE TRUMPET OF NORDLAND* AND *THE SEASONS*

The Trumpet of Nordland is a versified topographical encomium in anapaestic meters, composed in several stages between about 1678 and 1696. It is an expressive and vivid description of Arctandria; its natural features, its

8 PASSARGE, Ludwig. *Herr Petter Dass, ein norwegisches Litteraturbild aus dem 17. Jahrhundert*. Heidelberg, 1880.

9 Christian Donalitiuss’ *Littauische Dichtungen*. Übersetzt und erläutert v. L. Passarge. Halle, 1894.

10 Petter Dass. *Die Trompete des Nordlandes und andere Gedichte*. Aus dem Norwegischen übertragen von L. Passarge. Gotha, 1897. Einleitung, p. 34.

11 Op. cit., p. 2: So versteht man [...] seine Popularität gerade unter dem niederen Volke in den

Nordlanden, welche ihm in demselben Maße zuteil geworden ist, wie ein Jahrhundert später einem Walter Scott oder Robert Burns; p. 19: Wenn die Fischer auf dem Meere liegen, in der langen Winternacht oder beim Scheine der Mitternachtssonne, dann singen sie seine Verse ebenso kräftig, wie die venetianischen Fischer die Stanzen Tassos.

12 KNUDSEN, Nils Magne. Hr. Petters Trompet. In Petter Dass. *Nordlands Trompet*. Oslo 2007, p. 10.

13 www.petterdass-museet.no.

trades, its advantages and its drawbacks, depicted in dancing verse of breathless kind, and full of humour, fancy, wit and quaint learning, abounding in queer turns of thought and fine homely fancies.

Passarge emphasizes the youthfulness and popular tone, pervading not only *The Trumpet*, but also Dass' religious poetry, including the hymns. "Whereas his great contemporary Thomas Kingo somehow always puts on his Sunday best when writing, Petter Dass is always wearing working clothes."¹⁴

Just like Donelaitis' *Seasons*, the title of Petter Dass' poem is probably not from the poet's own pen. Some middleman has more likely invented "Trumpet" for commercial purposes and it was then sanctioned by a series of subsequent editors.

Although the poem abounds with digressions, it has a clear structure, consisting of an introductory section and two main parts describing everyday life, natural and commercial conditions of the Arctic regions. It begins with a general, thematic description of location, astronomical and meteorological conditions, faunas, agriculture, market places and ethno-cultural peculiarities, i.e. manners and modes of living among the Sami or Lapp people.

In the second special part, the landscape of the North is depicted in detail during the poet's voyage from parish to parish. This gives the poem an itinerant structure and a picaresque character, resembling one of its models, the Dane Claus Lyschander's rhyme chronicle about Greenland, with which *The Trumpet* also shares stylistic and rhythmic characteristics, including the anapaestic metre, resembling that of Medieval Latin sequences.¹⁵ Petter Dass' chronicle is all the same easier, more independent, fluent and elaborate than Lyschander's, as is vividly demonstrated already in the famous opening allocution:

I greet you, my Nordland's inhabitants, friends,
From host of the house to the poor hired man,
Be greeted my people of Nordland!

My greetings to you who are drying the fish
And salting the cod in the barrel to ship,
Be greeted each man and each woman! (P. 7)

Just as in Donelaitis' poem, piety mingled with humour is a characteristic feature in Dass' description of people and places, matters and manners. At this point Passarge accentuates another important similarity of the two poems: a deliberate emphasis on nature and culture as integrated and not separate spheres. Passarge

claims that this is most manifest in the presentation of human feelings, actions and conduct faced with nature: Mere description of nature leaves the reader unaffected, but he is engaged as soon as nature is related to man. What is not somehow imbued with, or appropriated by human spirit, is lifeless.¹⁶ Dass and Donelaitis do not just depict the nature to which they introduce the reader; instead they stage people there, let them act in ways that demonstrate what kind of impression this nature makes on them. Thus nature in both poems is enlivened by means of individualization and personification as central instruments.

SEASONAL MOTIFS

Unlike Donelaitis' temporally structured *Seasons*, Petter Dass' *Trumpet* is chiefly thematically organised. However, one pervasive theme there is seasonal activities connected especially to fishery and trade, whereas Donelaitis' poem is primarily preoccupied with agriculture. Dass appeals first and foremost to his maritime muse – only the free ocean releases his spirit, as Passarge puts it.¹⁷

Donelaitis dwells in detail on animals' and people's experience of each part of the year, in Lithuania clearly separated in four seasons, whereas in Northern Norway it is more appropriate to operate with only two seasons, expressed as follows by Petter Dass, beginning with the winter:

I almost will dare to repeat the old say'
That we in this country have one night and day
From New Year to end of December,
Since winter is almost continual night;
Perpetual day is our summer's delight;
The seasons thus pass us forever. (P. 15)

14 Op. cit., p. 32: Während sein großer Zeitgenosse Thomas Kingo nur gleichsam in Feierkleidern dichtet, entfernt Dass sich niemals von den Bedürfnissen des arbeitenden Volkes.

15 LYSCHANDER, Claus. *Den Grønlandske Chronica*. København, 1608.

16 Op. cit., p. 20: ...die bloße Beschreibung widerspreche dem Wesen der Poesie, deren erster und letzter Zweck ist, die Phantasie des Lesers anzuregen. Einen ganz gleichen Standpunkt nimmt hundert Jahre später in Deutschland der Litauische Dichter Christian Donalitus ein, namentlich in

seinem "Jahr". Dieses geschieht am wirksamsten durch die Vorführung menschlicher Empfindungen, menschlichen Thuns und Treibens. Die Schilderung einer Landschaft läßt uns kalt, sie erwärmt uns aber, sobald wir uns für einen Menschen in dieser Landschaft oder auch nur für den Darsteller interessieren. Mit einem Wort: uns ist tot, was nicht der Menschengestalt in irgendeinem Sinne durchdrungen und sich zu eigen gemacht hat.

17 Op. cit., p. 24: nur das freie Meer befreit seinen Geist.

The winter will bring a continual night;
 It comes as a pall on the wilderness quite;
 The murkiness stays unrelenting,
 The farmer has then no agreeable life –
 In darkness to bed and in darkness to rise –
 One night with the other conversing. (P. 16)

In Arctandria, fish is the very condition of life; as a consequence various kinds of fish dominate each season of the year – primarily cod, saithe, herring and halibut.

The fish in the water our livelihood is;
 If he stays away, then our lives are amiss;
 We sigh in distress and in terror. (P. 33)

Petter Dass elevates the cod to “King of the fish” – caught and dried on racks in late winter. It is called *torsk* in Scandinavian, corresponding to German *Dorsch* and Russian трески (*treski*), which means ‘dried fish’, i.e. stock fish, stoccafisso, bacalao etc.

It hangs on the rocks, and it fills all the stores;
 Praise God that this fish comes each year to our shores;
 It feeds both the wives and the husbands.

In spring the stock fish was transported from the northern shores to Bergen, where it was sold to fishmongers in exchange for goods and groceries.

O cod, you are truly our livelihood nigh;
 You bring us from Bergen the much needed rye
 And feed Nordland’s fishermen amply. (P. 33)

When the fishermen returned home from Bergen, winter’s darkness had given way to uninterrupted sunshine until the end of summer:

On the darkest and dimmest of midsummer days,
 The sun will at midnight send out its bright rays
 And glow on the western horizon.

O summer! Delightful to young and to old,
 When night is replete with a glory untold,
 And birds praise their loving creator! (P. 17)

Summer is occupied with saithe fishery, saithe or pollack mostly caught for domestic consumption, less for the trade markets.

How charming your play about midsummer time,
 When sun shines abundantly here in our clime!
 It must every Northlander hearten. (P. 43)

The autumnal fish is herring, salted in barrels and brought to the markets.

The mountaineer comes from the innermost fjord;
 He purchases herring for bark and for boards;
 He barterers one kind for another. (P. 40)

The second most valuable fish after the cod is the big flatfish or flounder or halibut, which Petter Dass personifies as the “Queen of the sea”.

You know that it makes a delicious meal,
 And gratefulness only a diner can feel,
 Whose plate God has blessed with the flounder. (P. 41)

You have not an equal ‘mong fishes I trow;
 Your back is like raven, your breast is like snow;
 Much whiter than shells in the sunlight. (P. 42)

The name *halibut* (German *Heilbutt*) means ‘holy fish’, indicating religious or superstitious connotations, demonstrated in Norwegian fairy tales, where the halibut plays an important part as a generous helper of the poor.

EXPRESSIONS OF CLASS DISTINCTION

In *The Seasons*, opposition between peasantry and nobility is repeatedly expressed and discussed, especially the mockery and exploitation of the farmers by the upper class. Donelaitis reports:

Some plucked lordling often seems to laugh at peasants,
 And the fool, who smiles, despises their hard labors,
 As if he could keep his footing without peasants
 Or take pleasure in his cakes without their dung?
 Ah, what would lords do if they should lose their peasants,
 And if such poor people didn't bring their dung?

Watch how easily, though, it would bend downward
 If like us, poor wretches, they should have to swallow
 Watery borscht and burnt porridge down their gizzards,
 Or to share with all of us the woes of serfdom.

In Norway there was practically no nobility; nonetheless class distinction existed to a considerable extent. Traders and buyers of food and fish exploited farmers and fishermen, not at least on the fish market in Bergen, dominated by mighty Hanseatic merchants – Bergen was for centuries the leading Hanseatic port in Scandinavia. Petter Dass accentuates distress and famine among indebted farmers in the wake of unsuccessful fishing combined with aggressive greed of corrupt creditors:

'Twas yeomen's old custom with neighbors to trade,
 But now must their trading with merchants be made –
 In quicksand of debt stand the seller.
 What earnings are made in a season or two
 Are thrown to the merchant without much ado;
 The farmer is the slave of the trader. (P. 82)

The words *serf* and *slave* are figurative expressions in this context; since feudalism was never established in Norway, serfdom – unlike most other countries – did not exist there.

ETHNIC ASPECTS – THE LAPPS

A further common feature in Donelaitis' and Petter Dass' poems is ethnic differences and opposition, in *The Seasons* related to German and French settlers in Lithuania. In Arctandria, however, there was no immigration in Petter Dass' time; instead he depicts in detail the indigenous inhabitants of the region, the Lapps or the nomadic Sami people, differing in decisive ways from their more sedentary fellow citizens:

The Lapps are a people of nature quite strange,
Of body quite short, and on short legs they range,
Not unlike the dwarfs, I am thinking.

Of eye they are sharp, and severe is the mien;
Of jaw they are long, and their features are lean;
Their faces are tawny and brownish. (P. 64)

The livelihood of the Lapps, according to Petter Dass “the greatest of treasures”, are the reindeer, driven between hibernation in the highlands and meadow pasture on the islands in summer:

Their homes are set up among hillocks and rocks;
They live in the mountains and keep there their flocks
On paths quite unknown to all others.
Yet they have a time in their calendar year
When they come among us; they likely appear
To trade and obtain their essentials.
The day is midsummer, Saint John is the same;
Then gather the Lapps, with their reindeer quite tame,
To be at the Midsummer market. (P. 63)

Dass is attentive to Sami belief and rites, such as awe for the respected bear:

The Lapp thinks the bear has the finest of meat;
He eats it with joy but is very discreet –
He leaves not a speck on the platter.
The backbone and legbones he gathers with care
And buries them as a religious affair –
He sings, too, a song for the purpose. (P. 69)

As a clergyman, Petter Dass regrets Sami witchcraft, paganism and superstition, magic by means of which they control winds and waves, men and animals:

It is to regret that the race of the Lapps
By heathenish fogs are more covered, perhaps,
Than anyone else in this country.
The pastors admonish in words and in threats,
But one must admit, much as one it regrets,
The Lapps go the way of their fathers. (P. 70)

In practising their religion, the Lapps resort to shamanism in order to encounter and interact with the spirit world:

He throws himself prostrate, the Lapp, as if dead
 And falls in a swoon; you think life must have fled –
 He shows neither breathing nor motion.
 But when he at last does return to this life,
 He tells from far countries, their ways and their strife,
 And all he has seen in the spirit. (P. 72–73)

What in Dass' poem is said about Finns, is actually meaning the Lapps. His description of the Lapps/Finns as mighty witches may have spread or even caused the belief that Finns – people of Finland – have magical powers, a theme which is known from Jack London's and Rudyard Kipling's works, and has been a belief among world's sailors.¹⁸

THE WEDDING MOTIF

Just like *The Seasons*, the greater part of *The Trumpet* is descriptions of necessities and concerns, toils and troubles of everyday life – on land and on sea, respectively. But in addition both poets give interesting glimpses of feasts and festivals – a burlesque and partly grotesque description of a wedding occupies one third of the chapter “Autumn” in *The Seasons*.

Similarly, Petter Dass describes a wedding over a couple of pages, but rather cursorily compared with Donelaitis' precious and detailed account including menus and music, dancing and dialogues. Petter Dass limits himself to a superficial summary:

First drank they to God, to his honor they sang,
 A chorus of voices, all gathered, rang
 Through halls, as the custom demanded.
 Then drank they a toast to the king of the land,
 To queen and to prince by His Majesty's hand,
 Then bishop and gov'nor remembered.
 The whole wedding party was flush with the ale;
 They drank to the bottom and relished it well,
 And gaiety came with the drinking.
 A hum of discussion rose up from the crowd –
 The stories were dirty, the voices were loud;
 For such is the way of the country. (P. 55)

This is rather faded and featureless compared with Donelaitis' magnificent description, saturated with individual characteristics, whereas Petter Dass' *Trumpet* offers mainly a general overview focusing on just a few individual actors.

Now the wedding guests, at their ease, having eaten
 And too generously quaffed their heavy draughts,
 Quite forgot to say their prayers, as Christians should,
 And like pigs of manor serf (a shame to tell it),
 Soon began to sing and squeal out swinish ditties.
 Stepas told a lot of lies about fat mares,
 Enskys sang the praises of his lordly oxen,
 And the rest, all playing foolish pranks, made merry.

They swapped tales, and the musicians rushed together,
 Playing the peasant melodies, now for the dance.
 Plykius clashed the cymbals, Kubas worked the fiddle,
 Žnairiuks, with his lips pulled sideways, trilled the fife.
 Soon, then, Enskys, who had called the girls to join in,
 Urged them on to dance with the fine neighbor lads.
 Klisis, in his ugly boots, took hold of Tušė,
 And they danced and kicked about like Lithuanians,
 Over the earthen floor ...

BIRD MOTIFS

Birds are central in both poems, endless flocks of wondrous warblers rejoicing at spring and new life – “and all of them praised God”, as Donelaitis states:

For now the winter's chills and frosts were at an end,
 And the enchanting spring wrought wonders everywhere.
 Ah, now in every place new life was all athrob;
 The air was filled with tunes of songsters on the wing.

Main messengers of spring in Lithuania are the stork and especially the nightingale, which warbles “queen-like amidst the other singing birds”:

18 MOYNE, Ernest J.; KIME, Wayne R. *Raising in the wind: The legend of Lapland and Finland Wizards in Literature*. Newark, 1981.

All admire and all give praise to your good song,
 As for us all you warble miracles, nightingale!
 Your voice silences the organ and the cymbal.
 Violins and zither pause, ashamed, when you
 Lift your sweet voice up and up, in simple song ...

Storks and nightingales are absent in *The Trumpet*; they are practically unknown birds in Northern Norway. Instead, Dass presents seabirds like puffins and eider ducks, which have adjusted to the harsh Arctic climate, and through centuries, if not for millennia, have been an important part of livelihood, even commercially. Their meat and eggs were attractive food, and the down or the feathers were used in pillows and quilts or eiderdowns.

The down of the auk is the dearest in trade,
 Three times as expensive as others, 'tis said –
 All buyers will try to obtain it. (P. 87)

Sky-high nesting cliffs are crowded with seabirds – “as many as raindrops from sky”, Dass asserts – their loud screams echo among the abrupt rocks and reach a deafening crescendo, like hundreds of symphony orchestras. The nests are accessible only by descending the cliffs with long ropes, an extremely risky undertaking:

Now whoso is daring – on daring is bent –
 On end of a rope down the mountain is sent
 To war with the mountain for booty.
 The man at the top must right trustworthy be;
 He lets down the other where bird's nests they see –
 Together they cover the mountain.
 The one who is lowered has difficult role;
 He walks to the nests, by the crag, to the hole
 And fills there his pockets and trousers.
 When all he has taken, he pulled is to top;
 He bulges with booty, he has quite a crop.
 Elsewhere they continue their plunder. (P. 112)

Of special interest are the parrot-like puffins, nesting underground on the top of the cliffs. Their nests are unreachable for people; therefore special puffin dogs were trained to creep into the holes to catch the birds.

They fill up the mountains with circles of nests,
 And curious homes build the curious guests;
 The strangest of habits they show you.
 The auk-mother hatches but one single egg;
 She hides it in scree or in holes of the crag,
 So far in that man cannot reach it.

But yeomen, who know what the seabirds will do,
 Are able to scheme what the auk-mothers rue;
 The men bring their dogs for the hunting.
 These dogs are of body both narrow and small;
 They into their innermost openings crawl,
 And pull the bird-mothers out with them. (P. 85–86)

THE MOSK MAELSTROM

Petter Dass' *Trumpet* has given material to world literature through the description of the greatest tidal current in Europe, the mighty Mosk maelstrom or whirlpool, a tremendous stream flow comparable in power with the greatest rivers on Earth. For a long time it was believed to be the location of Homer's Charybdis in the *Odyssey*. Petter Dass was not the first to describe the current; he refers to one of his models, *Hexaëmeron* (posthumous 1661) by the Dane Anders Arrebo (1587–1637), but Dass explains about this natural phenomenon in an alternative and essentially more lively way, making it remind Passarge of Schiller's ballad "Der Taucher".¹⁹ Dass' account made the Mosk maelstrom famous and inspired imaginative tales of numerous writers, first in Denmark, whence its reputation spread to the rest of Europe and to The New World. The most renowned Non-Scandinavian contributors to the Mosk literature are Edgar Allan Poe with the short story "A Descent into the Maelstrom" (1841) and Jules Verne, in whose novel *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* (1870) the submarine Nautilus is shipwrecked at Mosk. The impressive and dangerous current is also mentioned in Herman Melville's fateful novel *Moby Dick* (1851).²⁰ Petter Dass' description of the "billowing seas" sounds as follows:

They often like rapids in foam may be seen,
 And many onlookers amazed have been
 How waters could get such a fury.
 At full moon or, say, even when it is dark,

19 Op. cit., p. 24.

20 www.folk.uio.no/the_lofoten_maelstrom.

A roaring is heard that is fearful and stark;
 Your back will get shivers of terror.
 Yes, sometimes so awful is ocean and speed,
 The land and the houses are quaking indeed,
 As if heavy thunder were roaring.
 And if it so happens that counterwinds blow,
 The waves will as high as the mountaintops flow
 And have nothing comparable elsewhere.
 Should anyone dare to attempt the sea then,
 He would not see near ones of dear ones again;
 His grave would be watery bottom. (P. 106)

Conclusion

The major comparability of *The Seasons* and *The Trumpet* is their initialising impact on the literary tradition in their respective countries. Just as *The Seasons* was the starting point of Lithuanian literature, Norwegian literature was resumed with Petter Dass' *Trumpet* after several hundred years of hibernation. They are both major contributions to European literature, describing nature, living conditions and culture in relative proximity in ways that show their close affinity in spite of considerable differences of life and conditions in Baltic fields and forests and on Arctic seas and shores.

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Santrauka

Kristijono Donelaičio *Metai* Skandinavijoje nėra gerai žinomas literatūros kūrinys. Jis nebuvo išverstas į Skandinavijos kalbas iki 1991 metų, kai pasirodė Lennarto Kjellbergo *Metų* vertimas į švedų kalbą.

Straipsnyje siekiama nustatyti K. Donelaičio *Metų* ir Skandinavijos poezijos sąsajas. Būtų sunku įrodyti ryšius su lietuvių poeto amžininkais, tačiau galima išžvelgti ryškių netiesioginių analogijų su tam tikrais kūriniais, ypač su XVII a. Norvegijos literatūros pavyzdžiais, tai yra iki K. Donelaičio laikmečio sukurtais kūriniais. Ryškiausias pavyzdys – Petterio Dasso epinė poema *Šiaurės trimitas (Nordlands Trompet)* (1678–1696, išleistas po autoriaus mirties 1739 m.).

Kaip ir K. Donelaitis, P. Dasso (1647–1707) buvo liuteronų pastorius, kūręs ir baroko himnus, ir topografinę poeziją. P. Dasso poetinė duoklė gimtajam Arktandrijos regionui – svarbiausias Norvegijos literatūros kūrinys, sukurtas iki romantizmo laikų. Daugeliu atžvilgiu šį kūrinį galima sulyginti su K. Donelaičio *Metais*: abi poemos žymi šiuolaikinės literatūros pradžią Norvegijoje ir Lietuvoje. K. Donelaitis kūrė savo gimtąja kalba, P. Dasso – danų kalba.

P. Dasso gyvenamuoju laikotarpiu Danija ir Norvegija buvo vieninga valstybė, kurioje danų kalba buvo bendra rašytinė kalba. Vis dėlto nuo XVII a. pabaigos vis daugiau autorių įtraukdavo norvegų kalbos elementus į danų kalbą. Būtent P. Dasso ir laikomas šio proceso pradininku. Sukūręs epinę poemą *Šiaurės trimitas*, jis įrodė – kaip ir K. Donelaitis – literatūrinį savo gimtosios kalbos potencialą ir nutiesė kelią nacionalinei literatūrai ateities kartoms.

Verta atkreipti dėmesį ir į gausias *Šiaurės trimito* ir *Metų* paraleles perteikiant kūrinio nuotaiką ir išsakant leitmotyvus, kurie kuriami vadovaujantis bendru estetiniu skoniu ir panašiomis literatūros priemonėmis.

Šiaurės trimitas yra rimuota topografinė panegirika, sueiliuota anapesto metru. Poemoje aprašomas kasdienis gyvenimas, gamtinės ir prekybinės Arktikos regionų sąlygos. Joje pateikiamas teminis vietovės, astronominių ir meteorologinių sąlygų aprašymas, fiksuojamos paukščių, žuvų ir banginių gyvenimo akimirkos, aprašomas žemės ūkis, turgavietės ir etniniai-kultūriniai ypatumai, tai yra gyvenimo tarp samių (ar lapių) būdas ir papročiai.

Kaip ir K. Donelaitis, P. Dasso aprašo žmones ir vietoves, įvairius kasdienes reikalus ir papročius, derindamas pamaldumą su humoru. Ši pasakojimo ypatybė būdinga abiem aptariamiems poetams. Pagrindinė tema P. Dasso poemoje – sezoninė veikla, ypač susijusi su žvejyba ir prekyba, o K. Donelaitis didžiausią dėmesį skiria žemės ūkio darbams.

Kaip ir K. Donelaičio *Metuose*, P. Dasso *Šiaurės trimate* vaizduojamos įdomios švenčių ir iškilmių akimirkos – šiuose kūriniuose esama burleskiškų vestuvių ceremonijų aprašymų.

Abiejose poemose itin daug dėmesio skiriama paukščiams. Lietuvoje pavasario pasiuntiniais laikomi gandrai ir lakštingalos. Šiaurės Norvegijoje šie paukščiai nežinomi, todėl ir neaprašyti P. Dasso poemoje, bet čia randame Arktikos jūrų paukščius pufinus ir gagas. Pabrėžiama šių paukščių mėsos, kiaušinių ir plunksnų svarba kaip ištisus šimtmečius gyvavęs pragyvenimo šaltinis.

Ir *Metai*, ir *Šiaurės trimitas* laikomi svarių indėlių į Europos literatūrą. Abiejose poemose galima įžvelgti panašumų aprašant gamtą, gyvenimo sąlygas ir kultūrą. Nepaisant reikšmingų gyvenimo būdo ir geografinių sąlygų skirtumų (Baltijos regione vyrauja laukai ir miškai, o Arktikos regiono pakrantes skalauja jūros), šias poemas vienija daug panašumų.

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