

## The image of neighbours: Latvian and Lithuanian literature in Estonia

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**Abstract.** The translated text has a specific value in the new culture: it can be a translation of a literary text, and it can be a translation of culture, i.e. a synchronic text of a cultural system. There are two principal concepts which are used in the present article: 'translation' and 'reception'. Reception begins with the selection of the author, literary or historical epoch, literary style, or ideology. So, every translation and reception begins with reading, and every reading creates meanings. At the same time, reception is also translation: it is a moment when two distinct cultures mix, and this situation needs understanding of the other. The translated texts create the image of the translated culture and/or nation. The article examines texts from Latvian and Lithuanian literatures from the second half of the 18th century to the early 20th century which have been translated into Estonian: what kind of texts are translated in different periods and by different translators (the selection of the authors and the texts); what the purpose of the translations is; how these translations translate Latvian or Lithuanian culture into Estonian; and how Estonians understand and accept these translated texts. And, finally, how these translated texts create the image of the translated culture and/or nation.

The story of Latvian and Lithuanian literature in Estonia is the story of reception: the reception of another culture through literature, which begins with the reading and translation process and includes interpretations of the text in new contexts. Thus, there are two principal concepts, which are used in the present article: 'translation' and 'reception'. It is possible to discern two kinds of relationships between translation and reception: according to Peeter Torop

(1999: 20–21), the first is translation as reception and the second is translation and reception. However, both relationships are not totally divergent, as will also become obvious in the present article. The first step in analysing them is when a translated text emerges in a new context, and a new cultural situation begins at the point in which we see translation as reception.

There are several interpretations of the term ‘reception’; one of them has been suggested by Erkki Vainikkala: “[...] the term ‘reception’ refers to the juncture where text and reading meet and meaning is produced [...]” (Vainikkala 1993: 5). This formulation includes both types of the relationship between translation and reception, as every translation derives from reading, and every reading creates meanings. At the same time, the distinguishing component in the translation process is the reader: to regard the translator as a reader is to regard translation as reception, and to speak of readers who read the translation is to speak of the reception of the translation or, in other words, translation and reception.

Reception begins at the moment of selecting the author: it may be the reception of a literary or historical epoch or literary style, or the reception of different ideologies. At the same time, reception is also translation: it is the moment when two distinct cultures mix, and that situation requires mutual understanding. Both kinds of relationships between translation and reception depend on each other, and the translated text has a specific value in the new culture: it can be a translation of a literary text and it can also be a translation of culture. The translation can be a diachronic text of literary history and it can be a synchronic text of a cultural system (Torop 1999: 20). An example of the latter type of translation would be Eduard Vilde’s translations of Rūdolfs Blaumanis’ stories which are analysed in this article.

The above-mentioned relationships and processes are connected with Juri Lotman’s concepts of culture and boundaries. According to Juri Lotman, “[e]very culture begins by dividing the world into ‘its own’ internal space and ‘their’ external space. How this binary division is interpreted depends on the typology of the culture. But the actual division is one of the human cultural universals” (Lotman 2000: 131). It is the old question of the self and the other. And it is also a question of boundaries – one of the primary mechanisms of semiotic individuation (*ibid.*). The internal or “own” space and the external or “their” space are separated by boundaries and on these boundaries translation of each message takes place, because “[t]he boundary is bilingual and polylingual”, and “it both separates and unites” (Lotman 2000: 136). Lotman

has written: “On the level of the semiosphere it implies a separation of ‘one’s own’ from ‘someone else’s’, the filtering of what comes from outside and is treated as a text in another language, and the translation of this text into one’s own language. In this way external space becomes structured” (Lotman 2000: 140).

Culture is not a static phenomenon; on the contrary:

The dynamics of culture can be represented as neither an isolated immanent process nor the passive sphere of external influences. Both these tendencies are realised in conditions of mutual tension from which they cannot be abstracted without the distortion of their very essence.

Intersection with other cultural structures may be achieved in a variety of ways. Thus, an “external” culture in order to enter into our world must cease to be “external” to it. It must find for itself a name and a place in the language of the culture into which it seeks to insert itself. But in order to change from “alien” (*chuzhoi*) to “own” (*svoi*) this external culture must, as we can see, submit to a new name in the language of the “internal” culture. The process of renaming does not take place without leaving a trace of that content which has received the new name. (Lotman 2009: 133)

Translation is the space of reception of literature and culture, and translation is arranged by the translator; even the selection of the method of translating is reception, according to Peeter Torop (1999: 20–21).

All the above-mentioned processes and relationships have been taking place in the interactions between Estonian and Latvian literatures, as well as between Estonian and Lithuanian literatures.

### **Latvian literature in Estonia**

The literatures of Latvia and Estonia are quite young, but before the national literatures came into being, the early contacts between the two nations were described in the old chronicles. *Heinrici Chronicon Livoniae* is one of the oldest documents about the ethnic groups living by the Baltic Sea. *Heinrici Chronicon Livoniae* tells the story of Germans warring against the Estonian pagans, and about the role of Latvians in this war. The chronicle, written in Latin by *Henricus de Lettis*, covers the period from 1180–1227.

Initially, information about contacts between the two nations was stored in oral folklore. In the 18th century, such information began to appear in literary

texts and translations by Baltic Germans. These texts and translations represented Enlightenment ideas and culture. August Wilhelm Hupel (1737–1819) and Peter Ernst Wilde (1732–1785) published the magazine *Lühhike Öppetus* (*Brief Instruction*, 1766–1767) in Põltsamaa. The Latvian translation, *Latviešu Ārste* (*Latvian Doctor*), was published in 1768–1769 and served as the foundation for Latvian journalism.

Probably the first text which was translated from Latvian into Estonian was Gotthard Friedrich Stender's (1714–1796) *Jaukas pasakas in stāsti* (*Pleasant Tales and Stories*, 1766). Friedrich Wilhelm von Willmann (1746–1819) translated and complemented Stender's stories, and published them in the book *Juttud ja Teggud* (*Tales and Deeds*, 1782). Stender's stories were influenced by Aesop, Luther and even Arabic fairy tales (*Arabian Nights*) (Vinkel 1975: 247; Annus *et al.* 2001: 44).

The next important cultural contact that deserves mentioning is Johann Gottfried von Herder's (1744–1803) book *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (*The Voice of the People in Songs*, 1807) where Latvian and Estonian folk songs, collected by August Wilhelm Hupel (1737–1819), were first published. The first collection of Latvian folk songs (*dainas*) in Estonian translation appeared in 1985.

The first translation of a literary text from Latvian into Estonian, *Õnne tee, ehk kuidas võib rikkaks saada* (*The Way to Happiness, or How to Get Rich*, 1866), was done by Mats Grant (1836–1884), an Estonian peasant who studied in Salacgrīva, Latvia; the author of the text is unknown. Most probably, Grant also translated the love story *Turaidas jumprava* (*The Virgin of Turaida*, 1856) into Estonian.

The contacts between Estonian and Latvian intellectuals were quite frequent during the 19th century. Both Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald (1803–1882) and Friedrich Robert Faehlmann (1798–1850) enjoyed good cooperation with their Latvian colleagues, and they both were influenced by Garlieb Helwig Merkel's (1769–1850) works. Even so, the texts written in both Estonian and Latvian during the 19th century do not often mention their neighbours. Perhaps the Latvian texts, for instance *Lāčplēsis* (*Bear Slayer*), are more concerned with the Latvian-Estonian relationship than the Estonian texts: in the Latvian epic, the Estonian hero Kalevipoeg is mentioned, but the Latvian hero is not mentioned in the Estonian epic at all.

### Rūdolfs Blaumanis (1863–1908) in Estonia

The friendship between Eduard Vilde (1865–1933) and Rūdolfs Blaumanis (1863–1908) established a new level of quality in Estonian and Latvian translations. Blaumanis established the genre of the short story in Latvian literature and he was in contact with the Estonian writer Eduard Vilde, the initiator of the Estonian realist novel, when (in 1889 and 1890) they both worked for the German newspaper *Zeitung für Stadt und Land*. Blaumanis and Vilde were colleagues who were interested in each other's work. Vilde wrote that Blaumanis intended to translate his short story *Punane mulk* (*The Red Mulch*) into Latvian, but the idea was never realised (Kuningas 1963: 138). At the same time, Vilde translated three of Blaumanis' short stories into Estonian, although he did it through German translations which had been done by Blaumanis himself, and in 1892 Blaumanis' first collection of prose *Õlest katuse all* (*Under a Thatched Roof*) was published in Estonian in Tallinn. It seems that Vilde was the first serious translator to introduce Latvian literature to Estonian readers. A little later, he also translated some fragments from Blaumanis' satirical short story *Jutt seast, kes rääkis* (*A Story about the Pig Who Talked*), published in 1891 in the collection *Naer on terviseks* (*Laughter is Healthy*) (Kuningas 1963: 138). Speaking of translation as reception, we must ask how Vilde perceived Blaumanis' works, why these works were interesting to Vilde, and how he as a translator presented Blaumanis' works to Estonian readers.

The three stories published in Blaumanis' first collection in Estonian were *Raudupi perenaine* (*The Mistress of Raudupi; Raudupiete*), *Raha sukkades* (*Money in the Stockings; Nauda zeķēs*), and *Pikne* (*Thunder; Pērkoņa negaiss*) (Vilde 1892). All three are realistic and important works, and were reprinted in 1960. It is significant that the first collection also contains a preface by Vilde in which he noted that it was a pity that two neighbours, Estonians and Latvians, did not co-operate in cultural or literary societies and organizations, and he hoped that Estonians would become more acquainted with a famous writer from our neighbouring nation through these three stories. He stated that the young Blaumanis was the best and the most famous Latvian storyteller (Vilde 1892: 3–4).

Vilde used a German translation which had been done by Blaumanis himself and, judging by his preface, we can understand that Vilde's primary purpose was to translate culture, the synchronic text from a cultural system, not

the particular text. He believed that through these three texts Estonians would get to know something new and interesting about their neighbours.

Another very significant aspect that Vilde emphasized in his preface was Blaumanis' realism. Adherence to realism drew the two writers together. Though Vilde noted that Blaumanis represented nature very poetically in his stories, it was still meaningful that his presentation of life seemed natural, making it possible to learn from his writing how Latvians actually lived. Blaumanis' realism was very inspiring to Vilde when he decided to translate his stories.

The next translator of Blaumanis' texts, Aleksis Rebane (1868–1926), knew the Latvian language very well and translated directly from Latvian. He continued Vilde's tradition of stressing realism through the short stories he selected: *Puhas hing* (*Pure Soul; Baltais*), *Tants kolmekesi* (*Dance of the Three; Dancis pa trim*), *Soosse vajuja* (*Subsidence to Mire; Purva bridējs*) etc., and Blaumanis' first translated play into Estonian, *Ärakadunud poeg* (*The Prodigal Son; Pazudušais dēls*, 1902), which was staged by Karl Menning at the Vanemuine Theatre in Tartu in 1907 (Kuningas 1963: 139).

The translations by Vilde and Rebane were also translations of literary style. A more complex question is whether both men also translated ideologies. It seems that ideology was not very important to Vilde as regards his translations, although he himself wrote quite revolutionary stories at the time he made the translations. Blaumanis was his soul mate and, when translating his stories, the main thing was to introduce Latvian literature and culture to Estonians. However, at the same time ideologies emerged through the realist text: through the translator's selection and through the presentation of Latvian villages and peasants. The opposition between the rich and the poor, the life of poor peasants, the power of money – all of these topics also carry ideological meanings stemming mainly from leftist ideology which was prevalent in Europe at that time and which interested and shaped the young Vilde when he was in Berlin during 1890–1892. In those years, Vilde's ideological world-view solidified after completing his translations of Blaumanis.

Generally, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, ideologies were transmitted through literary texts, including translations. And that reception depended directly on the translator's world-view and selections. The relationship between translation and reception, or translation and the reader, was not presented in the official criticism or the secondary literature in as scholarly a manner as it was in the 1920s–30s, although polemics on realism

existed at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries as well. Vilde was one of the innovators in the Estonian literary criticism at that time: so, we can see how a translator influenced readers through his translated texts, literary criticism and secondary literature (his preface for Blaumanis' first collection also indicates this). Consequently, we may say that Vilde had two roles in the literary process: he represented translation as reception, and he also represented the relationship between translation and reception.

The third important translator of Blaumanis' texts was Mart Pukits (1874–1961), and his preferences were quite different from those of Vilde and Rebane. He translated directly from the Latvian language in a very refined style. This also marked a change in the translation of Blaumanis' texts: Pukits preferred Blaumanis' comedies. He translated the plays *Vargad* (*The Thieves; Zagļi*), *Magusast pudelist* (*From the Sweet Bottle; No saldenās pudeles*), the drama *Paha vaim* (*The Evil Spirit, Ļaunais gars*), and Blaumanis' most popular play, *Rätsepäd Sillamatsil* (*Tailor-Days in Silmači; Skroderdienas Silmačos*), etc. The last one was produced at the Vanemuine Theatre in 1912 and was very popular in Estonia, along with *The Thieves* which was performed in the countryside about five hundred times (Kuningas 1963: 139). It seems that Pukits translated mainly the text, not the culture. The situations in Blaumanis' comedies were not totally strange to Estonian readers; these situations did not need translation, but the text had to be translated well because of the verbal humour intrinsic to the genre of comedy. At the same time, the translation of comedies creates the feeling that two different nations, cultures and languages are not alien, and this is the mystery of comedy: it connects different nations through laughter. The translator's duty is to retrieve laughter from the original text and to translate it into his own language or culture.

The last collection of Blaumanis' short stories in Estonian, *Kevadised hallad* (*The Spring Frosts; Salna pavasari*), was translated by Oskar Kuningas and published in 1960 (Blaumanis 1960). The collection includes 17 stories (some of them are reprints), and a rather good afterword by the translator which includes an exhaustive overview on the life and literary works of Blaumanis. It is remarkable that Oskar Kuningas avoided the ideological assessments and extremes of the 1960s. This book presents the best selection of Blaumanis' works and some remarks on their context, but it does not teach or dictate directly how to read these stories. Thus, the translator and his preferences were transmitted into the text, his reception being expressed in the selection of the text and in the style of the translation. It is noticeable that Blaumanis' texts

were published in a new context in 1960. This demonstrated the timeless value of his works and Blaumanis was received as a Latvian classic by Estonian culture. The last translation of a text by Blaumanis to appear in Estonian was Oskar Kuningas' translation of the play *Tules* (*In the Fire; Unguni*), published in 1986 (Blaumanis 1986).

### Rainis (1865–1929) in Estonia

Rainis (real name Jānis Pliekšāns) is another very famous Latvian writer from the same period as Blaumanis whose works are connected with Estonian culture through different motifs. Rainis' texts, translated into Estonian, contain indications of double cultural translation, and are thus a very interesting case not only for Latvian but also for Estonian literature.

Estonian translators began to translate Rainis' works quite late – in the 1920s when the author was already about 60 years old. When Mart Pukits began his translation work, he stressed Rainis' Marxist worldview, and the connection with leftist ideology to a great extent determined Rainis' reception by official critics in the Soviet times. Two volumes of Rainis' selected works were published in 1965 including his poems and plays. The afterword written by the talented translator Karl Aben was still strongly influenced by ideology, but this was typical of that time. However, Rainis' texts provide a good material for ideology, and sometimes it is possible to use his texts in the service of different ideologies. We must agree with the Latvian researcher Andre Šedriks, who has written: "Whatever ideological interpretation one wants to give Rainis' work, his life was totally committed to the emancipation of his people" (Šedriks 1979: 40).

In terms of Estonian influences on Rainis' works, Šedriks maintains concerning Rainis play *The Golden Steed* (*Zelta zirgs; Kuldratsu*, 1909):

Although the Latvians appear to have a definite claim on this tale by virtue of numerous variants, Rainis used an Estonian folk tale on the same theme as a source of raw material for his play *The Golden Steed*. Rainis, of course, was acquainted with the Latvian tale, but the Estonian version which he had on his shelf in a German translation may have struck him as perhaps more dramatic and easier to adapt. [...]

In constructing *The Golden Steed*, Rainis utilized some of the motifs of the Estonian folk tale but also invented his own to suit his personal vision. (Šedriks 1979: 43–44)



Voldemārs Kalpiņš has written that the ideas of Rainis' play *The Golden Steed* were drawn from Kreutzwald's fairy tale *Kuidas kuningatūtar seitse aastat oli maganud* (*How the Princess Had Slept Seven Years*; Kuningas 1979b: 5). At the same time, a story about a princess who slept on a glass mountain is well known in northern Europe. That fact not only connects Estonian and Latvian folklore, but also places them in a wider European context and indicates the relationships between European nations.

However, we can find other motifs from Estonian folklore in Rainis' works. It is an important fact that all these motifs are quite tragic or dramatic. Kalpiņš and Kuningas have observed and described the motifs originating in the Estonian epic *Kalevipoeg* and the mythological story *Koit ja Hämarik* (*Dawn and Dusk*; Kuningas 1979a: 3). It is known that Rainis had read the *Kalevipoeg* in German, and he also translated some songs from the German language. The motif, which he used in his drama *Blow, Wind!* (*Pūt, vējiņi!*, 1914) is the orphan motif from *Kalevipoeg*. Both the slave girl from the *Kalevipoeg* and Baiba from Rainis' drama were orphans and had to work hard for their stepfamily. The orphan motif certainly points to several variants of the Cinderella story that have been transmitted all over the world. But it is interesting that Rainis also uses another motif from the *Kalevipoeg*: the motif of Saarepiiga, the maiden who lived on an island. After she had met Kalevipoeg a tragic love story ensued, and Saarepiiga jumped into the sea and drowned.

Johannes Semper (1997: 100–104) has analysed the folk motifs in the *Kalevipoeg* and he sees a parallel between *Kalevipoeg* and the Finnish epic *Kalevala* in this regard: the motif of the maiden who commits suicide by drowning is repeated several times in the *Kalevala*. This reminds of the story of Kullervo who met a nice maiden on his travels and raped her. Next day it turned out that the girl was Kullervo's sister, and then the maiden drowned herself. According to Semper, incest was implicated also between Kalevipoeg and Saarepiiga. The second tragic story from the *Kalevala* that influenced Kreutzwald is the story of Väinämöinen and Aino. The sad love story ended with Aino getting drowned in the sea. The fact that the *Kalevala* influenced Kreutzwald has been mentioned in his letters to a friend. All these motifs are well-known in Europe and have existed in national literatures for a very long time (cf. Ophelia in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*).

Another tragic and at the same time exalted motif whose traces we can find in Rainis' works is the myth of Dawn and Dusk – a legend about sunrise and sunset in the summer solstice when day and night touch each other and fuse

together in their kisses. It is a story by Friedrich Robert Faehlmann (1798–1850) which inspired the sculptor Weizenberg in the creation of his figures of the characters, and also Rainis. According to Oskar Kuningas, the personification of the motifs of sunrise and sunset are repeated several times in Rainis' play *Blow, Wind!* Although the motifs of sunrise have been well known since the antiquity (these are female deities Eos and Selene in Greek, and Aurora in Roman mythology), the love stories differ from the legend written by Faehlmann. *Blow, Wind!* contains a situation involving Baiba and Uldis in which their passion becomes stronger and stronger, while it all ends with a farewell kiss from Baiba and her jumping into the water (Kuningas 1979a: 5).

Rainis used these tragic motifs to create tension in his texts: the tragic is exalted, and through tragedy spiritual catharsis takes place. At the same time, Rainis connects different motifs from different cultures, and he uses cultural translation to create the great texts of his own.

## Lithuanian literature in Estonia

Lithuania has a different and great history, but the Soviet period created a common destiny for all three countries. Most of the translations of texts from Lithuanian literature into Estonian were made in the Soviet period, although Lithuanian literature is older than Estonian and Latvian ones. The older period of Lithuanian literature is quite long, reaching from the 14th to the 18th centuries, and it includes Lithuanian, Byelorussian and Polish traditions, as well as texts which were written in different languages (Latin, East-Slavic, Polish and German). These texts also represented different genres: historical texts, chronicles, philological texts, religious texts etc. The contacts between Lithuanian and Estonian cultures have not been as active as the contacts between Latvian and Estonian literatures.

Lithuanians consider the Lutheran priest Kristijonas Donelaitis (1714–1780) to be the father of Lithuanian poetry. His main work is the narrative poem *Metai (The Seasons)*, written in 1770–1774. *The Seasons* is a significant poem in the tradition of European literature, and it presents the life of Lithuanian peasants during one year of the 18th century:

*The Seasons* depicts the everyday life of the serfs in Lithuania Minor, the subject matter, and the poem's ideological stance as well focusing on the peasants. Donelaitis appears to be a spokesman for peasant interests, their ideologue in a way.

He creates pictures of country life as if he were observing that life up close or were a participant who was interested and moved by everything that a peasant experiences. *The Seasons* is a work of antifeudalist spirit, strongly condemning serfdom. (Kubilius 1997: 43)

Latvian researcher Māra Grudule has written about the role of nature in Baltic literatures during the second half of the 18th century, stressing the idea that nature and the peasant culture are the elements which connect Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian culture. The Lithuanian poet Donelaitis and his poem *The Seasons* would belong to the best examples of the beginnings of Baltic secular literatures: Donelaitis and his contemporaries resonated “with the literary tradition of European literature and philosophy as we can see through ties with Rousseau. [...] On the one hand they are fertilized by European streams of culture, on the other they are deeply rooted in national culture” (Grudule 2007: 96–97).

Donelaitis’ narrative poem *The Seasons* has been translated into many languages, but unfortunately, not completely into Estonian. Some fragments from the fourth part of the poem, *Winter Cares* (*Talvised mured*), translated by Mihkel Loodus, were published in the journal *Looming* in 1964. There is also a brief comment about the content of the poem by the translator, and a longer article about Donelaitis by the Lithuanian researcher Teofilis Tilvytis. Actually, the fragment of Donelaitis’ poem and the article by Tilvytis celebrate the 250th anniversary of the birth of Donelaitis. Tilvytis stressed the realist aspect of Donelaitis’ poem and the article was influenced by Soviet ideology (Tilvytis 1964: 120–121).

We can also find some texts about Donelaitis in the Estonian newspapers *Edasi* and *Sirp ja Vasar* by Mihkel Loodus (Loodus 1963) and Johannes Semper (Semper 1964), respectively; there is also an article in the journal *Keel ja Kirjandus* by the Lithuanian researcher Leonas Gineitis (Gineitis 1973), and that is all. It is significant that it is quite common for Lithuanian and Latvian researchers and writers to write about their own literature in Estonian magazines, but it is very uncommon to find an article about Latvian or Lithuanian literature written by Estonian critics.

At the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, realism was dominant in Lithuanian literature, but at that time some writers were also neo-Romantics. One of them was Vaižgantas (real name Juozas Tumas, 1869–1933). The name Vaižgantas is the name of one of the Lithuanian pagan gods, and the writer who wrote under this name was a patriot

and idealist who belonged to the generation which created the model of national culture at the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th centuries. Vaižgantas' works involve a search for the spirit of the nation, and he presents the main features of the national character and life, the agrarian culture, and the love of work and nature. These features are similar to Estonian national features, but our writers present these national features in a totally different manner. Vaižgantas' book of long short stories *Onud ja tädid* (*Uncles and Aunts; Dėdės ir dėdienės*) was published in 1920–1921, but the Estonian translation by Ilmar Vananurm was only published in 1985. The book contains an afterword by the Lithuanian researcher Vincas Kuzmickas which is a good overview of the life and literary works of Vaižgantas. There are also some remarks about the contacts between Vaižgantas and Estonian writers or, more exactly, about some casual and single-sided or even failed contacts in 1921 (Kuzmickas 1985: 255). It seems that the cultural contacts between Estonians and Lithuanians have been more complicated and rarer than contacts between Estonians and Latvians already for a very long time.

The protagonist of the book is a poor man Mykoliukas, who represents the national character. Mykoliukas is not a farmer but a servant in his family because he is not married. He is the uncle of his brother's children:

Vaižgantas firmly believed that “gentleness of manner and goodness of the heart” compose the essence of Lithuanian ethnic character. [...] Peasants, who were released from serfdom and wanted to achieve economic security, were forced to take part in rather immoral actions, namely, to use their unmarried brothers and sisters as cheap labour, as servants in a way, so that they would not have to divide the land and pay them their fair share. These selfsacrificing family members were called “uncles” and “aunts” in the family, because the children addressed them this way. The spiritual drama of these people gave the author an opportunity to reflect on the essence of Lithuanian national character. (Kubilius 1997: 134–135)

Mykoliukas works very hard but he still finds time to play the violin. The song that Mykoliukas plays is very expressive and significant:

Kui ma tahan – tōd teen tōsist, kui ei taha – laisklen ka. (Vaižgantas 1985: 9)  
If I want to, I work so hard; if I do not want – I'm idle, too. (My translation – A. M.)

There are several characteristics which represent Mykoliukas and also the spirit of the nation: he “has a sensitive soul” and “he subtly experiences the beauty of

nature” (Kubilius 1997: 135). The role of nature is very important in Vaižgantas’ story as it was in Donelaitis’ poem.

The book presents a more optimistic and lighter view of life than Estonian literature generally, for example in the works of Anton Hansen Tammsaare (1878–1940). In his text Vaižgantas stresses that Lithuanians are always joyful, love to laugh and are naive. Both Latvian and Lithuanian literatures are similar in this respect: these literatures are more lyrical and softer than Estonian literature, as well as the national characters represented by our writers like Vilde, Tammsaare etc. It seems that such an image of our neighbours still exists, at least to some extent.

## Conclusion

The analysis of Latvian and Lithuanian writers demonstrates different ways in which the translation process takes place in literary texts, as well as in culture as a whole.

The cultural contacts between Estonian and Latvian nations are older than the contacts between Estonian and Lithuanian nations. The literary contacts between Estonian and Latvian began to appear in the 18th century in literary texts and translations by Baltic Germans. These texts and translations as synchronic texts of a cultural system represented Enlightenment ideas and culture. Eduard Vilde’s translations of Rūdolfs Blaumanis’ stories are also synchronic texts of a cultural system, also representing ideology, while Vilde himself had two roles in the literary process: he presented translation as reception, and he also presented the relationship between translation and reception. The later translations of Blaumanis’ works, especially the collection *The Spring Frosts* (1960) are diachronic texts of literary history, as are the translations of Rainis’ literary works in 1965. At the same time, the literary works of Rainis are more complicated, because he connects different motifs from different cultures, and he uses cultural translation to create the great texts of his own.

The translations of older Lithuanian literature (Donelaitis) and also literature of the 1920s (Vaižgantas) are diachronic texts of literary history. Unfortunately, most of the translations of texts from Lithuanian literature into Estonian were made in the Soviet period, and the reception was influenced by the Soviet ideology, yet these translations still introduced Lithuanian literature to the Estonian readers.

Translation is connected with interpretation, and at the same time translation and reception are mixed. It is also important that these translated texts create the image of translated culture and/or nation, including our neighbours.

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### **Образ соседей: латышская и литовская литература в Эстонии**

Переведенный текст получает в новой культуре особенное значение. Прежде всего это перевод литературного текста, но это может быть и перевод культуры. "Перевод" и "рецепция" являются основными понятиями, которые используются в данной статье. Рецепция начинается уже с выбора переводимого автора, литературного или исторического периода, литературного стиля или разных идеологий. Можно сказать, что каждый перевод и рецепция начинаются с чтения и каждое чтение привносит значения. В то же время рецепция является и переводом – это момент, когда две культуры встречаются и эта ситуация нуждается в понимании "другого". Переведенные тексты создают представление о переводимой культуре и/или народе. В настоящей статье рассматриваются переводы на эстонский язык текстов латышской и литовской литературы с конца 18-го до начала 20 века. В статье показывается, какие тексты переводились в разные периоды, какие авторы были выбраны, что было целью перевода и как эти переводы транслировали латышскую и литовскую культуру эстонскому читателю. Анализируется и то, как эстонские читатели воспринимали и понимали эти тексты.

### **Kujutluspilt naabritest: läti ja leedu kirjandus Eestis**

Tõlgitud tekstil on uues kultuuris eriline tähtsus. Kõigepealt on see kirjandusliku teksti tõlge, kuid see võib olla ka kultuuri tõlge, s.t teisest kultuurisüsteemist pärineva sünkroonilise teksti tõlge. "Tõlge" ja "retseptatsioon" ongi kesksed mõisted, mis käesolevas artiklis on kasutamist leidnud. Retseptatsioon saab alguse juba tõlgitava autori, kirjandusliku või ajaloolise perioodi, kirjandusliku stiili või erinevate ideoloogiate valikust. Võib öelda, et iga tõlge ja retseptatsioon algab lugemisest ning iga lugemine loob tähendusi. Samal ajal on retseptatsioon ka tõlge – see on moment, mil kaks erinevat kultuuri kohtuvad, ja see situatsioon vajab "teise" mõistmist. Tõlgitud tekstid loovad kujutluspildi tõlgitud kultuurist ja/või rahvast. Käesolevas artiklis on vaatluse all eesti keelde tõlgitud tekstid, mis pärinevad 18. sajandi lõpu kuni 20. sajandi alguses läti ja leedu kirjandusest. Artiklis tuuakse välja, milliseid tekste on erinevatel perioodidel tõlgitud, milliseid autoreid ja tekste on tõlkijad valinud, milline oli tõlkimise eesmärk ning kuidas need tõlked on läti ja leedu kultuuri eesti lugejale edasi andnud. Analüüsitud on sedagi, kuidas eestlasest lugejad neid tõlgitud tekste on mõistnud ja omaks võtnud. Lõpuks üritatakse jõuda selgusele, kuidas vaatluse alused tekstid loovad kujutluspilti tõlgitud kultuurist ja / või rahvast.