

Friedrich Nietzsche's Influence on the Estonian Intellectual Landscape

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In my article, I delineate Friedrich Nietzsche's influence on Estonian intellectual landscape. As it turns out, this influence has been quite remarkable and extends from literature to politics. I start with outlining several orientations of the reception of Nietzsche's thought in the world and then suggest that with one exception, all those orientations are to some extent also present in Estonian Nietzsche reception. Nietzsche's reception in Estonia started rather early and one can say that he was somewhat known in Tallinn as well as in Tartu even in his lifetime. The first attempt to translate one of his works (notably *Also sprach Zarathustra*) into Estonian was made already in 1901. Till the Soviet occupation in 1940, Nietzsche's thought was rather actively appropriated by Estonian writers, intellectuals and even politicians. In Soviet Union, Nietzsche was prohibited and his works were not freely accessible in public libraries. With the restoration of Estonia's independence in the beginning of 1990s, a new, fresh and active wave of Nietzsche reception also begun. New translations appeared and the reception was generally more faithful and philosophical than in the first period.

Keywords: Nietzsche, will to power, literature, Estonian history of thought, Young Estonia, Zarathustra, overman

The thought of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) has been extraordinarily influential in the 20th century; Estonian culture and its intellectual landscape have not been left untouched. The aim of this article is to sketch what I consider to be some of the most important lines or veins of the reception of Nietzsche's philosophy in Estonia, from the beginning till today, with a particular focus on the early reception. Since Nietzsche's influence in Estonia has been very multifaceted, this article does not obviously intend to exhaust the topic, no one article could. But as far as I know, it is the first attempt to chart the main lines of the entire reception.

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With several exceptions and despite the risk of oversimplification, the reception of Nietzsche's philosophy in the world can be divided into four or five fundamental orientations. In the first phase of reception, Nietzsche was regarded primarily as a writer-essayist: indeed, his influence on literature and literary theory extends from Russian symbolism and formalism to French, German, Russian, Portuguese and Latin-American literature. Many philosophers also regarded him first of all as a writer, a view that has been subtly expressed by Rudolf Carnap, who regards Nietzsche as a metaphysician "who perhaps had artistic talent to the highest degree" (1959, 80) and who can be least accused of confusing the expression of *Lebensgefühl* with meaningful sentences. On the one hand, "a large part of his work has predominantly empirical content" (Carnap 1959, 80) and can be classified as meaningful. But *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, for instance, and many others of his works as well are, for Carnap, purely artworks and have nothing to do with philosophy and its rigor. Thus, Carnap finds a certain double nature in Nietzsche. Bertrand Russell, however, seems to push Carnap's view even further and regard him merely (or at least mainly) as a writer-essayist (cf. Russell 1945, 760–772). Shortly, for many, Nietzsche was a writer, perhaps not even a bad one, but still a writer, and one should not take him very seriously as a *philosopher*.

The second main orientation, in sharp opposition to Russell's and Carnap's position, is most clearly represented by Martin Heidegger, and by accounts of Nietzsche's thought that bear his influence. Heidegger regarded Nietzsche as one of the deepest and most important of western philosophers, in whose thought western metaphysics reaches an endpoint. Heidegger grounds his interpretation in the notes and fragments of Nietzsche's *Nachlass*, and carries out a systematic reconstruction of Nietzsche's thought around the concept of the 'will to power' (*Wille zur Macht*). However, Heidegger paid scant attention to Nietzsche's textuality, his formal and stylistic experiments that are visible in his published works; in short, Nietzsche's literariness received short shrift from Heidegger.

The founding impulse of the third orientation, which is directly opposed to the Heideggerian Nietzsche, came from France in the works of Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault. These authors regarded Nietzsche as a relevant, highly modern philosopher-thinker, from whom there is much to learn with respect to contemporary philosophical problems and foci; however, these thinkers largely avoided systematic reconstructions of Nietzsche's philosophy. Instead, they paid close attention to the style and formal texture of Nietzsche's writings and the many-facetedness of content enabled by this formal experimentation. One should mention that partly, in ways that even seem somewhat Heideggerian, these authors sought to

integrate Nietzsche into their own philosophy. In the eyes of some more traditional readers, Nietzsche became almost unrecognizable.

Over the course of the last decades a certain paradigmatic interpretation of Nietzsche has developed in Germany. Relying in part on the French tradition, this approach combines philosophical questioning (regarding Nietzsche as a thinker who has an important place in the examination of today's philosophical problems) with textological-philological methods. After the great poststructuralist wave, a similar trajectory has emerged in France as well.

Beginning in the 1980s, but particularly in the last few decades, a remarkable number of works on Nietzsche have been published with an Anglo-American analytic slant. These can be somewhat distinguished from the German approach due to their problem-centered focus and a paucity of emphasis on philological aspects, but in essence this trend is in alignment with the German paradigm. Well-known analytic philosophers who have directly and extensively been influenced by Nietzsche include Bernard Williams (in his book *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy*), as well as Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre.

Except for this most recent Anglo-American direction, all of the above-mentioned orientations are present in some form in Estonian Nietzsche reception. There is a widely-held view that the reception of Nietzsche began with Young Estonia, a highly influential artistic and literary movement of cultural renewal.¹ This is not exactly true, as philosopher of history Mart Kivimäe has argued in several of his articles, where he shows that even during Nietzsche's lifetime he was not entirely unknown, either in Tartu or Tallinn. Apparently the first to make the acquaintance of some of Nietzsche's early works in Estonia was Gustav Teichmüller, a colleague of Nietzsche's from his Basel period, who was appointed Professor of Philosophy at Tartu University in 1870. Indeed, in his afterword to the Estonian translation of Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra* (*Nõnda Zarathustra: Raamat kõigile ja eikellelegi*), Johannes Semper (1932, 152), a prominent writer and essayist of the Young Estonia movement mentioned that Nietzsche, too, had been extended the invitation to a professorship at Tartu University, in the area of philology. Semper underscored this fact by reference to Raul Richter's monograph, *Friedrich Nietzsche: His Life and Work* (1922, 36), though Richter's

¹ As a group and as a movement, Young Estonia was active in the years 1905–1915. In its own way it sought to appropriate European legacies of thought and literature in order radically to renew Estonian language and culture. The members of the movement included prominent Estonian writers, linguists, and essayists, who have since become classics, including Gustav Suits, Friedebert Tuglas, Johannes Aavik, Johannes Semper, Aino Kallas, and Bernard Linde.

sources for this information are unclear. Some indications concerning such an invitation can be found in Nietzsche's correspondence, which is mentioned in a letter from Friedrich Ritschl dated 14 February 1872 (Nietzsche 1977, 543). Teichmüller held all of Nietzsche's philological works in high esteem, though he found the philosophical ones to be too wild (Schwenke 2006, 258). Kivimäe suggests that Nietzsche himself may have dispatched some of his works to Estonia, specifically to Palmse manor, to a Baltic-German lady named Isabella Olga von Ungern-Sternberg (née von der Pahlen), whom he met in Italy in 1876, and who published a graphological study of Nietzsche's handwriting (*Nietzsche im Spiegelbilde seiner Schrift*) in 1902. Kivimäe goes on to mention that Nietzsche was "the object of the private literary passions of Baltic ladies from Estonia, including Fanny von Anrep" (2006b). Leaving aside the aspects of handwriting that interested Isabella Olga von Ungern-Sternberg, one cannot say with certainty what the Baltic-Germans of Estonia found of interest in Nietzsche's works, and what messages they read there. To ascertain outlines of these reading patterns would require extensive and thorough research, but most likely these interpretations were philosophically speaking insignificant. It should be added that at the end of the 19th century and at the fin de siècle, philosophically interesting interpretations and treatments of Nietzsche's thought were, at that time, quite rare everywhere else as well.

The first attempt to translate Nietzsche into Estonian was made by the journalist and educator Ado Grenzstein in 1901, just a year after Nietzsche's death. In the prominent daily newspaper "Olevik," Grenzstein began serializing his own translation of *Also sprach Zarathustra* (under the title *Sarathustra*), and succeeded in publishing almost half of it (Nietzsche 1900; Nietzsche 1901). It might indeed be interesting to reread and reevaluate this translation, in view of questions such as whether Grenzstein found himself forced to invent new vocabulary, and to what extent his translation as a whole left its mark on Estonian (poetic) language. At the time, Grenzstein's Nietzsche translation drew an appreciable amount of attention. A certain Baron A von H.H., most probably one of the Hoyningen-Huene family wrote a letter to the editor of "Revaler Beobachter," in which he remonstrated that however great a thinker or poet Nietzsche was, "it is a mistake, even a great social crime to publish his works in a popular newspaper" (as cited by Luiga 1902, 106). Ado Grenzstein replied self-confidently to this allegation in "Olevik," stating that he knew very well what he was doing. The problem was that an "unbreachable, well-guarded (*gordovoilik*—referring to the *kardavoi*—imperial police who kept order) wall had been built around the Estonian people, feeding the impression that nothing existed outside of it. Of course it would be advantageous to the lords to isolate the common people in this

way, in their stupidity and lack of knowledge. Grenzstein proceeds to explain that the translation of *Zarathustra* had the potential of chipping away at such a wall, even punching a few holes in it, showing the simple country people that “the lordly life only begins outside this wall—a life full of high peaks, deep chasms, heat and sweat, and inexplicable mysteries (Grenzstein 1902). As the very first translator of Nietzsche into Estonian, Grenzstein makes an interesting point here, namely that his translation had one main, pedagogical purpose: to put *Zarathustra* in the service of the enlightenment of the Estonian people and the development of the Estonian nation. Needless to say, all Estonians did not share Grenzstein’s views in this regard.

In 1902, in two consecutive issues of the daily newspaper “Eesti Postimees,” a serialized article was published by writer and journalist Georg Eduard Luiga, entitled “Nietzsche in Estonian Literature.” The title of the article is a bit misleading, because only at the end of the article does the author mention in passing that ostensibly Nietzsche had had a direct influence on the works of one author, Ernst Peterson. The article gives a brief introduction to Nietzsche’s life and works, and then picks up the discussion between Grenzstein and the aforementioned Baron A. von H.H., arguing from the Baron’s perspective: was it really reasonable to introduce Nietzsche’s thought to the Estonian people? The author concludes:

even in the science of thought, a great deal of preparation must be undertaken to train one’s powers of judgement to maturity, so that one will not suffer damage from taking on the writings of Nietzsche. An apprentice apothecary is not assigned to work with the most potent and poisonous medicines on his first day: he could thus do a great deal of damage to himself and others. (Luiga 1902, 109)

Indeed, Luiga supports the baron’s position. But what does he find so dangerous about Nietzsche? Specifically, for Luiga, the dangerous material lies in the teachings about the Overman (*Übermensch*) and the propagation of the morality of the master. Luiga practically reduces Nietzsche’s thought to these concepts. In his view, the Overman seemed to reject all those (Christian humanist) values that are so highly appreciated today, including that which pertains to the common folk. According to a certain Nietzsche, slavery was to be actively cultivated in order to facilitate the emergence of the Overman. Obviously, this was not to the advantage of the Estonian people. Upon closer look, Luiga’s interpretation is not quite this biased; or, to put it more precisely, it is much less biased than many of the other interpretations of Nietzsche at the time, as well as the (political-ideological) ones from a slightly later era. This can be seen in the following quotation from Luiga:

Where Nietzsche sings the praises of violence, selfishness, etc, this should not be taken the way a superficial reader might understand

these terms. Nietzsche's works are not reading for the simple-minded; they are meant for careful study; they are a riddle. (Luiga 1902, 106)

Despite these reservations, the author sees the teaching about the Overman as the core of Nietzsche's thought, and this same assumption has characterized Nietzsche-reception in Estonia for quite a long time, perhaps even until the restoration of Estonian independence at the beginning of the 1990s. In effect, this somewhat strange tendency, which is also widespread elsewhere, seems to confirm the centrality of *Also sprach Zarathustra* in the early reception of Nietzsche in Estonia: The teaching about the Overman is most prominent precisely in that work where it is preached by Zarathustra and not necessarily by Nietzsche himself. In his other, noticeably less fictional works he uses the word "Übermensch" only rarely, and the same goes for proclaiming the teaching of the Overman.

As has already been stated, Nietzsche's influence on the burgeoning culture of Estonia is most clearly visible in the Young Estonia movement, where it had considerable impact. In the words of Aino Kallas, the Finnish writer who married an Estonian folklorist and was a member of the Young Estonia movement, Nietzsche belonged to the "primary library" of Young Estonia (1921, 21). According to Bernhard Linde,² the poet and literary scholar Gustav Suits, one of Young Estonia's leading figures was reading Nietzsche avidly in 1903 and 1904. Retrospectively, Suits reflected on Nietzsche's role as one of Young Estonia's sources of inspiration:

In our youth, the heavens were set afire by the first impulses of the red emancipation movement of Russia. As their waves broke over the borders of Estonia, the writings of Darwin, Marx, Nietzsche, Brandes, Ibsen, Tolstoi, Gorki, Hauptmann, Juhani Aho and many more of their contemporaries pronounced harsh judgment on the life and literature of the intellectual youth of this land. (Suits 1910–1911, 638)

As Jüri Kivimäe argues, in order to determine more precisely what the Young Estonians picked up from Nietzsche, or ways in which Nietzsche influenced them (in both a literary and philosophical sense), a thorough study of Nietzsche's reception among the Young Estonians is required (Kivimäe 2008, 35). Some steps have already been taken in this direction. In her article on Gustav Suits, "Noorte püüded ja rõõmus ajalugu: Gustav Suits ja Friedrich Nietzsche" ("Youthful Strivings and Joyful History: Gustav Suits and Friedrich Nietzsche") (2005), Epp Annus has pointed to clear resemblances between Nietzsche's philosophy and Suits' treatment of history and attitudes toward life. Granted, Annus begins with Nietzsche's early work

² "Suits' familiarity with Nietzsche's works can already be seen in 1903 and 1904; Marx and Kautsky followed on their heels" (Linde 1918, 16). Cf. also (Annus 2005).

Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben, and there is no clear evidence as to whether Suits had even read this particular work. However, some of the arguments, tensions, and pathos of this essay can also be found in others of Nietzsche's writings, with which Suits was doubtless more familiar. To some extent mediated by Georg Brandes, Nietzsche certainly did have an effect on Suits, particularly with respect to ideas such as creative tension, the storm and tempest (*Sturm und Drang*) of youth, the intensity of life, and the accompanying longing for the heights of culture. According to the young Nietzsche, these qualities are attainable through a certain forgetfulness, the kind of historical writing he refers to as "monumental," and selective recollection of the past. On the basis of these observations, we can conclude that among many other writers and thinkers, Nietzsche had a direct and beneficial impact on the growth in self-awareness of the youthful culture of young Estonia.

The second leading figure of Young Estonia to be influenced by Nietzsche was Friedebert Tuglas, and the marks of this are mostly literary and stylistic. Tuglas has described the experience of reading *Also sprach Zarathustra* as follows:

At that time what stunned and bewitched me about that book, what enriched my experience of life and filled my heart to blissful overflowing was not so much the energy of Nietzsche's striving nor his teaching about the Overman, but a tragic and beautiful poetry of landscape, which was opened to me for the first time. (Tuglas 1936, 54)

Writer and literary scholar Jaan Undusk (1986) has pointed out Nietzsche's influence on Tuglas' views on the theory of stylistics as well as his stylistic practice. Literary researcher Eve Süvalep has outlined Nietzsche's thematic influence on Tuglas' short stories. Indeed, for Tuglas, the significance of Nietzsche was "first and foremost a new mythology, a new world-feeling and account of the human being, an articulation of new ideals" (1999, 196). In many of Tuglas' short stories, overcoming or transcendence of the self and the thematics of the Overman do indeed play an important role. However, Tuglas' relationship with Nietzsche's thought is much more multifaceted than this and calls for further in-depth treatment.

In her article "Mõtteid Tammsaarest, Nietzsche ja Dostojevskist" ("Reflections on Tammsaare, Nietzsche, and Dostojevsky") (2005), Marina Grišakova has considered the avenues of Nietzsche's thematic influence on A.H. Tammsaare, one of Estonia's most influential 20th century novelists, who was more loosely connected with the Young Estonia movement than Suits or Tuglas. Tammsaare was reputed to have a deep understanding of the contemporary European thought. In 1909 he wrote a journalistic article entitled "Friedrich Nietzsche: Linnulennult" ("Friedrich Nietzsche: A Bird's

Eye View”). The first half of the piece is admirable for its balance and depth, but unfortunately also Tammsaare sees Nietzsche mainly in relation to the Overman, not in terms of his diagnostics of nihilism nor the philosophical critique of traditional understandings of truth, language, consciousness and introspection. Tammsaare writes:

A man must be made of iron in body and mind. Only such a man can rise above the morality of the herd in all of its varieties; he must rise above the call for pity. He knows how to be pitiless both toward himself and others, and in all situations to impose his desire to rule, his will to power (that Nietzsche regards as a basic characteristic of nature and by means of which he seeks to explain everything) ... This is the Overman, about whom Zarathustra preaches so resonantly ...; it is he who calls us to renounce everything and aspire to become the Overman, as if such a being were somehow proven or established somewhere, aside from our belief in him. (Tammsaare 1986, 232)

Tangentially connected with Young Estonia was also Marie Heiberg, a child-poet from very difficult material circumstances; her hardships resulted in a collapse into severe mental illness at a young age. According to Peeter Lindsaar, Heiberg used to refer to herself as “Nietzsche’s Daughter” (as cited by Vaher 1998, 44). Evidently what she meant by this was some spiritual affinity to Nietzsche, but such an identification should not be taken too seriously with regard to Nietzsche’s overall intellectual influence in Estonia. Marie Heiberg had very little formal education; her reading was scattered and superficial, and according to her contemporaries she articulated similar connections with other great thinkers to make herself seem more weighty and intelligent. (Cf. Vaher 1998, 44).

Even critics of Young Estonia considered Nietzsche to be one of their important role models and influences. This can be seen in an essay entitled “Uusromantism ja Noor-Eesti” (“The New Romanticism and Young-Estonia”) published in 1910 by Otto Minor (Münther) in the second volume of “Ääsi tules” (In the Anvil’s Fire), an essay collection of the St. Petersburg Estonian Students’ Association. The author accuses A. H. Tammsaare, F. Tuglas, and J. Aavik of an uncritical adoption of Nietzschean individualism. It is in Aavik’s essayistic narrative “Ruth” (published under the pen-name J. Randvere) that Minor recognizes Nietzsche’s “teaching about the Overman,” under the guise of a new romanticism (cf. Kivimäe 2008, 32–33).

As Ele Süvalep (1994, 54) has vividly shown, the images, metaphors, and symbols of “Zarathustra,” such as heights and depths, rises and falls, bridges, ropes, arrows, the eagle, can also be recognized in Betti Alver’s poetic oeuvre from the 1930s. Indeed, the group of poets (to which Betti Alver belonged) who called themselves “Logomancers” (“Arbujad”) might well be considered the descendants of the intellectual traditions of Young Estonia. Alver’s 1936

poetry collection “Torm ja tuli” (“Dust and Fire”) was extraordinarily popular and well received (poems from this collection were even passionately committed to memory by high school students). Perhaps it was through this particular volume of poetry that Nietzschean motifs entered Estonian popular parlance as suggested by classical philologist Marju Lepajõe.

The first of Nietzsche’s works translated into Estonian in its entirety was *Vastkristlane* (*Der Antichrist*, 1895), probably published in 1919. The translator’s name is marked with the initials U.L, but according to Volume II of “The Book in the Estonian Language 1918–1940” (Ainz et al. 2012, 1648), the translator was Mihkel Juhkam, a convinced atheist, later the Defense Minister of the Estonian Republic, who was deported to Siberia on 14 June 1941 and died in the Sosva prison camp in 1942. The preface to this work was written by Ado Anderkopp, who was also highly placed in the world of politics, served as Minister of War, and had a similar fate as Juhkam. Anderkopp was arrested by the Soviet occupation forces in Tallinn and was executed there in 1941. In his foreword to the translation, he takes a sociological-political approach, according to which Nietzsche is an “apostle of freedom” for individuals.

Today’s republics—not to speak of socialist republics, break down the individual. History is not made by a republic, a society, but by individuals who lead them. Therefore, down with this kind of republic, down with this social order! ... And the Christian faith, which is the first large-scale socialist teaching, where everyone is the same before God, where you must love your neighbour as yourself, where the person who raises himself is humiliated—such a faith has no place on this earth. (Anderkopp 1919, 4)

In Anderkopp’s brief three-page foreword one can find similarities to the elitist-aristocratic interpretation of Nietzsche which was quite widespread at that time. In 1889, still within Nietzsche’s lifetime, Georg Brandes had published an essay on Nietzsche under the title “Aristocratic Radicalism.” This famous essay appeared in English translation in 1914 in the volume *Friedrich Nietzsche* by Brandes. Despite some apparent similarities, this elitist-aristocratic interpretation should by no means be confused with National Socialism, which began taking hold in Germany in the 1930s. However, the unusual circumstance that behind the Estonian translation of *Der Antichrist* were two prominent Estonian politicians indicates that the influence of Nietzsche’s thought was not limited to literary circles.

The publication of *Vastkristlane* attracted a great deal of attention in Estonian church circles. On 17 February 1921, Theodor Tallmeister, pastor of the Church of the Holy Spirit gave a speech at “a public meeting of several thousand souls” (sic!) in the opera “Estonia” concert hall, in which he interpreted and partially critiqued Nietzsche’s views. The impulse for the speech

was provided by several reviews occasioned by the publication of *Vastkristlane* in the newspaper "Vaba Maa" in which the end of Christianity was proclaimed. Interestingly enough, Tallmeister's attitude toward Nietzsche's thought is not one-sidedly negative:

Besides, it is the manner of great minds to express their thoughts in a sharply-etched manner, which smaller minds find repulsive . . . Similarly, in Nietzsche's case one should not take his particular thoughts, articulated by force of the feeling of the moment, as his final, weighty judgment. Rather, one should try to find grains of truth in his world-views. (Tallmeister 1921, 6)

Apparently due to Kierkegaard's influence, Tallmeister considered Nietzsche's greatest contribution to be emphasis on the value of the individual, because in our century there was a great danger of being swallowed up by uniformity. However, Tallmeister's interpretation goes awry when he tries to identify the Overman with Jesus Christ, whose life had been a great struggle, "and who had sought out this battle and fought it with sharp weapons." How could the faith created by such a man be "limiting, oppressive, and enslaving"? In *Der Antichrist* Nietzsche makes a clear distinction between the historical person of Jesus and Jesus Christ as the founder of Christianity, who was, to a great extent the creation of Paul and other early Church Fathers. Indeed, Nietzsche is favourably inclined toward Jesus as a historical figure, whom he tried to free from the layers of Christian tradition, but Nietzsche never regarded Jesus as a warrior, a hero, or an Overman. To the contrary, Nietzsche saw Jesus as a meek and mild, childish, antirealist-decadent, who avoided all struggle and showed no resistance whatsoever to anyone. In sum, Tallmeister's interpretation is quite idiosyncratic, even high-handed.

The second Nietzsche text to be translated into Estonian in its entirety, was the whole text of *Also sprach Zarathustra* (*Nõnda kõneles Zarathustra: Raamat kõigile ja eikellelegi*), already familiar and influential in intellectual circles thanks to Ado Grenzstein's partial translation and the discussion that followed. The full translation was published in 1932 by Johannes Pall, with an afterword by Johannes Semper, the same afterword that mentioned Nietzsche's invitation to become professor of philology at Tartu University. After the restoration of Estonian independence, there have been several reprintings of Palla's translation, but clearly there is a need for a fresh translation.

The years of the Estonian republic saw the publication of two lengthy treatises on Nietzsche that approach the scale of monographs. This in itself is remarkable: at that time, no other thinker seemed to be important enough to warrant the composition of lengthy monographs. In 1922, an educator named August Kuks published a book entitled *Nietzsche eetika põhjendus* (*A Justification of Nietzsche's Ethics*) which is perhaps the most philosophical of

studies of Nietzsche during the interwar years. Essayist Friido Toomus' book entitled *Friedrich Nietzsche: Üli-inimese kuulutaja* (*Friedrich Nietzsche: Proclaimer of the Overman*) followed in 1936. Toomus' book was not an original contribution, and consisted mostly of biographical information; one might even consider it an "intellectual biography" of sorts. Nevertheless, it provides an overview of Nietzsche's life and the development of his thought, a patchy book overall, but in some aspects quite thorough.

Thus, to summarize briefly the reception of Nietzsche during the years of the Estonian republic, concerning which the current overview is selective and by no means exhaustive, Nietzsche's strongest and most intensive influence was on writers and literature. In addition, his thought interested or affected some politicians and religious figures. Despite the formal and stylistic influence on Estonian literature (which still require thorough research), the major topics in the reception orbited around the Overman and Nietzsche's critique of Christianity. Returning to the scheme presented at the beginning of this article of the division of Nietzsche reception into basic orientations, I would designate the whole first phase of Nietzsche reception in Estonia as literary-essayistic. It seems that "philosophical" reception—which would place Nietzsche's thought in the larger context of Western philosophy along with a conceptual explanation of the background of the critique of Christianity, or the relation of the Overman to platonism or nihilism—was absent altogether. We should observe, however, that often such contextualization is not essential: for example, Gustav Suits, who seemed to regard direct access to Nietzsche's philosophy as a source of inspiration and intensity cannot be said to have misunderstood him. Perhaps his view of Nietzsche was one-sided (are not all translations always and unavoidably one-sided?), but it was certainly not overtly wrong.

With the coming of the Soviet occupation in 1940, Nietzsche reception in Estonia was interrupted, or at least died down for a long period (perhaps continuing to some extent "underground"). In the Soviet Union, Nietzsche was heavily censored. Official Marxism connected his thought with extreme antihumanism and the ideology of National Socialism. As Mart Kivimäe states, Nietzsche's works were not

... freely accessible in public libraries; non-Marxist research literature on him was placed in a special (closed) collection. As Arseni Gulõga later testified based on his own personal negative experience, even as late as the mid-1980s, the demonized Nietzsche was simply edited out of the "correct edition" of the history of German philosophy. (Kivimäe 2006a, 44)

When the Soviet era ended, Nietzsche reception in Estonia underwent a powerful revitalization. But after the restoration of Estonian independence

Nietzsche was already being read somewhat differently in Estonia. In the meantime, a great number of new Nietzsche interpretations had been generated (particularly French, but also German renditions based on Heidegger) in the West, and these had made their mark. In 1991, the fifth issue of the literary magazine *Vikerkaar* was largely devoted to Nietzsche (and this was even before the formal declaration of Estonian independence). Among the contents was a selection of aphorisms translated by Ilmar Vene, who has offered more thorough examinations of Nietzsche in many of his later works of cultural philosophy. Likewise, Jaan Undusk contributed the first translated excerpts of *Ecce Homo*, and writer Hasso Krull an overview of Derrida's account of Nietzsche, "Nietzsche's Oto-Biography." Other interesting contents of this special issue include translations of several of Nietzsche's poems and several well-known studies of Nietzsche. In 1993 a new printing of the 1932 Estonian edition of *Also sprach Zarathustra* was published (subsequently there have been several more). In 1996 Jaan Undusk published his full translation of *Ecce Homo*, along with a foundational afterword entitled "Confession without a Priest," which is now a classic. In his afterword, Undusk aligns himself with the third and fourth orientations mentioned at the beginning of this article, raising also issues which were original at the time, even in a global perspective. Nietzsche is present in Undusk's literary works as well: in 1999 he published a play, "Goodbye, Vienna," that literary critic Janek Kraavi (2002) has called one of the most powerful literary works of the decade. Nietzsche's person (under the name Adolf Nietzsche, which points to the National Socialist appropriation of Nietzsche) and his thought are central to the play. It is interesting that Undusk represents Nietzsche with the term "(välis)eestlane," which means an Estonian (from abroad), someone who belongs, yet does not belong to us.

After the restoration of Estonian independence, Nietzsche has also been discussed in the context of Estonian philosophy. In 1995 Jaan Kaplinski published article entitled "Eesti filosoofia" ("Estonian philosophy") in which he attempts to show that Nietzsche has implicitly argued in favour of Estonia's having its own philosophy:

The question, the challenge, is an old one. Nietzsche has presented it in his work *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*. He states that there is every reason to believe that philosophers of the Uralic-Altai language area (where the concept of the subject is less elaborated) could see the world with a different perspective and would take different paths than Indo-Europeans or Muslims. (Kaplinski 1995, 1868)

As the Estonian language belongs to the Uralic group, there is, according to Kaplinski, grounds to presume that one could philosophize in Estonian uniquely and to good effect. Kaplinski is not completely accurate in his

reading of Nietzsche's ideas (cf. Nietzsche 1988, 34–35) but his article is compellingly interesting as well as unusual. Today's linguistic research seems to support some of the positions expressed there.

Since the beginning of the new century, philosopher Leo Luks has begun to explore Nietzsche thoroughly and has written several articles about him. His primary focus has been the problem of nihilism in Nietzsche, and how this has been interpreted by Heidegger and Vattimo. In 2004, Luks published a translation of Nietzsche's nihilism fragments in the journal "Akadeemia." Nietzsche has also been an important author in the Philosophy Department of Tartu University—Tõnu Luik, Eduard Parhomenko, and Ülo Matjus have given lecture courses and engaged in relevant research. Their accounts of Nietzsche have been strongly influenced by Heidegger, and thus in several respects they represent the second orientation of Nietzsche reception mentioned at the beginning of this article.

It is appropriate to conclude with a list of those Estonian translations of whole works by Nietzsche that have not yet been mentioned in this article. In 2002, Tiiu Mikenberg published a new translation of *Der Antichrist*, which have subsequently reissued in 2007 and 2010 with thorough corrections and annotations. In 2009, classical philologist Anne Lill's translation of *Die Geburt der Tragödie: Oder: Griechenthum und Pessimismu (Tragöödia süünd. Kreeklus ja pessimism)* was published, which unfortunately contains many distorted passages. However, Lill has furnished her translation with commentary and an afterword, which together provide quite a thorough overview of the philological context of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* and its relations to tragedy in ancient Greece. In the very near future, two of Nietzsche's most debated works will be published in Estonian translation in the "Open Estonian Book" series: Andres Luure's translation of *Zur Genealogie der Moral* and Jaanus Sooväli's translation of *Jenseits von Gut und Böse: Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft*.

Acknowledgements

Translated by Tiina Kirss.

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