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SERIALISED TRANSLATIONS IN THE ESTONIAN NEWSPAPERS IN THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY (1900–1940)

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Summary. *The paper explores the serialised novels and stories in the two leading Estonian daily newspapers, Päevaleht and Postimees, the majority of which were translations. The approach, combining book and translation history, is driven by the two issues debated in the media in 1900–1940: the desire to distance from the dominant German and Russian cultural influences and search for a new orientation; the categories of literature serialised in newspapers including the proportion of popular literature (genres like mystery, thrillers, romance, etc.) and the concern of intellectuals about its growth. The study uses the years 1906–1911 and 1928–1933 as a sample for content analysis of the feuilleton sections of the two newspapers in order to examine the changes in source literatures and the category of literature. The results demonstrate that German literature still dominated the serialised fiction translations at the beginning of the century, although many other literatures were used as sources. In the independent Republic of Estonia, in the 1920s and 1930s, Anglo-*

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American literature occupied the leading position in accordance with the general cultural orientation. Still, German had not become marginal, and the range of other source literatures was quite diverse. The proportion of popular literature, mystery novels, and romance above all, started to increase in Pääwaleht since 1906, becoming dominant in the 1920s and 1930s. Postimees also started to include some mystery and thriller novels in the selection, but in general, remained true to its preference for literary fiction. Thus, the agency of the Editors-in-Chief and editorial boards can be seen in the choice of works. The overall abundance of translated popular fiction in the book market and periodicals caused the protests of writers and educational circles that culminated with the suggestion to introduce a translation tax, which was, however, abandoned.

Keywords: translations, roman-feuilleton, serialised fiction, popular literature, newspapers, Estonia

Serijinės literatūros vertimai Estijos laikraščiuose XX a. pradžioje (1900–1940 m.)

Santrauka. *Straipsnyje nagrinėjami serijiniai romanai ir apsakymai, dalimis publikuoti dviejuose populiariausiuose Estijos dienraščiuose – „Pääwaleht“ ir „Postimees“. Dauguma tiriamų kūrinių ištraukų buvo verčiamos iš kitų kalbų. Knygų ir vertimų istorijos tyrimą lėmė dvi 1900–1940 m. žiniasklaidoje nagrinėtos problemos: noras atsiriboti nuo dominuojančios vokiečių ir rusų kultūros įtakos kartu su naujos orientacijos paieškomis; intelektualų susirūpinimas serijinės literatūros, ypač populiariosios literatūros žanrų (tokių kaip mistika, trileriai, meilės romanai ir kt.) spaudoje išpopuliarėjimu. Siekiant ištirti literatūros šaltinių ir literatūros žanrų pokyčius, turinio analizės tyrimui buvo pasirinkti minėtų dviejų laikraščių 1906–1911 m. ir 1928–1933 m. feljetonų skyriai. Rezultatai rodo, kad vokiečių serialinė grožinė literatūra XX šimtmečio pradžioje vis dar dominavo kaip pasirinkimas versti, nors buvo versta ir kitų šalių literatūra. Nepriklausomos Estijos Respublikos laikotarpiu, trečiajame ir ketvirtajame dešimtmėčiuose, atliepiant bendrą kultūrinę orientaciją tarp vertimų populiariausia buvo anglų ir amerikiečių literatūra. Vis dėlto vokiečių literatūra nebuvo nustumta į paraštes, o ir kitos literatūros spektras buvo gana įvairus. Pastebėta, kad nuo 1906 m. „Pääwaleht“ pradėjo daugėti populiariosios literatūros, mistinių romanų ir visų pirma – meilės romanų – vertimų, o trečiajame ir ketvirtajame*

dešimtmečiuose ši literatūra tapo dominuojanti. „Postimees“ leidėjai taip pat pradėjo rinktis spausdinti kai kuriuos mistikos romanus ir trilerius, tačiau apskritai laikraštis liko ištikimas grožinei literatūrai. Taigi pagal kūrinių pasirinkimą jaučiamas vyriausiųjų redaktorių ir redakcinių kolegijų agentūrų vaidmuo. Bendra verstinės populiariosios grožinės literatūros gausa knygų rinkoje ir periodinėje spaudoje sukėlė rašytojų ir švietimo atstovų protestus, kurie baigėsi siūlymu įvesti vertimo mokesčių, kurio galiausiai vis dėlto buvo atsisakyta.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: vertimai, romanas-feljetonas, serijinė grožinė literatūra, populiarioji literatūra, laikraščiai, Estija.

INTRODUCTION

Publishing and reading of Estonian-language fiction started with translations and adaptations. At first, they were read mostly from periodicals, that were regularly issued in the Estonian language since 1857.¹ The serialised novels (French *roman-feuilleton*) were published in the Estonian-language newspapers since the 1870s–1880s. The feuilleton had originated in French newspapers as a supplement sectioned out from the main news stories at the beginning of the 19th century. The serialisation meant that the text was presented and published in a newspaper or magazine in consecutive instalments. The Baltic German newspapers that were the closest model for the Estonian periodicals used feuilleton since the 1860s.²

When Estonia was part of the Tsarist Russia, it was self-governed by the Baltic-German nobility. These were Baltic-German pastors and Estophile intellectuals who started to translate texts into Estonian. In the middle of the 19th century, the Estonian-language cultural life began to move to the hands of the Estonians. The first generations of Estonian intellectuals were mainly educated in German and familiar primarily with German literature. Hence, the

1 A couple of short-lived newspapers had been issued during the first half of the 19th century: the “Tarto maa rahva Näddali-Leht” in 1806 and “Marahwa Näddala-Leht” in 1821–1823, 1825. ARU, Krista. Eesti ajakirjandus aastatel 1766–1940. In ANNUS, Endel; LOOGVÄLI, Tiina (eds). *Eestikeelne ajakirjandus 1766–1940*. I, A-N. Tallinn: Teaduste Akadeemia Kirjastus, 2002, p. 21, 23.

2 KURVITS, Roosmari. *Eesti ajalehtede välimus 1806–2005*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2010. p. 200–201. (Dissertationes de mediis et communicationibus Universitatis Tartuensis, 10.) ISBN 9789949195152 (pdf) [accessed 15 January 2024]. Access through Internet <<https://dspace.ut.ee/items/5ee95b98-3585-44ac-b756-c531ffb6a871>>.

main source literature of translations during the 1860–1880s was German. Since the 1880s, when the Russification reforms were launched in education and the knowledge of the Russian language expanded, the number of translations of Russian literature also began to grow. According to the Estonian scholar Toivo U. Raun it also created a new cultural pluralism, a Russo-German *Kulturkampf* in the Baltic region that helped to emancipate the Estonians from Baltic German cultural hegemony and encouraged them to look elsewhere for cultural models.³

Over time, the range of source literatures gradually started to become more diverse, but especially the young writers advocated a more decisive break from the univocal foreign influences at the beginning of the 20th century. The literary group Young Estonia, which was established in 1905, expressed their aim in the slogan: “Let us be Estonians, but let us also become Europeans!” In their search for cultural counterbalance to German and Russian dominance, they shifted the attention mainly to Romance literature, and also to Finnish, Scandinavian and Anglo-American literatures.⁴

The construction of Estonian identity and the related issue of cultural orientation continued to be relevant also during the following decades in the independent Republic of Estonia. The aim to move further from the dominant German and Russian impact can be followed in the changes of source literatures during the first four decades of the 20th century. The serialised fiction remained an important component of the daily newspaper at that time, being an important source of reading matter. Thus, it is relevant to examine the appearance of the changes in the cultural orientation on the basis of fiction published in newspapers, using the sample of the two leading newspapers, *Päewaleht* and *Postimees*.

While analysing the composition of the novels and stories serialised in the newspapers *Päewaleht* and *Postimees*, a distinction is made between popular and elite (literary) fiction. The difference between them has been widely discussed in literary criticism, referring mainly to their socio-cultural features. Popular forms of literature have been associated with large readership, the en-

3 RAUN, Toivo U. The Estonian Engagement with Modernity: The Role of Young Estonia in the Diversification of Political and Social Thought. *Tuna = Past: Special Issue on the History of Estonia*, 2009, p. 116.

4 MONTICELLI, Daniele. (Trans)forming national images in translation: The case of the “Young Estonia” movement. In: DOORSLAER, Luc van, FLYNN, Peter, LEERSSEN, Joep (eds.). *Interconnecting Translation Studies and Imagology*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2016, p. 281, 283.

tainment aspects and the lack of complexity.⁵ According to the American researcher Andrew Goldstone, the institutionalisation of popular fiction categories as a system that came to be used by writers, readers, publishers, and libraries since the 1970s, has also led to the use of the term genre fiction to designate certain kinds of fiction like crime stories, romance novels, Westerns, science fiction, etc. Due to the historical association with the pulp magazines, the categorised fiction acquired a lower status.⁶ Jacques Migozzi confirms this in the European context, arguing that popular literature, the printed fictions widely read since the advent of serialised novel, the “irrelevant genres” have systematically been minimized by the cultural canon.⁷

The general economic, social and cultural development of Estonia from the beginning of the 20th century as well as the liberating effect of the revolution of 1905 contributed to the rapid evolvement of the European model of culture in Estonia with the distinction between the level of “popular culture” and “elite culture” that reflected the widening of the spiritual horizons of the intellectuals and the common people.⁸ The emerging Estonian literary criticism also began to distinguish between elite and popular literature using many terms like *pahnakirjandus*, *turukirjandus*, *sopakirjandus* in Estonian to denote inferior consumer-literature and could be translated as literary trash. The journalist and writer August Gailit has written about the history of popular literature in Estonia in 1911, starting it with the sentimental stories (e.g., about Genoveva) in the 1840s, followed by robber and adventure stories, and further moving to detective stories, which were all predominantly translations.⁹ The debate about the abundance of popular literature on the Estonian book market continued in the independent Republic of Estonia during the 1920s–1930s and included the serialised fiction in newspapers. Many authors claimed that at the beginning of the century, in the 1900s–1910s, newspapers had published mainly literary

5 MONTORO, Rocio; MCINTYRE, Dan. Subordination as a potential marker of complexity in serious and popular fiction: a corpus stylistic approach to the testing of literary critical claims. *Corpora*, 2019, vol. 14, issue 3, p. 275–299.

6 GOLDSTONE, Andrew. Origins of the U.S. Genre-Fiction System, 1890–1956. *Book History*, 2023, vol. 26, issue 1, p. 203.

7 MIGOZZI, Jacques. Littérature(s) populaire(s): un objet protéiforme. *HERMÈS, La Revue*, 2005, 2, p. 93–100.

8 JANSEN, Ea. Estonian Culture–European Culture in the Beginning of the 20th Century. In LOIT, Aleksander (ed.). *The Baltic Countries 1900–1914*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1990, p. 324–325. (Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Studia Baltica Stocholmiensia, 5). ISSN 0282-5066.

9 GAILIT, August. Sherlock Holmes: Meie turukirjandusest. *Postimees*, 1911, November 5.

fiction, whereas in the 1920s–1930s, turned to popular fiction and offered only light entertainment.

The aim of the paper is to explore the serialised fiction published in the two leading Estonian-language newspapers in the 1900s–1930s, with a focus on translations in the context of the changing socio-cultural situation. The approach combines book and translation history. The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To identify the source literatures of the serialised translations published in the newspapers *Päewaleht* and *Postimees* during the two studied periods (1906–1911; 1928–1933) and to analyse the changes in the position of different source literatures in both newspapers over time.
- To examine what type of literature (elite (literary) or popular literature) was published in these newspapers during the studied periods and to follow the possible changes in the typological composition.
- To compare the two newspapers to establish the differences between them and to interpret the sources of these possible differences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of literary translations published in periodicals has attracted the attention of researchers from numerous disciplines including media studies, literary studies, cultural studies, book history and translation studies as well as the emergent field of periodical studies. For example, a collection of articles (2019) that stem from literary and cultural studies as well as book history explores the popular serial storytelling as a decisive force reshaping nineteenth-century cultures and societies across Europe and beyond.¹⁰ Many publications combining translations and periodicals have been issued lately in the framework of translation studies. The collection of articles “Literary Translation in Periodicals” discusses the field’s methodologies and perspectives providing numerous case studies on translation in periodicals in different regions.¹¹ The significance and methodological issues of the study of serialised

10 STEIN, Daniel; WIELE, Lisanna (eds.). *Nineteenth-Century Serial Narrative in Transnational Perspective, 1830s–1860s: Popular Culture – Serial Culture*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. 352 p.

11 FOLICA, Laura; ROIG-SANZ, Diana; CARISTIA, Stefania. *Literary Translation in Periodicals. Methodological challenges for a transnational approach*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2020. 401 p.

translation is treated also by Zhen Yuan and Bo Li who propose the application of current analytical frameworks to the newly digitised source material.¹²

The special issue of the journal “Translation & Interpreting Studies” published in 2019 includes articles that engage with various regions and historical periods. The article by Bo Li concentrates on the study of detective stories which made up the majority of serialised translations in Hong-Kong newspaper “The Chinese Mail” in 1904–1908, Émile Gaboriau and Fortuné du Boisgobey being the most popular authors.¹³ Anne O’Connor’s case study of the 19th century Irish periodical “Dublin University Magazine” draws on book history approaches and uses both quantitative as well as qualitative analysis to investigate the impact of the specific publication context on translations, paying attention not merely to canonical texts but also to more ephemeral printed products. The results underline the significance of the material form to the study of transnational communication.¹⁴

From the Baltic countries, the Latvian researcher Andrejs Veisbergs briefly treats the translations in periodicals in his article on Latvian translations at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. Like in Estonia, the Latvian newspapers carried novels in instalments, many of which were translations. Annually two German novels on average were published in book form, but 3–4 in periodicals. Translations in periodicals were frequently abridged to meet layout and space requirements, the translators’ names were often omitted or substituted by pseudonyms, the titles could have been changed beyond recognition.¹⁵

The topic of the article also presupposes the study of the historical background of periodical publishing in Estonia that has been treated mainly in the works by Epp Lauk and Krista Aru. Epp Lauk has analysed the political, institutional and economic development of Estonian periodical press from the beginning of the 20th century till the end of the 1930s.¹⁶ Krista Aru makes an

12 YUAN, Zhen; LI, Bo. The Study of Translation in Periodicals: Past, Present, and Future. *Translation Quarterly*, 2020, 96, p. 55–68.

13 LI, Bo. Serialized literary translation in Hong Kong Chinese newspapers: A case study of The Chinese Mail (1904–1908). *Translation and/in Periodical Publications: Special issue of Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 2019, 14:2, p. 306–324.

14 O’CONNOR, Anne. Translation in nineteenth-century periodicals: Materialities and modalities of communication. *Translation and/in Periodical Publications: Special issue of Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 2019, 14:2, p. 243–264.

15 VEISBERGS, Andrejs. Latvian Translation Scene at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Century. *Vertimo Studijos* 2020, vol. 13, p. 110–127.

16 LAUK, Epp. Eesti ajakirjanduse arenguajooni XX sajandi algusest 1930. aastate lõpuni.

overview of the development of Estonian periodical press in the introduction to the bibliography of Estonian-language periodicals issued in 1766–1940.¹⁷

The newspapers *Päewaleht* and *Postimees* have been discussed in special research works. The book dedicated to the centenary of *Päewaleht* includes chapters about the history of the newspaper in 1905–1940 by Krista Aru.¹⁸ The editorial work in *Päewaleht* in the 1920s–1930s has been studied by Marian Männi using biographical method and the memoirs of the journalist Tõnis Braks.¹⁹ The history of *Postimees* and the activities of its Editor-in-Chief Jaan Tõnisson have been studied in several works by Krista Aru.²⁰ Articles by Enn Lillemets on the translator Marje Pedajas also provide data on her work in *Postimees* during the 1920–1930s where she was responsible for serialised fiction.²¹

A couple of works focus on the study of fiction that was published in newspapers. The Master thesis by Krista Aru analyses the composition of fiction in Estonian-language newspapers in 1896–1907 as well as the discussions on the role of literature published in periodicals.²² Diploma papers by Marika Salu and Maie Alas include a bibliography of serialised fiction published in several Estonian newspapers in 1918–1940 as well as its analysis by genres

In LAUK, Epp; MÄLK, Maret; PALLAS, Anu (eds). *Peatükke Eesti ajakirjanduse ajaloost 1900–1940*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2000, p. 9–42; LAUK, Epp. *Historical and sociological perspectives on the development of Estonian journalism*. Tartu: Tartu University Press, 1997, 178 p. (Dissertationes de mediis et communicationibus Universitatis Tartuensis, 1406-2313; 1). ISBN 9985562410.

- 17 ARU, Krista. Eesti ajakirjandus aastatel 1766–1940..., p. 20–51.
- 18 ARU, Krista; VARE, Tõnu; METS, Margus; HÖBEMÄGI, Priit. "*Päewaleht*" ja tema ajastu. Tallinn: Eesti Päevaleht, 2005. 254 p.
- 19 MÄNNI, Marian. *Ajakirjanikutöö ja selle konteksti kajastusi läbi Tõnis Braksi eluloo 1920.–1930. aastate Eestis : biograafilise meetodi rakendamise katse* : [unpublished Bachelor's work]. Tartu : Tartu Ülikool, 2008. 91 p. [accessed 28 November 2023]. Access through Internet <<https://dspace.ut.ee/items/a5afca51-ddbe-4703-b742-0511ced510c0>>
- 20 ARU, Krista. Üks kirg, kolm mõdet: peatükke eesti toimetajakesksest ajakirjandusest: K. A. Hermann, J. Tõnisson, K. Toom. Tartu : Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumi Teaduskirjastus, 2008. 480 p.; ARU, Krista. Eesti toimetajakeskne ajakirjandus kodanikuühiskonna kujundaja ja omakultuuri kandjana ajalehe *Postimees* (1886–1935) näitel. In UDE, Indrek; VIHALEM, Peeter (eds). *Eesti Akadeemilise Ajakirjanduse Seltsi aastaraamat 2010/2011*. Tartu: Eesti Akadeemiline Ajakirjanduse Selts, 2012, p. 116–127.
- 21 LILLEMETS, Enn. Ühe tõlkijatöö taastamisest: Marje Pedaja elust ja tööst. *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 1979, 6, p. 379–381; LILLEMETS, Enn. Marje Pedajas iseendast. *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 1995, 9, p. 627–633.
- 22 ARU, Krista. *Eesti ajakirjandus ja selle kirjandusosa sajandivahetusel (1896–1907)*: [unpublished Master thesis]. Tartu: Tartu Ülikool, 1992. 311 p.

and authors.²³ Neither of these works studied the newspapers Pæwaleht and Postimees that are treated in the present article.

Roosmarii Kurvits has explored the changes in the visual form of Estonia's major newspapers between 1806 and 1940 looking at the social, economic, cultural, journalistic and technological factors that forced them.²⁴ The work also describes the placement of the instalments of serialised fiction in the newspapers.

Statistical data on literary translations published in Estonia in 1900–1917 and 1918–1940 by source languages can be found in the articles by Aile Möldre.²⁵ These writings provide input for comparisons of book production and periodicals.

METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

Content analysis is used to study the serialised fiction published in the newspapers Pæwaleht and Postimees by source literatures and genres. The observed frequencies are interpreted in context of the socio-economic and cultural trends of the studied periods.

The serialised fiction published in Pæwaleht and Postimees is studied using the sample years 1906–1911 for the beginning of the century and the years 1928–1933 for the Republic of Estonia. These were both periods of relatively stable development prior or after disruptive historical events (the revolution of 1905, the world wars, *coup d'état* of 1934 in Estonia). The serialised fiction published in Pæwaleht and Postimees in 1906–1911 was identified by studying all the issues of the sample years that have been stored in the digital archive

- 23 SALU, Marika. *Aastatel 1918–1940 eestikeelsetes ajalehtedes ilmunud jutulisade bibliograafia*: [unpublished Diploma paper]. Viljandi: Tartu Ülikooli Viljandi Kultuuriakadeemia, 2010. 101 p. [accessed 28 December 2023]. Access through Internet <<https://dspace.ut.ee/items/32b38276-4c6d-4535-a7ff-e84f025daa13>>; ALAS, Maie. *Aastatel 1918–1940 Saaremaa ajalehtedes ilmunud jutulisad*: [unpublished Diploma paper]. Viljandi: Tartu Ülikooli Viljandi Kultuuriakadeemia, 2012. 63 p. [accessed 28 December 2023]. Access through Internet <<https://dspace.ut.ee/items/8800a998-df75-4c18-bed3-c1cf06c2abad>>.
- 24 KURVITS, Roosmarii. *Eesti ajalehede välimus 1806–2005*. Tartu : Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2010. 423 p. (Dissertationes de mediis et communicatThe ionibus Universitatis Tartuensis, 10.) ISBN 9789949195152 (pdf) [accessed 15 January 2024]. Access through Internet <<https://dspace.ut.ee/items/5ee95b98-3585-44ac-b756-c531ffb6a871>>.
- 25 MÖLDRE, Aile. Publications on Literary Translation in Estonia in 1901–1917: An Overview. In: CHALVIN, Antoine; LANGE, Anne; MONTICELLI, Daniele (eds.). *Between Cultures and Texts: Itineraries in Translation History*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011, p. 151–164; MÖLDRE, Aile. Ilukirjanduse tõlked 20. sajandi esimese poole Eesti ja Soome raamatutoodangus (1900–1940). *Methis*, 2012, 9/10, p. 88–101.

DIGAR : Estonian newspapers (<https://dea.digar.ee/?l=en>). The instalments of novels or stories were placed under a demarcation line, “below the line” that enabled to structure the page spatially and in substance.²⁶ Some of the instalments were published as separate supplements, folded between the newspapers. These literary supplements of the newspapers have not been digitized and were studied in the Academic Library of Tallinn University as paper publications. The serial novels published during the years 1928–1933 were identified in the bibliography compiled by Kalev Sikk (2014) that includes both fiction and nonfiction serial stories published in the Estonian-language periodicals in 1918–1944.²⁷

The coding units were the novels and stories that were issued in at least five instalments, one literary work was counted as one unit. The identification of the source literature of a work and its genre was based on the paratext in the newspapers or data collection on the author and the work. The ascertainment of the literary genre also involved browsing and reading of the works. The analysis of the composition of these publications by genres makes a distinction between elite and popular fiction, the latter of which is categorised as romance, science fiction, mystery, thriller, adventure story. The statistical analysis of the dataset enabled to establish the proportions of different source literatures and genres of the serial novels in the studied newspapers.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERIODICAL PUBLISHING IN 1900–1940 AND THE POSITION OF PÄEWALEHT AND POSTIMEES

The number of Estonian-language periodicals started to increase at the end of the 19th century, but the emergence of a mass market took place during the Russian revolution of 1905 that liberated the establishment of new periodicals. It was a period of both ideological and structural diversification and a rapid expansion of the Estonian press. While 48 titles of Estonian-language periodicals were published in 1905, by the end of 1906 their number had increased to 100 titles.²⁸ During the second half of the 19th century the

26 In Estonian the serialised stories published as *feuilletons* are often called “*joonealune*” that means published below the line

27 SIKK, Kalev. *Eesti perioodikas ilmunud järjejuttude bibliograafia 1918–1944*. Vana-Saaluse: L. Sikk, 2014. 258 p.

28 ARU, Krista. *Eesti ajakirjandus aastatel 1766–1940*, p. 38; LAUK, Epp. *Historical and sociological perspectives*, p. 24.

Estonian-language press had been influential and important in the cultural sphere and nation-building process, functioning as a vehicle of broadening the mental horizon of people, as a teacher and enlightener of the society. Its role as a mediator of news and shaper of public opinion strengthened since the end of the 19th century, and during the Revolution of 1905 the press also became a political factor. The following decades led to the distinction between entertaining and political press.²⁹

The growing number of periodicals quickly led to the competition between publishers for readers' attention. As companies with larger capital stock have an advantage in the competitive struggle, individual publishers were soon replaced with publishing companies issuing multiple newspapers and magazines. The first of them was the Tallinn Estonian Publishing Company (Tallinna Eesti Kirjastus-Ühisus) that was established in 1908 and developed into the largest periodical publisher active until 1940. The company bought the newspaper *Päewaleht* (Daily Newspaper) established in 1905 by Andres Pert and turned it into the leading daily paper in the northern part of Estonia. The paper was not affiliated to any political party and offered balanced and objective information.³⁰ *Päewaleht* achieved a significant print run of 7500–8000 copies in 1910, becoming the daily paper with the largest circulation before the World War I.³¹ It preserved this position also in the independent Republic of Estonia after 1918 with the circulation 40 000–50 000 copies.³² The long-time responsible editor and Editor-in-Chief (1908–1934) of the paper was Georg Eduard Luiga (1866–1936), a journalist and writer who made a notable contribution to the development of *Päewaleht*.³³

The other newspaper under study, *Postimees* (Postman) had been established in 1886 in Tartu.³⁴ Since 1911 it was published by the publishing company with the same name, that was the largest periodical publisher in Southern Estonia.³⁵ The Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper *Postimees* in 1896–1935 was Jaan Tõnisson (1868–?), a statesman and politician. The newspaper was the organ of the political parties established and led by him, starting with the Estonian

29 ARU, Krista. *Eesti ajakirjandus aastatel 1766–1940...*, p. 50–51.

30 ARU, Krista. *Eesti ajakirjandus aastatel 1766–1940...*, p. 40.

31 LAUK, Epp. *Eesti ajakirjanduse arenguajooni...*, p. 14.

32 ARU, Krista. *Eesti ajakirjandus aastatel 1766–1940...*, p. 49.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 40.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

35 LAUK, Epp. *Eesti ajakirjanduse arenguajooni...*, p. 15.

Progressive National Democratic Party (Eesti Rahvameelne Eduerakond), the very first political party in Estonia established in 1905 that has been characterised as moderate and liberal.³⁶ Its circulation was around 12 000–13 000 copies in the end of the 1920s.³⁷

By the 1910s–1920s newspapers had become an everyday commodity, they were relatively cheap and affordable. For example, in 1910 the annual subscription of *Postimees* cost 5 roubles and 50 kopecks and that of *Päewaleht* 6 roubles (including postage). The single issue of *Postimees* cost 3 kopecks and of *Päewaleht* 4 kopecks. At the same time fiction book prices ranged from 10 kopecks to 1 rouble 50 kopecks.³⁸ The family of a factory worker would have been able to spend about 5% of their annual earnings, that is 16 roubles on cultural and educational activities, so it was, in principle, possible to afford a newspaper subscription or at least to buy its editions occasionally.³⁹

In the end of the 1920s to the beginning of the 1930s an issue of *Päewaleht* cost 6 cents and that of *Postimees* 5 cents. The annual subscription of *Päewaleht* cost 14 Kroons and 50 cents, the price for subscribing *Postimees* was 14 Kroons (all prices including postage). A 300-page hardcover fiction book could cost over 5 Kroons, but in average the prices were around one to two kroons, while a short paperback could cost only 25 cents. Translations tended to be cheaper than works by Estonian authors. According to the budget survey among industrial workers from 1939, one per cent of the monthly income or 1 Kroon and 17 cents was spent on books and periodicals.⁴⁰

As the prices of different newspapers were more or less the same, they competed for readers with various supplements, almanacs and books that were attached to the paper free of charge or for a small price. A very important role belonged also to serialised fiction that was published in the main edition of the newspaper. The Editor-in-Chief of *Postimees* Jaan Tõnisson explicitly spoke about the role of newspapers in the promotion of reading belles-lettres. The

36 Ibid., p. 23.

37 ARU, Krista. Üks kirg, kolm mõõdet..., p. 240.

38 According to the data on prices in the national bibliography *Eestikeelne raamat 1901–1907*, 1.–2. Tallinn: Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia, 1993.

39 PIHLAMÄGI, Maie. On the Conditions of the Estonian Working Class at the Beginning of the 20th century. In LOIT, Aleksander (ed.). *The Baltic Countries 1900–1914*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1990, p. 303. (Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Studia Baltica Stocholmiensia, 5).

40 VESKIMÄGI, Kaljo-Olev. *Kabte kappi on ühhetassa majas tarvis: leivakappi ja ramatokappi: Eesti raamatukogude ajalugu*. Tallinn: K.-O. Veskimägi, 2000, p. 381.

aim of the cultural programme of Postimees was to educate people, to promote national self-consciousness as well as moral values. Fiction and poetry published in the newspaper was supposed to broaden the horizon and improve the character of its readers.⁴¹

In addition to fulfilling a cultural mission, serialised novels also contributed to the commercial success of newspapers. They were useful for the publishers in many ways – readers would buy the paper every day to read the new instalment, thus being instrumental for enhancing customer loyalty and increasing profitability. Publisher could use the type set up two times – in the newspaper as well as for issuing the same text as a book.⁴² This kind of practice was common, for example, in Päewaleht in 1911–1914.

Serialised fiction was very popular among readers, the novels cut out of newspapers and bound together were the core of many family libraries, especially in the countryside at the end of the 19th and in the beginning of the 20th century.⁴³ According to memoirs readers were very dissatisfied when a novel instalment was omitted from the issue. For example, when it happened in Päewaleht due to lack of space during the 1930s, numerous readers threatened to cancel their subscriptions.⁴⁴

Readers also strongly preferred novels or longer stories to short stories. Voldemar Mettus, a journalist and theatre critic who worked both in Postimees and Päewaleht in the 1930s has recalled that it was not always possible to start publishing a new serialised novel immediately after the previous one had come to an end (in Päewaleht). In that case a short story was published in the next issue to fill the space. Since its second instalment, no matter how good the short story was, the number of copies sold fell up to 500 per day. Voldemar Mettus has written: “It might have been possible to deceive the readers for a couple of days when they did not notice that it was only a short story, but the absence of the word “novel” aroused suspicion in many men and women. It turned out that for many newspaper readers the novel was the most important reading material.”⁴⁵

41 ARU, Krista. Üks kirg, kolm mõõdet..., p. 123.

42 KURVITS, Roosmarii. *Eesti ajalehtede välimus 1806–2005*, p. 200–201.

43 LIIVAKU, Uno. *Eesti raamatu lugu*. Tallinn: Monokkel, 1995, p. 95.

44 ARU, Krista; VARE, Tõnu; METS, Margus; HÖBEMÄGI, Priit. “Päewaleht” ja tema ajastu..., p. 105–106.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 106.

THE SERIALISED FICTION IN PÄEWALEHT AND POSTIMEES BY SOURCE LITERATURES

The serialised fiction published in Estonian-language newspapers consisted mainly of translations and Pääwaleht and Postimees were no exception. First of all, Pääwaleht published more than two times as many novels and longer stories than Postimees in 1906–1911, giving fiction considerably more space than Postimees (Table 1). In Pääwaleht, the serialised novel was partly published in the main issue of the newspaper (typically below the line on pages 3 and 4), but partly in a separate four-page literary supplement that was folded between the newspaper. In Postimees the instalment of the novel was typically below the line on the first page.

As could be expected, both newspapers translated the largest number of novels and stories from German literature in 1906–1911. Pääwaleht was strongly oriented on the German-language (German and Austrian) literature, but published also a notable number of titles from English and French literatures. The number of translations from Russian in Pääwaleht was limited to only two stories. The total number of source literatures reached 13.

Postimees published more translations of Russian novels and stories, although it had expressed anti-Russian views in its editorials during the revolution of 1905. The works selected for translation corresponded to the aesthetic and political views of the editorial board, for example, the story “Blood Stain” by Mikhail Artsybashev, depicting the violence of the revolution.

However, the Estonian scholar Toivo U. Raun has noted that modernisation fostered cultural exchange not only with Western Europe but also inside the Russian Empire.⁴⁶ One of the leaders of Young Estonia movement, Friedebert Tuglas, claimed that its members treated the Russian literary modernism as a similar process of “Europeanisation” that was taking place in Estonian literature in the 1900s and 1910s.⁴⁷ Young Estonia gave preference to Russian symbolist writers, but only a few translations of their works were published at the beginning of the century.

Postimees paid more attention to Finnish authors, published Swedish, Latvian and South-African literature as well as introduced modern American writers like Upton Sinclair. The translations published in both newspapers include a notably

⁴⁶ RAUN, Toivo U. *The Estonian Engagement with Modernity...*, p. 116.

⁴⁷ PILD, Lea. Kõsimus “vene mõjust” Friedebert Tuglase artiklis “Valeri Brjussov”. *Methis: Special Issue on Noor-Eesti (Young Estonia)*, 2008, vol. 1, no 1–2, p. 183.

wider range of source literatures than German and Russian expanding the selection, above all, with English, American, Finnish and Scandinavian authors. A rather long list of countries was represented with one or two writers.

The paratextual information about the translations published in the newspapers at the beginning of the 20th century was minimal – the source languages and literatures were rarely presented, the name of the translator could be missing altogether (especially in *Päewaleht*) or indicated by a pseudonym. The translator's full name was presented more often in *Postimees*. Although translating from the original language was already valued, there was a discrepancy between the norms and practice, and compliance with such a requirement was not yet widespread.⁴⁸ German and Russian were typically used as intermediate languages for translations from, for example, English and French during this period that could also have had an impact on the selection of works. However, direct translations were made from Finnish and Latvian; Swedish and Danish were also explicitly mentioned as source languages in several occasions.

The construction of Estonian identity and the related issue of cultural orientation continued to be relevant also during the following decades in the independent Republic of Estonia in 1918–1940. For the first time it became possible to freely choose the cultural models and connections. The surveys conducted among intellectuals and public figures in the 1930s demonstrate that a particular danger was seen in falling under the influence of one foreign culture, respondents spoke for pluralism of cultural policy. To neutralise the German and Russian dominant, the intelligentsia favoured English and French orientation.⁴⁹ Thus the main direction was similar to the aspirations of Young Estonia movement at the beginning of the century.

The attitude towards German culture was often negative and the historical bond with the German cultural space largely ignored.⁵⁰ This also manifested itself in the position of German among the source literatures of literary translations, including in periodicals in 1918–1940. In *Päewaleht* the total number of translated serialised novels and stories published during these years was similar to their amount in 1906–1911 (Table 1). The largest number of translations in *Päewaleht* in 1928–1933 were made from English literature (36.5% of

48 SÜTISTE, Elin. “Hea tõlke” konstrueerimine tõlkekriitikas (ajakirjas Eesti Kirjandus aastail 1906–1922 avaldatud tõlkearvustuste põhjal). In: VEIDEMANN, Rein; KIRME, Maris (eds.). *Kriitika diskursus: minevik ja tänapäev*. Tallinn: Tallinna Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2008, p. 95–136.

49 KARJAHÄRM, Toomas; SIRK, Väino. *Vaim ja võim*, p. 349–350.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 350.

all translations), followed by the translations of American (15%) and German authors (12%). Thus the English and German literatures had changed positions compared to the beginning of the century.

TABLE 1. The Source Literatures of Serialised Novels and Stories in Päevaleht and Postimees in 1906–1911 and 1928–1933

Source literatures	Päevaleht		Postimees	
	1906–1911	1928–1933	1906–1911	1928–1933
German	26 (38%)	8 (12%)	7 (26%)	9 (22.5%)
English	7 (10%)	25 (36.5%)	2 (8%)	8 (20%)
American	4 (6%)	10 (15%)	2 (8%)	7 (17.5%)
French	7 (10%)	1 (1.5%)	1 (4%)	1 (2.5%)
Russian	2 (3%)	1 (1.5%)	5 (19%)	1 (2.5%)
Norwegian	4 (6%)	4 (6%)		5 (12.5%)
Austrian	6 (9%)	1 (1.5%)		3 (7.5%)
Finnish	1 (1.5%)	1 (1.5%)	4 (15%)	
Danish	1 (1.5%)		1 (4%)	1 (2.5%)
Swedish		3 (4%)	2 (8%)	
Hungarian	2 (3%)	2 (3%)		
Polish	2 (3%)	1 (1.5%)		
South-African		1 (1.5%)	1 (4%)	
Latvian			1 (4%)	1 (2.5%)
Italian		2 (3%)		
Spanish	1 (1.5%)			
Icelandic	1 (1.5%)			
Canadian		1 (1.5%)		
Welsh		1 (1.5%)		
Scottish		1 (1.5%)		
Australian				1 (2.5%)
Irish				1 (2.5%)
Romanian				1 (2.5%)
Swiss				1 (2.5%)
Unknown	4 (6%)	5 (7.5%)		
Translations: in all	68 (100%)	68 (100%)	26 (100%)	40 (100%)
Estonian	1	5	7	8

Table 1 demonstrates the sustained interest in Nordic as well as in Hungarian and Polish literatures although they are represented with a much smaller number of translations. Pääwaleht introduced novels and stories by Italian, South-African, Welsh and Canadian authors thus widening the geographical reach of its literary translations with new countries.

In Postimees, the total number of translated novels and stories was higher (40 titles) than at the beginning of the century (26 titles). Translations from German (22.5%), English (20%) and American (17.5%) literatures were represented with the largest proportion. Beside the attention to Scandinavian, primarily Norwegian literature that was widely popular at that time, Postimees offered a varied selection of literatures including Australian, Romanian, Irish and Swiss authors.

The study of the hierarchy of source literatures of serialised fiction in both newspapers demonstrates the rise of translations of Anglo-American literature. In Pääwaleht translations from English and American literatures make up a half of all translations and in Postimees more than a third. The statistical data shows that the turn from German to English orientation can be observed also in the sample newspapers. The variety of source literatures was rather large in both newspapers. Still, their representation was disproportionate and many literatures were represented by one or two works.

TYPES OF LITERATURE IN THE SERIALISED FICTION OF PÄEVALEHT AND POSTIMEES

The list of serialised novels published in Postimees in 1906–1911 includes many works that were translated into Estonian quickly after the publication of the original. For example, the translation of the most famous novel by Finnish author Johannes Linnankoski “The Song of the Blood-Red Flower” (1905), was published in Postimees already in 1906. The translation of the best-known novel by Ilmari Kianto “The Red Line” (1909) was published in Postimees in 1910. The translations of the novels by Upton Sinclair “The Jungle” (1906) and “The Money Changers” (1908) were also published very soon after the original. Postimees published translations of Leo Tolstoi, Dmitry Merezhkovsky, Charles Dickens, August Strindberg and Selma Lagerlöf as well as of many authors who had been popular at the beginning of the century (Paul Keller, Otto Ernst, Klara Viebig, Gustav Wied).

The selection of serialised novels in Postimees demonstrates that the newspaper clearly offered its readers literary fiction that corresponded to its educa-

tional programme. Päewaleht also published it, but included some light reading matter as well. The selection of authors in the two newspapers was different with the exception of Upton Sinclair and Johannes Linnankoski. Sinclair's novella "A Captain of Industry" (1906) was published in Päewaleht in 1907. His works that propagated social reforms could be attractive to readers who had simultaneously experienced the revolution of 1905. Päewaleht published translations of many outstanding authors like Jonas Lie, Knut Hamsun, Gestur Pálsson, Mór Jókai, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Edgar Allan Poe who were already known to Estonian readers. There were numerous translations of authors and works that were popular at that time but have since been forgotten (e.g., Xavier de Montepin, Luise Westkirch, Hugo Rosenthal-Bonin, Balduin Möllhausen).

About a fifth of the translations were historical novels which continued to interest readers since the end of the 19th century. About 25% of all the translations could be characterised as popular literature, including different genres – adventure stories, romance as well as mystery novels and thrillers (e.g., by Stein Riverton, Reinhold Ortmann, Karl Emil Franzos). It was during the first decade of the 20th century, especially since 1905–1906, that several Estonian-language newspapers began to publish mystery novels that earlier had been rare.

By the 1860s, many European publishing houses published translations of British and French crime fiction and during the following decades they arrived also to other parts of the world. The wave of mystery novels swept also through the whole Tsarist Russia.⁵¹ From the German editions they arrived in Estonia to be published in books and periodicals.⁵² It has been said that detective fiction is a narrative that considers necessary the existence of a modern society, and its main attractive point is to entertain all types of readers.⁵³ In the stories based in Europe, especially by the most prominent writer of detective stories Arthur Conan Doyle, investigation was treated as a scientific enquiry where reason, logic and rationality took precedence and thus, readers were attracted to mystery narratives that engaged their minds.⁵⁴

51 E. W. Trükiasjanduse seisukord Venemaal ja Eestis. *Tallinna Teataja*, 1912, 26 July.

52 PEEP, Harald. *Kolm laipa, kõik surnud, ehk, Kriminaalne kirjandusmaastik*. Tartu: Ilmamaa, 1996, p. 12.

53 ISAMI, Romero. Imperialism, Modernity, and Literature: Why Detective Fiction Did Not Become Popular in Early 20th Century Mexico. *Keio Communication Review*, 2015, vol. 37, no. 3, p. 55.

54 SRINIVASAN, Shrija; SHEKHAWAT, Sushila; BHATTACHARYA, Somdatta. Mapping the Evolution of Crime Fiction as a Genre: Eighteenth Century to the Contemporary Times.

This trend was discussed in many Estonian newspapers. Recognising the importance of translated literature in educating the readers, the authors typically accused the light reading matter, characterised as “literary trash” and “Pinkertons” of harming readers and degrading their literary taste. The writer August Gailit even argues that it was better not to read at all – nonreaders were naïve fools whereas the readers of literary trash (e.g., stories about Sherlock Holmes by Arthur Conan Doyle) have low instincts.⁵⁵ The journalist Eduard Laamann advocated the total exclusion of serialised novels from newspapers because they were unable to offer good stories. However, Laamann and others recognised the efforts of *Postimees* to publish fiction of literary value.⁵⁶ Thus, in this period, *Postimees* started to distinguish itself from other newspapers with its attention to the quality of works selected for serialisation.

By the end of the 1920s to beginning of 1930s the situation had changed and popular fiction had become predominant in the newspapers. The serialised novels and stories published in *Päewaleht* in 1928–1933 mostly belonged to popular fiction (84% of all translations) – mystery novels and thrillers (54%) as well as romance (15%), adventure and sci-fi novels. Most of the works published as *feuilletons* in *Päewaleht* were by contemporary authors and translated rather quickly after their first edition. On the whole, the range of authors was wide and few of them were represented with more than one work in the sample under study. Among them were, for example, Sven Elvestad (Stein Riverton), E. Phillips Oppenheim, Joseph Smith Fletcher, Agatha Christie, Philip MacDonald and Victor Bridges – all writers of mystery novels and thrillers. Interest in historical novels had faded, but some works were published, for example, the novel “Tsushima” by the Soviet Russian writer Aleksey Novikov-Priboy. The novel about the Russo-Japanese War in 1904–1905 could attract Estonian readers as Estonians had taken part in the war as soldiers of the Tsarist Russian army. The editorial introduction to the second part of the novel especially draws attention to the death scene of an Estonian sailor included in the novel.⁵⁷

Postimees had also started to give more space to light entertainment which accounted for a half of all translations. The majority of these novels and stories were mystery novels by authors like Zane Grey, Fred Andreas, Marie Belloc

Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities, 2020, vol.12, no. 6, p. 6.

55 GAILIT, August. Sherlock Holmes: Meie turukirjandusest.

56 J. S. Tartu teated. Noor-Eesti kirjanduslised koosolekud. *Postimees*, 1914, 18 February.

57 *Päewalehe* toimetus. Sissejuhatus romaanile “Tsusima merelahingus”. *Päewaleht*, 1933, 13 May.

Lowndes, Arnold Bennett, Katrin Holland, etc. Although the most popular mystery writers of the time were published by both newspapers (e.g., E. Phillips Oppenheim, Edgar Wallace), the selections of Pääwaleht and Postimees differed, the latter being somewhat more oriented on more demanding psychological thrillers. Thus the Golden Age of crime fiction, generally defined as the period between the 1920s and 1930s, characterised by the massive popularity of mystery fiction, had also reached Estonia.

However, Postimees, headed by Jaan Tõnisson still remained true to its programme of cultural development and continued to issue also literary fiction (Sigrid Undset, Panait Istrati, Janis Akuraters, Lion Feuchtwanger, John Galsworthy, Johan Bojer, etc). Several authors were first introduced to Estonian readers in Postimees, for example, Lion Feuchtwanger whose novel “Jud Süß” was published in 1929. It was translated by Marje Pedajas whom Postimees had employed as a translator in 1922. Her main task was to select and translate fiction for publishing “below the line.” According to her memoirs, the selection took into account the readers’ taste and offered thrilling stories, but at the same time she tried to show them that literary fiction could also be interesting and engaging. Pedajas was able to translate from German, French, English, Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish.⁵⁸ Thus her extensive language skills and knowledge of literature contributed to the balanced list of translations.

In the beginning of the 1930s Estonian literary and educational circles launched a fierce campaign against the translations of popular literature, mystery stories above all. They accused publishers in flooding the book market with translated literary trash that resulted in the readers losing interest in the Estonian literature. Translations, often cheaper than works by Estonian writers were more affordable to buyers. The Estonian authors complained about limited opportunities for publication and insufficient income. The critique of the readers’ poor literary taste was accompanied with the criticism of the government’s inaction to improve it.⁵⁹ Special attention was paid to translations in the newspapers. According to the Estonian poet Henrik Visnapuu the serialised novels in Estonian periodicals were at best translated from average-level

58 LILLEMETS, Enn. Ühe tõlkijatöö taastamisest, p. 379–381. Pedajas also started to translate from Russian after 1940.

59 RAMLER, Gristel. *Eesti Haridusministeeriumi Kooliraamatute Komisjoni, Raamatukogude Komisjoni ja Lavateoste Alamkomisjoni loomise põhjustest, tegevusest ja mõjust kirjastusturule 1918–1940*: [unpublished Master thesis]. Tartu: Tartu Ülikool, 2010, p. 6. [accessed 15 January 2024]. Access through Internet <<https://dspace.ut.ee/items/66d94b65-569f-4ba3-b688-6456f6d66889>>.

light fiction, but mainly offered cheap “criminal-exotic-adventurous” stories.⁶⁰ He was seconded by the renowned Estonian writer Johannes Semper who argued that quality fiction available in periodicals at the beginning of the century had been replaced with “Anglo-Saxon weed.”⁶¹

Indeed, English-language countries had occupied the first place in hierarchy of source literatures and at least Pääwaleht published mostly popular fiction. The dominant position of light reading is further illustrated by the research on nine newspapers issued in 1918–1940 by Marika Salu that identified the majority of serialised fiction as mystery, adventure, thrillers and romance novels.⁶² However, the turn towards popular genres had started in the newspapers already during the 1900s.

The Editor-in-Chief of Pääwaleht Georg Eduard Luiga was one of the few who defended popular literature: “Why should a person search entertainment in a pub or café or play cards, why cannot one read entertaining literature?” He emphasised everyone’s freedom of choice and independence in deciding what and when to read.⁶³ Luiga personally selected works for translation for Pääwaleht, favouring light novels that could attract readers.⁶⁴ He explained the specific features of a story suitable for a newspaper – it cannot require deep reading and concentration as the text is read in short instalments and in random places like sitting in a tram or train, standing or walking. Every instalment has to be exciting to keep the readers interested.⁶⁵

Still, the campaign against translated popular fiction continued and peaked with the plan to tax publishers for translations which they published either as books or serialised in newspapers in the middle of 1930s. Exception was planned for translations that were included in the recommendation lists for libraries, supposed to include valuable literary fiction. The sums received from the tax were intended for the promotion of national writers and translation of the best works of world literature. The measure would increase the prices of translations. In addition, the bill introduced for debate in 1935 stipulated that 50% of fiction published in periodicals must come from Estonian authors.⁶⁶

60 VISNAPUU, Henrik. Kirjanduslikest konventsioonest välisriikidega. *Agu*, 1924, 39, p. 1305.

61 J. S. [= Johannes Semper]. Eesti nädal ja eesti tõlkekirjandus. *Looming*, 1934, 6, p. 708.

62 SALU, Marika. *Aastatel 1918–1940 eestikeelsetes ajalehtedes...*, p. 6.

63 LUIGA, Georg Eduard. Kultuuri toll. *Agu*, 1924, 40, p. 1337–1338.

64 MÄNNI, Marian. *Ajakirjanikutöö ja selle konteksti kajastusi...*, p. 34.

65 LUIGA, Georg Eduard. Kultuuri toll..., p. 1337.

66 Tõlketoodete maks kuni 200 kr. raamatult. *Pääwaleht*, 1935, 1 June.

This requirement seriously worried periodical publishers who doubted whether there were enough works by Estonian writers suitable for serialisation. It would lead to the decrease of serialised novels published in newspapers and the drop in demand.

The following discussions came to a conclusion that it was not possible to establish objective criteria for distinguishing between literary fiction and light literature and the unreasoned promotion of Estonian authors could lead to the advancement of local low-quality literature. In that case the aim to offer readers more valuable works would remain unachieved. Thus the bill was abandoned.⁶⁷ Freedom to choose the texts for publishing in newspapers was preserved. The state policy striving to develop the readers' literary taste was carried out primarily through the acquisition policy of public and school libraries who had to acquire books from the recommendation lists compiled by the Ministry of Education.⁶⁸

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the serialised fiction in the newspapers *Päewaleht* and *Postimees* in 1906–1911 demonstrated the dominant position of translations of the German literature whereas translations from Russian were few. Previous research by Krista Aru established that from 1905 to 1907 the translations of novels and stories by Russian authors decreased in all Estonian-language newspapers while the translations of Finnish, Scandinavian, English, and American authors increased.⁶⁹ This change has been explained by wider knowledge of the Russian language among Estonians due to the Russification of the schools at the end of the 19th century, which reduced the need for translations. The emerging Estonian bourgeoisie and intelligentsia were also nationally oriented and resisted the Russian revolutionary spirit.

At the same time, translations of Russian authors retained their position in the book production, whereas the focus shifted from classics to contemporary authors. The translations of German (35%) and Russian (15%) literature accounted for a half of all the translated belles-lettres books in 1901–1917; the other half included translations from 17 literatures, above all from English,

67 Tõlketoodete maksustamise poolt ja vastu. *Postimees*, 1935, 5 June.

68 RAMLER, Gristel. *Eesti Haridusministeeriumi*, p. 74.

69 ARU, Krista. *Eesti ajakirjandus ja selle kirjandusosa...*, p. 119.

French, Finnish and Scandinavian literatures.⁷⁰ Thus the composition of source languages of serialised novels in the newspapers and in the book production was rather similar, the main difference being the representation of Russian authors. The example of Pääwaleht and Postimees emphasises the role of the editorial boards of the newspapers who selected fiction based on their literary preferences.

Due to the similar historical and cultural development, the changes that took place in the literary polysystem at the beginning of the 20th century in Latvia were analogous to Estonia including a lower, although still the largest, proportion of translations from German, more Russian translations, and an interest in other languages.⁷¹ The rapid growth of Estonian translations in Latvia was matched by numerous books (20 titles) translated from Latvian in Estonia (although Latvian literature is almost absent from the sample newspapers).

The translation statistics of the Republic of Estonia in 1918–1940 shows the desired break from the German cultural dominance. Translations from English outnumbered translations from German in Pääwaleht and Postimees, as well as in the newspapers studied by Marika Salu.⁷² The statistical data on book production from the years 1918–1940 confirm this trend: literary translations from English slightly exceed translations from German, followed by translation of French, Russian, and Finnish literatures.

Similar to the beginning of the century, the position of translations from Russian literature is the main difference between the source literatures of translations published as serialised fiction in newspapers and as separate books. While numerous works by Russian authors were published as books, in newspapers their role was rather marginal. A large proportion of book translations from Russian in the 1900s–1920s were plays (not suitable for newspapers); during the 1930s, the interest turned to classical authors. The (contemporary) Russian literature lacked the mystery novels that were mainly sought for serialisation.

These genres – mystery and romance – did not yet dominate the serialised fiction in the newspapers at the beginning of the century, but during the years 1918–1940, they had become the leading genres in most newspapers. Pääwaleht and Postimees clearly gave preference to mystery, although

70 MÖLDRE, Aile. *Publications of Literary Translation...*, p. 156.

71 VEISBERGS, Andrejs. *Latvian Translation Scene...*, p. 115.

72 SALU, Marika. *Aastatel 1918–1940 eestikeelsetes ajalehtedes ilmunud jutulisade bibliograafia...*, p. 95

Päewaleht published also some romance novels in 1918–1940. The change had, however, started already at the beginning of the century, along with the development of the press market. Still, *Postimees* preserved a notable proportion of literary fiction also in the 1920s–1930s that highlights the issue of agency. The Editor-in-Chief, Jaan Tõnisson, stood for a culturally enlightening newspaper and shaped its content accordingly. The attention to the promotion of national culture was expressed in the serialisation of several works by Estonian authors that were rare in *Päewaleht*. The Editor-in-Chief of *Päewaleht*, Georg Eduard Luiga, overtly favoured popular literature, considering light reading matter best suited for newspaper *feuilletons*. Attractive novels and stories obviously contributed to the wide distribution and economic success of *Päewaleht*. The difference between the newspapers illustrates the distinction between entertaining and political press made by K. Aru. She argues that the political newspapers did not commercialise, because the message was more important than business.⁷³ *Postimees* as an organ of the party led by Jaan Tõnisson, preserved its cultural mission.

A lot of translated books also included popular literature, especially the translations from English. According to Anne Lange's study, the most frequent form of English literature in the 1920s–1930s was a 192-page light novel.⁷⁴ At the same time, the publishing scene had developed and diversified, bringing to the Estonian book market a wide variety of translations, including outstanding works of literary fiction. The Estonian intellectuals criticised publishers for issuing the books "degrading the readers' taste" consistently since the end of the 19th century. Legal action against popular literature translations was attempted in the mid-1930s with a bill that, among other things, ignored the specificity of fiction publishing in newspapers.

Disparagement of the popular genres and their readers is, of course, characteristic not only to Estonian intellectuals. According to Jacques Migozzi, the attitude "bad genres make bad readers" has been widespread. He has argued that the roots of this downgrading lie in socio-historical, political, ideological, ecclesiastical, or educational reasons, aesthetics being only a screen.⁷⁵ The Estonian writers who initiated the taxing of translations proclaimed the higher cultural level of people as their aim. Their alleged aesthetic and educational reasons cannot be entirely questioned, the first four decades of the 20th century being the

73 ARU, K. *Eesti ajakirjandus aastatel 1766–1940...*, p. 51.

74 LANGE, Anne. *Otse predestineerit...*, p. 152.

75 MIGOZZI, Jacques. *Littérature(s) populaire(s)...*, p. 97.

time of ongoing promotion of the Estonian identity as well as integration into the best of the European culture. But the endeavour also involved the economic interests of authors.

To sum up, the changes of source literatures of serialised translations in the newspapers *Päewaleht* and *Postimees* in 1900–1940 follow the turn from the German dominance to the preference of English-language authors that was in accordance with corresponding changes in the book market. The one-sided German and Russian orientation was overcome also in theatre and art, the cultural ties with Western- and Eastern-European, Nordic countries and especially Finland gradually strengthened. During the years of independence in 1918–1940 Estonia had culturally integrated into Europe, absorbing its influences and trends.

In parallel with the growing role of English as a source language, newspapers started to publish more popular fiction in their feuilleton sections. Due to growing competition between newspapers, it became vital to win readers with attractive content that favoured translations of popular genres like mystery stories. Still, the selection of fiction in a particular newspaper depended also on the programme of the Editor-in-Chief, as can be seen in *Postimees*, where at least a half of serialised novels represented literary fiction.

The future research should focus on the history of reading which has been very little studied in Estonia, and look at the general changes in reading habits, gender differences in reading, the position of periodicals and books in the reading matter as well as the readers' attitude towards Estonian and foreign works.

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