



THE POWER OF NOSTALGIA

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WHO OWNS MY SUBJECTIVITY'?

Last autumn I participated in the conference “Communist Nostalgia” in the University of Glasgow, where, during public discussion, an American lady made a remark like this:

“It would be really bizarre if East Europeans would be nostalgic like us, for the late 80s and early 90s, I mean grunge music, Kurt Cobain, etc. It would be really, really bizarre!”.

I felt personally touched, as precisely this era and these keywords played important role in formation of my subjectivity. Nostalgia is rather temporal than spatial kind of longing. Space might denote and embody time, but territory and ownership might come along with it and claim their part of time. For sure, the centres of alternative culture of the 90s are the States and Western Europe. But the development of mass media separated culture from land and made it flow through cables and air. The total sense of culture and its intensive noise in the middle of no man’s land appeared as power of nature. They seemed like inexhaustible natural resources, open for anyone, as in socialism there was no property in nature – there was nothing, but tribal order and ancient rules. Piracy played the great role in distributing Western mass culture and this created an interesting link between the East and the West – from one hand, piracy was same natural as hunting, while from the other hand it was theft. For sure, the outbreak of self-organized piracy was the greatest marketing strategy. Maybe this is the reason, why the culture of the 90s has such a natural taste of life – as we all were personally engaged with global culture. But this engagement was followed by the usual process of alienation that is based on the fact that the materials and means of production are owned by someone else. Already in the era of piracy it was clear that “the original” is more authentic than “the copy”. The original always seemed to carry the scent of the real – something that existed in the distance, far away from our East European hell. Live concerts that were supposed to be the climax of authenticity always had intoxicating and traumatic effect. Standing by “the source of your identity” as one of the millions lost in the crowd can destroy the magic and glory of singularity. Measuring and distributing the right doses of attachment is what mass culture is about. Especially in Eastern Europe, where the notion of “foreign”

was quite lately understood as “extraterrestrial”. Mass culture embodied the geopolitical turn and empowered itself through everlasting contemporaneity – the era, where ideology and history had ceased to exist. A new subjectivity started to sprout everywhere – millions of people with identical desires, millions of new global citizens had emerged. For them globality started from the first border control between the East and the West.

I was one of such subjectivities. To me the 90s meant teenage – the most receptive age of being open to ideology. Music defined my relation with the world outside. Music was like a protective layer that saved me from the brutal reality that I could never identify with. I lived deep inside of my imagination, as teenagers often do. My long hair made me withstand constant harassments that came from everywhere, except my family and few friends. I spent a lot of time watching MTV and playing Nirvana songs on guitar. I used to daydream of Seattle – I imagined the Annelinn block houses into Seattle skyline. For long years I used to fill empty copybooks with my quick and restless drawings – always about my two imagined characters living their lives. One of them was a bearded musician with long hair, grey face and cigarette constantly in his mouth. He had concerts all over the world and got constantly hospitalized because of drug overdoses and suicide attempts. The other guy was a vital businessman with short oily hair and Latino look. He was rich and he got constantly hospitalized because of assassination attempts. I enjoyed inventing company names for him and draw schemes of his businesses. But he wasn’t just a one-dimensional, half-criminal East European tycoon. He had links with Edgar Allan Poe’s short story *The Business Man* and also with an evil genius Jim Profit, known from an American TV series. But still he related to the local reality around me, at least much more than the suicidal musician. Maybe because his main features were all material – cars, suits, villas, guns. And my society was full of masculinities who pretended to be like him. The musician’s identity was directly linked to Kurt Cobain, who had already passed away. Listening to Nirvana coincided with cynical, passive and negative attitude to life. For me Nirvana had nothing to do with original cassettes and CD-s or live concerts. Cobain’s suicide seemed like a radical confrontation against this material world. And a radical step towards my imagined world. Heroin addiction was part of rebellion against life and I found it attractive.

My characters were part of one and the same authority that functions through the production of contrast, such as mainstream and alternative, regular and special, material and spiritual. They were like two pills with different color, both covered with the binder of my subjectivity –

a sweet layer of drugs, money and destruction. Of course these characters were random, but behind them were whole cosmologies that formed the future of teenagers like me in the 90s. Musical taste and subcultural option could affect your hierarchical position in the society, as well as your gender and sexual identity. I always had the feeling that I could become a real (successful, powerful, sexually active) man only if I would forget the band guy and stop listening to music or only listen to what they play in radio – as would do the businessman. But in mass culture such controversies between these role models were taken care of. As the famous song *Loser* of Beck was pointed towards global audience, a local band Agape came out with the song *Grungeman* that was played in local radio so often that all these muscular and aggressive guys who had previously called me “girl” and “trans” could patronize me, saying “now we know you”. This is how another subordinated masculinity was recognized in the form of a weirdo. The whole 90s could be characterized by production of weird things – weirdo was taken as symbol of the new desireful system. A weirdo was accepted to the certain extent – as an amusement – and couldn’t cross the certain line that was related with authority, gender and sexuality. By crossing that line a weirdo could become “a fag”, which is the universal signifier for everything different from the everyday habits of a hegemonic masculinity. But the weirdo was constantly changing and getting new shapes. The losers turned out to be winners and “the weird” became the norm, but “bizarre” was left to those, who couldn’t transform or conform. Huge amount of new, universalist white male subjectivity was released above the ruins of society. I was becoming a white East European man, the universal subject and citizen of the world. I confronted the local life and its masculinity with my elitist cultural subjectivity that convinced me and millions of others how special and extraordinary we were. The first relapses were usually faced in border controls, on the way to the West. “Are you trying to find a job in the United States of America?” asks an officer. “Of course not, I came here for nostalgia!” I say. “Have you been in the States previously?” he asks. “In a way yes, I used to listen to...” I start daydreaming, but get interrupted: “There is no record of it. Have you been here illegally?”; “No, no, I have never been here before, at least not geographically, maybe psychogeographically...”. In this very moment I realize how the words “psycho” and “geography” fall apart from each other. And so do I – there is head and there is body, there is subjectivity apart from location. The whole Eastern Europe is full of such people. Their head is not where their body is. As if they had been decapitated by a guillotine. But guillotine is the very precondition and instrument of revolution!

SEPARATING HEADS FROM BODIES

Individualism and singularity are the strategic partners of a guillotine. Even if grunge nostalgia of the 90s would make sense in Eastern Europe, as we witnessed, there is still alienation and injustice, where human head is going in one direction, while body goes in the other. Origin and location decide over us – the geopolitical insects. The American lady in Glasgow probably meant collective, not individual nostalgia, although I cannot imagine any collective grunge nostalgia, especially because popular culture is based on individualism. The only explanation that makes sense here is the ongoing “geo-political turn” that makes people shut doors in front of the weird, the foreign and the bizarre.

The term “geopolitics” creates an illusion that politicians are able to move mainlands and continents, while they are actually moving and destroying massive amounts of our lives. As location means body, geopolitics means body politics. “East European” means being subject to geopolitics that people may not notice at all. But awareness about it is necessary, when you live in the other side of the Suwałki gap – in the place that’s destiny is publicly discussed alongside with nuclear strikes from east or west, that could kill millions. Universal global subject is the white mask that covers these heads that have been separated from their bodies. Mask is the priority, while body is an annoying remainder, like a piece of shit stuck in your shoe. When “the whole world” is talking about geopolitics, one should notice, what is going on with our bodies.

Events after the fall of the Berlin Wall were not the revolution of Eastern Europe although dramatic changes took place in human lives. While too many people lost their jobs, homes or citizenship, their children were happy for new Western candies in shops. The revolutionary events in the Baltics had cultural character and were followed by reforms. There were almost no victims – maybe it was about Soviet life that had made people realize that there is no point to die for politics. The Baltic Way and the Singing Revolution had made people feel their bloodstream united with the whole society. Even guillotine was brought out, as there is no proper revolution without a guillotine. And the heads started to fall – still, those were rather bronze heads, not real ones. The Soviet nomenclature was hiding behind these symbolic ruptures and slightly transformed into national elite that started to demolish the society with the set of reforms, that were the main content of this revolution. The process of permanent reforms that started off in the early 90s is still going on – it can be compared with the concept of permanent revolution. Reforms were taking place even inside of people, as if there is also

something underdeveloped and depreciated. The load of Western mass media was swallowed from space satellites – it designed and shaped human desires and consuming habits already before it was possible to fulfil them. A huge market opened to Western products and giant mass of cheap labor reached the West. The international body business that had started off was like a masquerade of white masks. An East European cannot be happy without being a migrant – this is the only way how a head would meet its body again. Most of my friends in Eastern Europe, who haven’t left yet, would run for the West at first chance – for several decades they’ve been living with such mentality. The tension between centre and periphery is not an adequate way of describing and understanding what is going on inside of millions of us.

THE ARRIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART

The symbolic revolution produced the display of a struggle between communism and capitalism, where victory was given to the latter. Therefore human subjectivity with all its inner spheres became very important. It was the era that existed outside of ideology and history. The concept of contemporaneity was used by power to guarantee its own eternal youth. Contemporaneity means the ability of power to renew itself constantly and never get old. After reaching the East in the early 90s, contemporaneity kicked the stagnant and oppressive matter – red monuments and socialist realism – into the trash bin of history. The centers of contemporary art, funded by George Soros, opened its offices in every newborn East European state. Of course they didn’t land on an empty field – in Estonia the dissident avant-garde served as the perfect ground. This avant-garde that lived “an underground life” can be compared to the Estonian government-in-exile that was keeping the state continuity during the occupation. It has also been named as repro-avant-garde, as did Sirje Helme in the text collection *East Art Map* of IRWIN. She named it after Yugoslavian retro-avant-garde – the term that was originally coined by Austrian curator Peter Weibel, who characterized the work of Yugoslavian artists Mladen Stilinović, Kazimir Malevich (Belgrade) and IRWIN like this. Later these artists started to use this term themselves. Here the most significant of these three artists is Kazimir Malevich (Belgrade), who reproduced the *The Last Futurist Exhibition 0.10* in an apartment of Belgrade in 1985. Next year this show took place in gallery SKUC, Ljubljana, being articulated by its curator Marina Gržinić as “an attempt to (re)create a system of art that has built the institution of contemporary art as we know it today². Repro-avant-garde referred to the illegal

status of avant-garde art in Soviet Estonia – artists had no chance to visit the West, so they had no direct contact with Western art and were influenced by it only through art magazines. This is how Estonian artists, living in this isolated piece of land inside of a totalitarian superpower, established their unreflected and fetish-based relation with Western art. This reminds me myself behind the TV in the early 90s.

The guillotine blade that was sharpened by Soros investments cut off the heads of artists, who had established themselves in the socialist system. It was sort of a revenge for the burden of socialist realism – executed in the similar total manner without mercy. As democracy knows no censorship, other ways were found to perform necessary cuts. Serbian art theorist Miško Šuvaković coined the term “Soros-realism” to re-politicize contemporary art that pretended to have no political sense in the post-ideological era. In his essay *The Ideology of Exhibition: On the Ideologies of Manifesta* (2002) he wrote, how financialization of art enables executing censorship in hidden mode. He also wrote about the emergence of similar artistic subjectivity from very different and sometimes even incomparable cultures.⁴ These were the new white subjects, although a bit weird and exotic – all ready to leave their country for any huge Western city, being troubled by their societies that were too underdeveloped to accept contemporary art and too poor to establish an art market. The term “Soros-realism” was also used by Serbian artist duo Rena Rädle and Vladan Jeremić, who wrote about the role of contemporary art in the process of transformation of Eastern Europe – for the initiation of the transition in Eastern European cultures, contemporary art served a position described as “Soros-Realism”; cultural politics and the agendas they impose are realized through the neoliberal strategies of the free market and with the help of the European totalitarian bureaucratic apparatus; we witness the expansion of consumption and cultural hyper-production, the branding of a region and the processes of gentrification providing ground for future economic investments.³

The first piece of contemporary art I ever saw was Jaan Toomik’s *Way to São Paulo* (1994). It was a box with mirror surface, floating on the stream of Emajõgi. Its shape reminded me the edgy and reflective facades of contemporary Western architecture. They way how it opposed to the organic surroundings was very absorbing to me – this mirror box embodied the way how contemporaneity penetrates an environment by hiding itself inside its reflection. When I entered the Estonian Academy of Arts and became the student of Jaan Toomik, the first schoolwork I made was a similar mirror box with an altar built inside of it. This probably reflected my religious

relation with capitalism and contemporary art, as the initial task was to build a personal totem.

THE TIGHTENING SPACE

In 2010 an important piece of art was destroyed in the house of Slovenian parliament – it was the fresco, made by Slavko Pengov in 1958, which depicted the genesis of Slovenian nation and portrayed its key-figures. The renovation works of the parliament house included lowering of the ceiling – this happened to cut off the upper part of the fresco and basically decapitated the Slovenian nation with all their important figures. Someone had justified the destruction with the argument that only 2% of the piece was removed. In 2013 the installation “Off With Their Heads!” was made by Slovenian artists Matija Plevnik and Kaja Avberšek – it was based on the reproduction of the space with the fresco. The entrances to this space were made so low, that one could enter only by a bow or without having a head on shoulders. The installation was followed by Mladen Dolar’s essay *Whose is the Head of the People* that discussed over guillotine as the foundation of democracy. As he wrote, the totalitarian regime of Yugoslavia had acted in a traditional manner by hiring the church fresco painter Slavko Pengov to continue his work in a different field. But the contemporary political regime uses a quite different approach that is comparable with a surgical blade – this performs a barely noticeable miniature lobotomy in the name of rationalization that slowly crushes our heads; we are being told that there is no need to worry for our 2% as we still have the other 98%, but they continue to take it from us at every step, presumably for our own welfare and the common.

Therefore one could conclude that the democratic space is constantly decreasing. The whole process of transformation can be characterized by the narrowing of public space, while the privatized space is proliferating. In the West also the space for migrants is constantly decreasing and the territorial struggle for subjectivity might be part of it. Already long ago the neoliberal regime got into economic and representational crisis – now it is hungry for any new difference and any new fetish to pop up. Lately it is becoming normal that socialist realism, the one that once was driven into the trash bin of history, has started to return to art galleries. There are several examples, like *Romantic and Progressive. Stalinist Impressionism in Painting of the Baltic States in the 1940s–1950s* (2016 in Kumu Art Museum, Estonia), curated by Eha Komissarov, and *Heroes We Love* (2015 in UGM, Slovenia), curated by Simona Vidmar and Miško Šuvakovič. At one hand, Eastern Europe possesses a written off cultural heritage that can occur as desirous difference within the

Western context. This has been understood and there is international interest that we are already trying to satisfy. From the other hand, enough time has passed to let us understand our insanity in the early 90s, when we destroyed a great deal of our culture, arts and literature. But what is the point to take these red monuments that have been put to death and bring them to gallery space – what kind of meaning would they carry there, except being examples something that has been killed twice? The aim of the Slovenian show *Heroes We Love* was articulated as the attempt to find the art historical and aesthetic value of socialist realism. The curatorial text asked directly, whether this monumental socialist art is capable of creating history – a history of art. But such a question is the second death of these pieces – if the first guillotine cut kicked these works to the trash bin of history, the other cut brings the forgotten corpses out of their context, to a totally misleading environment, where the absence of art historic value is encrypted inside the questions over aesthetics. In addition to aesthetic value, these works are also objects to nostalgia – longing for the past can wake up the metal forms and one could read smile out of a bronze face. But neither neoliberal aesthetics nor nostalgia are the real content of these pieces. Democratic space that has been established out of forgery and theft can only decrease, as any forgery and theft means violent occupation of space. Aesthetics and nostalgia have depoliticizing power in this space – it is the power that expropriates the meaning of an artwork and reduces it to an empty tin can. Then falls the veil of nostalgia and the power of contemporaneity is celebrated again. The demonized socialist realism that Eha Komissarov was using in her project was still much more abstract than the pieces from *Heroes We Love* and this made the revisionist approach possible. She focused on the genealogy of art works – the sources of education and subjectivity of artists. In the same time she committed the act of renaming, using the term “Stalinist impressionism”. There is a definition of nostalgia, coined by Michael Kammen, which says that nostalgia is history without guilt. Keeping socialist realism demonized and unreflected is a good ground for kitschy and empty nostalgia to appear.

THE POWER OF NOSTALGIA

Nostalgia is the way how past lives in present and affects future – its inseminating ground is personal experience and will for a better life. This is also the ground, where individual becomes collective. Nostalgia is real and inevitable. It is a resource that can be used for certain political agendas. So it is possible to neutralize it and lead to an infertile grounds, where it turns into useless kitsch. It can also be

linked with patriotism, although nostalgia as such has nothing to do with patriotism. Nobody is tied up to any history of homeland, no one is forced to live through any of such history. Everybody has right for better past and better future that can be built out of nostalgia. Soviet nostalgia is something that I have avoided talking about so far. While my teenage was the 90s, my childhood passed in the Soviet Union. This was the time that I remember as archaic life, nature, soil, plants and animals. I remember dysfunctional civilization that sometimes had to surrender to nature. Radio and television shows used sound clips that seemed to have no author, until I realized it was Kraftwerk. I had thought of it as music that cannot be produced by someone – to me it was the music of state and institution. It reminded me radiation, Raadi airport and polluted water – everything that I could link with dangerous and broken civilization. I don’t know if it is possible to be nostalgic about early childhood. Nostalgia always seems to have a bit of betrayal and hormones inside, so it belongs to teenage or adult life. Older generations, who spent their lives in the Soviet Union often speak about stability and secured future (social security and savings included), that got destroyed in the early 90s. Stability is something that too many people are right now longing for, as our hyper-functional civilization has made them dysfunctional. So there is no difference, what kind of Soviet symbol can trigger an emotional outbreak of nostalgia that fades out soon in our hermetic space. Lithuanian Grūtas Park and Hungarian Memento Park are basically graveyards. It wouldn’t make it better if we’d take a Lenin and bring it to a city square or gallery – it is better to leave this empty shell and read Lenin’s books.

“Steps to the park. Strolls. Stares boldly the faces of walkers. Like a proper lawful ever. In the evening he goes to the theatre. Finds a good seat. Sits down with a truthful art-loving face. And yawns. Undoubtedly. But still stands the performance of these pharaoh servants until the end.”

This is how the notorious revolutionary Viktor Kingissepp is described by the forgotten Estonian writer Eessaare Aadu in his novel *The Outlaws* (1922–23, all together 1935). This novel speaks of the life of underground revolutionaries during the first republic of Estonia. The works of Eessaare Aadu hold such a subjectivity, such a deviant position that you cannot find elsewhere in Estonian literature. He is not one of these bourgeois geniuses, masters in depicting and describing something. He is the depicted, he is what he describes. He writes from the inside, his text doesn’t alienate from its content as his text is the content. Behind the name of Eessaare Adu there was the famous revolutionary Jaan

Anvelt – the man, who led the Commune of the Working People of Estonia, and who was one of the organizers of 1924 Estonian coup d’état attempt. His destiny was paradoxical – the bolshevik regime that he was working for killed him in 1937 during the Great Purge. Later he was rehabilitated and in 1962 his monument, a bronze bust by Martin Saks and Uno Tõlpus was erected in Tallinn. As one of many red monuments it went under guillotine in the early 90s and currently it is situated at the Museum of Occupations.

Jaan Anvelt gives a good chance to think of the political potential of a red monument. The suffocating depoliticization of nostalgia and aesthetics can’t handle the fact that there is an unrecognized writer hidden under the bronze surface. His books can be found from libraries and old book shops. Of course these books are unknown for the mainstream and they don’t belong to recommended reading lists of schools. Only the voice of contemporary Estonian writer Aarne Ruben has avoided Eessaare Aadu to be silenced to death – Ruben’s articles and long term research have kept this writer in the discourse of local literature. If we compare Eessaare’s texts, that were considered to be socialist realism, with socialist realism in arts, there might appear the question of honesty and authenticity in artist positions. Many artists were smart enough to slip themselves through different regimes and ideologies by keeping their hand in such a good position, where it could hold a tricolor or red flag, but most of all – a brush. But there is no doubt that Eessaare Aadu had only one thing in his hand – a gun. People should be interested how a person like this used to think and write. Also, the books of Eessaare could help to open the local history and genealogy of non-existing leftist thought, with all its hidden patriarchy and will of emancipation. We should recognize the whole Soviet heritage, but prevent fetishizing, nostalgia and new national narratives. Instead, a long intellectual process, similar to self-analysis and decolonization, should be started.

THE THIRD WAY

In the video *If You Remember, I Always Talked About the Future* (2013) of Slovenian artist Maja Hodoscek a young teenage boy imitates his idol Josip Broz Tito, dressing up like him and making self-made speeches. The huge collective wave of nostalgia that is directed towards the era of Tito’s Yugoslavia is called yugonostalgia and also titostalgia. This teenager who was born in the second part of the 90s has never seen any Yugoslavia – just like I had never been to the States, while being a teenager. Still his individual nostalgia is part of the greater whole and the reason for this is related with the fact that he is

standing on the ground that Tito used to fertilize long time ago. Titostalgia could be compared with the cult of Stalin that has emerged in Russia, but it doesn't make sense! The difference between Stalin and Tito is huge, same as the difference between living in the ex-Soviet Union and the ex-Yugoslavia. The Soviet Union was an example of global coloniality to function through its worst alternatives and opposites. Still, the ground for the Soviet Union emerged from such a poor condition that despite these millions of dead bodies the Union was still considered as emancipation. The indescribable violence brought modernity to the heart of darkness, where only wolves were howling. But Yugoslavia – lucky enough to possess a small territory in good geographic location – chose a different way, the Third Way. It turned its back to the East and the West and their global opposition. Like this Yugoslavia was the example of non-colonial Europe. The Non-Aligned Movement that was established in Belgrade in 1961 was one of the main pillars of the worldwide decolonial turn. The Non-Aligned Movement established non-colonial relations between its members and confronted the Cold War opposition of two great powers that manipulated with the rest of the world. Slovenian curator Bojana Piškur has written that the NAM enabled to decolonized states to find an independent place inside the modernity, without being colonized. She referred to Achille Mbembe, who has said that it is important not only to generate one's own cultural forms, institutions etc., but also to translate, fragment and disrupt realities and imaginaries originating elsewhere, and in the process place those forms in the service of one's own making. We in the Baltics should do the same – to create a relation with decolonial world in the present and in the past, avoiding positions of a researcher or tourist, and to make our own place and subject within this world.

- 1 Subjectivity is the way how somebody operates with his/her knowledge, feelings, needs and possibilities.
- 2 Marina Grzinić. Dispatch From Ljubljana. ARTMargins [online]. 30 January 2002. <http://www.artmargins.com/index.php/about-artmargins/guidelines?id=345:dispatch-from-ljubljana>
- 3 Miško Šuvaković. The Ideology Of Exhibition: On The Ideologies Of Manifesta. PlatformaSCCA, No. 3, Januar 2002. <http://www.ljudmila.org/scca/platforma3/suvakoviceng.htm>
- 4 Rena Rädle & Vladan Jeremić. Psychogeographical Research. Belgrad, 2007. <http://raedle-jeremic.net/raedle-jeremic-archive-2014/psychogeo/psychogeography.pdf>

EESSAARE AADU – DEPICTING A SPECIAL STATE OF MIND

Aarne Ruben

From time to time, very paradoxical people with many faces and some masks to spare go down in history. One such paradoxical person was Jaan Anvelt, who used the pen name Eessaare Aadu. One of the aims of this exhibition is to rid Eessaare of the controversial ideological burden that has been forced upon him and to reduce the politician to a simple writer who had something to say to society. On display is the head of Anvelt as Eessaare Aadu – it is part of a bust that, in the 1970s and 1980s, stared at Tallinn's Kompass Square with its stiff stone eyes. As there is a compass drawn on the ground, the square was called Kompass and the surrounding urban region was designated Kompasna during the period of Estonian independence. In Soviet times, the area was mainly known as Maneeži and very old people still remembered the shootout that took place a couple of hundred metres away, on May 1st 1922. The shootout broke out when Jaan Kreuks and Johannes Linkhorst, members of the underground who were on their way to watch the workers' procession, were recognised by agents of the Political Police. The two men were cornered – the agile Kreuks managed to escape, but Linkhorst, known inside the party by the nickname Malm, started shooting among the crowds of Narva Highway and was knocked down. These events eventually led to the military tribunal of Viktor Kingissepp, the elimination of the party's old core, and finally to the Blanquist uprising that took place on December 1st 1924. In the March bombing of Tallinn in 1944, the whole area was partially hit and later rebuilt beyond recognition, erasing the streets of Jaama, Riesenkampfi, Hollandi, and Siimeoni in the process. Eventually, a bust of the rehabilitated Jaan Anvelt was set up at Kompasna, along with the flower shop "Kannike". The children of my generation loved to meet up in and outside the flower shop, because of the water that flowed on brightly coloured rocks and the wet statues of sitting frogs.

Moving on to Eessaare Aadu's novel *Linnupriid* (Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers, Leningrad, 1934-35), it should first be noted that many connections can be drawn between the literary character Maur and the historical figure Malm. Maur is an important member of the underground who has the licence

to seek out others. The underground movement has two kinds of members: those like Papp (Ville) and Kivi, who are allowed to seek out their associates, and then those who must never pay a visit to another member of the organisation – people will come to them instead. Mulk belonged to the latter. He was a semi-legal guy, who worked the factories and held speeches at the Workers' House. As such, he was even more useful to the party, because in an organisation of labourers, people like him were in short supply.

Despite the fact that he has their trust, Maur begins to rat out his comrades once he is held by the *PolPol*. He does not however betray the core of the party and instead, in order to save his family, gives up the handyman of their hideout and a "useless old man". Maur expresses the other side of the author's inner voice: he is a Judas, but at the same time he still displays his class consciousness when he visits the prostitute Minni and sees how women sell their bodies in the conditions of the bourgeoisie society. A woman is a garden of joy and a source of happiness for the bourgeoisie, who have shared all the bigger profits among themselves at state-level and orchestrate a mock "struggle" between their own bourgeoisie parties to demonstrate how the funds are being allocated for various purposes. Some of the sinful girls are their nightly slaves, who long for the passion and money that the capitalists might have left from all the drinking and cardplaying. The other harlots are inseparable parts of the capitalists' foul economy, all at once serving as the pharaohs' nursemaids, kitchen girls and whores. Maur rips up the dirty money that Minni has earned, but replaces it with a bigger banknote, which he places on her dressing table. The paradox is that Maur forgets his own money is not clean either, but was received for giving up his brothers of the working class. Even though the blood that was spilled belonged to a simple handyman and an old man, it is still the red blood of the oppressed class, in the name of which many weary hands have waved the red flag. In the film *Lindpriid*, a ballad written by Hando Runnel and performed by Liis Bender conveys how treachery tends to have very innocent origins (1971):

*And so have I wandered,
betrayed my brothers,
as well as myself
and sold out their beautiful ideals,
given all of them up,
all the children of the dismal slum!
Heroism, be it wise or senseless,
is not found in everyone!
I am a meek outsider among brothers.*

Maur has lost his way and side by side the novel tells the story of miss Meeri Ilmari, a young doctor who is still looking for herself. She treats

the brains of capitalists and learns that this class of people is devoted to spending money on cars, jewellery, clothes, and drinking in the back rooms of pubs. The eyes of the pharaohs are swollen from all the boozing, as the profits and concessions of the parliament are guaranteed to those who are in charge of the political system. This blasphemous kind of person has sunk so low that their intellect permits them to do little more than play with a puppy. At the same time, the people who actually do some work – and through this are responsible for the creation of new value - display intelligence and reason. As Meeri reads out the newspaper's backpages to his bedridden cousin Papp, who is a member of the underground, it becomes apparent that there is after all a bright side to this ugly world, consisting of a new hit film, a theatre play, a much-discussed new novel by some author, and a foreign prince who visited our country. The poet Vidrik Virbus, who is hopelessly in love with Meeri and strives after the elation of mankind, is another representative of this empty but pleasant perspective. Meeri Ilmar, however, sees what life is truly about when she finds herself next to a drunken potter who is sleeping in the gutter. Similarly to Maur, who wanted to save Minni, Meeri tries to help the smelly potter because the man finds himself in this awful situation due to his lack of class consciousness. With the help of a driver, she drags the tottering potter home, but is greeted, paradoxically, by a hostile member of the same working class. The angry wife snaps at her: "Does the streetwalker have no shame, that she dares to accompany him back to our apartment?"¹

What is the solution to this serious conflict, which is troubling both Maur and Meeri? Heinrich Ville has provided an answer that is quite short and seems incomplete to the reader of today: "In the future, the social instinct will be several thousand times greater than now. Society will then truly become a single entity. The joys and concerns of the general public will be shared by the individual a lot more than now, when there is a tendency for people to push themselves to the fore. (p. 69). Marxism is teleological and instills in us that man is not yet ready, that man is moving towards a certain destination in history when he will be ready once and for all. It is here that the Marxists' thinking is incomplete. If the proletariat should one day rise up and take over the railways, enterprises, companies, workshops, factories, ships, and everything else, then it is not certain at all that they would share enough of the benefits with their brothers in blood. In this case, agreements would be made that would restrict the less profitable industries; however, the entrepreneurs whose profits are smaller – the former workers – would still limit their employees' wages in order to increase profits and to catch up to their competitors. Thus the revolution would change nothing, except for the

fact that blood would be spilled and the former workers would become capitalists.

The Bolsheviks of the early 1920s were not asked these questions. The people who attended the meetings of the so-called Working People's Alliance were captivated by slogans: "Bring down the bourgeoisie butchers!" "Overthrow the white bloodhounds!" "Long live the world revolution!" Workers are specialists, but they carry out specific tasks in their own fields. They do not deal in abstractions and to them, slogans are absolute. "Fleshy bourgeoisie bodies", "butchers and leeches living off the suffering of the world's workers", "the skeleton, a symbol of the bourgeoisie order" – these are phrases from a speech held in the Workers' Basement in Vladimir Karassev-Orgussaare's film *Lindpriid*. Yes, that film is a work of art, but people really did talk like that.

For a worker to start following a political agenda, there needs to be an educated agitator who has read up on theory and who has a wider knowledge of the humanities than the proletariat. The tsar's officials were right to say that if the spectacled intellectuals are taken away, then the workers will never start a revolution. During the years of the First World War, only a handful of people belonged to the ultra-left intelligentsia: Jaan Anvelt, August Kastra, Hans Pöögelmann, Viktor Kingissepp, Artur Vallner, Jakob Palvadre, Voldemar Vöölmann and Nikolai Janson. The whole educated revolutionary circle comprised of these eight men, because they had attended university in Saint Petersburg or the theological seminar in Riga and perhaps had worked as journalists in Estonia or America. None of them came from a proletarian background and they were familiar with the struggles of the working class only from their books. If we take a closer look at Jaan Anvelt, then it becomes apparent that history has not at all forgotten him. There are plenty of accounts from his contemporaries of Anvelt's character: of his capacity for work, temperance, taciturn nature, and devoted seriousness. Anvelt's political career was a complete failure, but in *Linnupriid*, he has left behind something that has and will keep exciting future generations.

Besides *Linnupriid*, Eessaare Aadu was also a short story writer. The publishing house Mõte printed his collection *Räästa-alused* in 1916 as well as *Alasti* in 1917. These are realist stories that depict the struggles of common people. In the afterword of the 1984 anniversary edition, Pärt Lias wrote: "A favourite technique of Eessaare Aadu's is to place a character in a situation where their condition is different from usual (Papp's illness) or their activities are disrupted (Kill's escape). This technique allows the author to open up the inner world of his

character as precisely as possible, to examine them from the inside." Eessaare Aadu makes use of similar techniques in his short stories as well.

First of all, it should be noted that Estonian Bolsheviks were politically extremely naive. Anvelt and Kingissepp were indeed well versed in the theory and had read the works of nearly all the authors that a serious revolutionary erudite of their time could have read: Kautsky, Bakunin, Bebel, Bernstein, Plekhanov; not to mention the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin. Their intellectual equal was Rudolf Vakmann ("Ralf"), depicted in the novel as Kivi, who "yet again is writing some paper". However, the Bolsheviks' agrarian programme for Estonia had the naivety to propagate collective action in socialist manorial estates without challenging the territorial integrity of these feudalistic estates. This showed that the revolutionary intelligentsia was completely out of touch with their own people. The Estonian soul had a desire for land and did not join the Bolshevik cause. For this, the Estonian Red Guard took revenge on their countrymen with the Red Terror in the early winter of 1917. In addition, in December 1918, the Estonian Workers' Commune executed a hundred people in Narva at a septage waste site. The international, borderless workers' state did not work out either. At the beginning of January 1918, a congress of the Estonian military proposed that Estonia should be declared an independent socialist republic, ruling out a unification with Russia. The soldiers' proposal was also consistent with Gustav Suits's idea of a social democratic workers' republic. Anvelt and Kingissepp however did not agree to this. In January 1918, Anvelt, as the representative of the Estonian soviet, visited the government of the Russian soviet state to speak to People's Commissar of Nationalities' Affairs Joseph Stalin. Stalin had been informed of the decision of the congress and, keeping mind that the Estonian military had taken up arms, he proposed to Anvelt that Estonia should in fact be declared a Soviet Republic. The Estonian explained that their country could not survive without goods and transit from Russia, to which Stalin responded with these famous words: "So you do not wish to be independent?" Anvelt's opinion was a completely inaccurate reflection of the national mood in Estonia: Estonians wanted to have their own patches of land and likewise to govern their own country.

The Estonian Constituent Assembly elections were held in January 1919. In Saaremaa, for example, the Estonian Social Democratic Workers Party, who made it into Estonia's first government, received 200 times as many votes as the socialist revolutionaries, who were even more to the left of centre. This prompted the anger of Viktor Kingissepp: "In Saaremaa, the Socialist Revolutionary Party – the only party

who did not have the blood of local workers on their hands – received 134 votes, while the butchers received 27 000!"² The small scale and insignificance of Bolshevism when compared to the will of the majority of people is also evident in the events that took place in Tallinn Town Hall Square on December 18th 1918, when around a hundred people, mainly from the Dvigatel factory, held a protest. They demanded that the British warships leave, that martial law be lifted, and that the bourgeoisie government step down. At the end of Dunkri street, the protesters clashed with the Estonian Defense League, an organisation that had been created exactly for the purpose of preventing Russian soldiers from looting. The Central Committee of the Estonian Communist Party, whose representatives Kingissepp, Vakmann and Vennikas were also attending the protest, had called all the workers in Tallinn out on strike, but out of the tens of thousands of workers in the capital, only a hundred took part. After members of the Defense League were shot at, the commander-in-chief of the Estonian military major general Ernst Põdder issued a daily order that forbid having meetings, holding speeches, and driving automobiles without permission in the streets, and imposed a curfew. "I will give an order to open fire on anyone who does not comply with these regulations. All violators will be sent before a military tribunal, which must come to a decision on the same day."³ These draconian decisions of the Estonian government are understandable. Estonia was at war with the largest country in the world and did not have any allies, the only support being the firepower of the British naval artillery. Only 2200 men had thus far been sent to the front, including some student-soldiers who went straight from their school desks to fight against the cut-throat Red Latvian Riflemen. At the same time, there were attempts at subversion in the Estonian capital, where agitators claimed that the country is not being attacked by a foreign country, but instead by workers and peasants. "This war is our own doing," was their message. The self-sacrifice and example of the Tartu schoolboys was so great that it inspired everyone, but also forced the neighbour in the east to pay more money to the subverters.

In this situation, declaring martial law was vital. This decision has been appraised positively by judicial experts, for example in Konstantin Trakmann's article "Kaitseseisukord" in the journal *Õigus* 1'1930, p. 1–18. If during the Estonian War of Independence or afterwards any matter concerning the system of government, for example, the removal of a Bolshevik commissar from local government, would have gone to the courts, then without martial law the case would have been appealed from the circuit court and it would have been necessary to await the decision of the Supreme Court.

When in *Linnupriid* the Minister of the Interior says, “Our laws are from Russia”, he is quite right. This instance of martial law was borrowed from the 1916 Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire, from the “Law of Order and Security”. In the tense situation at the start of the Estonian War of Independence, there was little opportunity to immediately replace Russian laws, and this law was eventually replaced at a calmer point in time, in 1930.

The Estonian Communist Party was an armed organisation, they used weapons of war against the government of the republic and its representatives. They did this at a time when young Estonians were continually perishing on the fronts of the War of Independence. The Bolshevik leadership and their network in Tallinn (the one in Tartu less so) received constant funding from across the border. The top Bolsheviks like Kingissepp lived like noblemen. There was so much money going around that members even asked to be paid for delivering routine underground correspondence. Jaan Tomp was a communist who was just aching to bludgeon the “bloodhounds” with his Mauser, but trying someone like him in a civil court would have meant that he could have taken his case all the way to the Supreme Court and won time for his organisation, which would have only grown stronger from such a weak blow anyway. Why did the government take the strategic decision to execute Kingissepp as soon as he was caught on May 1st 1922? As it is written in the martial law: “offences against the state, high treason, armed resistance”. His leadership of a secret association whose goal was to topple the rule of law in the Republic of Estonia meant that he was brought before an emergency court – a military tribunal. A court of this kind heard the case according to the laws of war.⁴ The secret society in question did not hesitate to use radical methods either. For instance, on December 1st 1924, Anvelt ordered his hitmen to go to Kaarli Boulevard and throw a grenade through the window of Minister of Interior Karl Einbund, whose small children were sleeping in the same room.⁵ It is apparent that the communist leaders did not hesitate for a second about sending their little countrymen to their deaths – why then should the state have pampered these criminals who were organised against the government? Or as police chief Tent, the character in *Linnupriid*, put it: “Shouldn’t you keep a tight rein on a bucking horse?”

These years saw the emergence of a kind of social eugenics, in the way which the novel’s educated communists cursed “the fancy writers whose works featured a mixture of the lingering smell of corpses, toothless tripe about humanity, and perpetually uninhibited women.” In 1920, Viktor Kingissepp quoted from Vares-Barbarus’s poetry collection *Inimene ja sfinks*: “The men

brawl, women are half-naked / the clinks and the frothing vodka / a beastly passion unleashed. / I sink my teeth in... still hear a groan / writhing bodies, their lust at large.” The “oranges and cognacs, silks, velvets, and perfumes” that could be seen through the windows of the bourgeoisie restaurant Kuld Lõvi irritated Viktor Kingissepp.⁶

Otto Rästas has specified when exactly the odes to frothy vodkas were written: “Who took notice of life in Tallinn and Tartu in the years 1920-1921 will know that these were the years when the nouveau riche hit the bottle. Literature mirrored this expression of life. During the so-called “war of independence” years Estonia already saw the emergence of this special erotica and the art of inciting debauchery. Under, Visnapuu, Barbarus and others sang of lust, their poems were devoted to desires. The “frothy vodka” that Under sang of, the “leering eyes” that the social democrat Ast wrote about – these were the Canticles of the nouveau riche...”⁷ On December 23rd 1918, *Päevaleht* wrote that when German troops occupied the country and communist political activity became dangerous, Johannes Semper turned to poetry and Hans Kruus, another member of the intelligentsia, withdrew completely.

An intellectual like Vidrik Virbus would obviously “refuse to bury his head in the mood of intoxicating patriotism for the duration of the Great War”, as Johannes Semper proclaimed in the 1921 anthology of the Tarapita movement. Both the Bolsheviks and the spontaneously left-wing poets now had a dislike of the social democrats who were members of the war cabinets in Europe because they indeed had buried their heads in this “intoxicating mood” and thus were precisely those who were responsible for the deaths of millions. In place of this, Anatole France, Henri Barbusse, Selma Lagerlöf and others created Clarté, a group of intellectuals who wave the flag for “the high ideals of humanity”.⁸ In Virbus’s view, it is humanity that will support dr Meeri Ilmar in her return from prison as a person who will no longer be susceptible to germs of dreaded ideas and will be welcomed back by her former circle of friends. The reader meets Vidrik Virbus already in chapter three, right after the author has introduced us to Papp, Kill, and Illi. The poet stands above the materialistic herd and is on a high cliff, looking at the sea. He wants to protect Meeri from all the evil in the world and hopes to lie with her. He even wants her to bear him a child. He is calling her towards beauty and goodness, away from the hunchbacked slaves. Vidrik is having this grand discussion with his sea even though, at that very moment, the woman he cherishes “is dressed like a kitchen girl, wearing a white shawl and a simple blouse”. Vidrik is clinging more and more to a relationship that he is not even interpreting correctly,

because “the same woman... quickly turned the other way when she saw Vidrik Virbus from the corner of her eye”. Meeri has begun to avoid Vidrik, even though she used to tolerate his flattering compliments, as is appropriate for a woman of her class.

The sea is Virbus’s elemental force, and the novel also ends by the sea, when members of the underground and Meeri arrive at Virbus’s summerhouse. In chapter three, the poet is standing near his summerhouse and water sprinkles on his chest, it cools the chest that smoulders with his love for miss Ilmari and invigorates the life that burns his chest. In creating a Tuglas-like sea poet, Eessaare Aadu may have had a direct influence:

Let us take a look at other similar texts.

*The lady in white captivated me,
she is a fairy tale like you,
a homely dream like you,
oh, my beloved murmuring sea.*

(Henrik Visnapuu, “Amores”, August 11th 1917).

*Sand and dust, the sea’s gusts,
hands and knees and necks all raw.
The wind’s soft kisses are not lost on us,
the blazing Sun, burn once more!*

(Henrik Visnapuu, “Jumalaga, Ene!”, 1918).

Vidrik Virbus loves Meeri Ilmar also because she has a different kind of beauty – she does not have a happy-go-lucky walk or drawn eyebrows and her views cannot be bought off. The doctor is a natural and free woman. Vidrik is engaged in his struggle among the high cliffs, but Meeri has to help him build a better moment on the ruins of a Stone Age past. This kind of sentimentalism and talk of brotherhood that is expressed by Anvelt’s characters (i.e. by the author himself) was examined by Voldemar Vöölmann in his 1928 brochure “Anvelt and other leading forces of the ECP”, where Vöölmann lashes out at Anvelt: “He spreads propaganda about ‘divine brotherhood’, yet at the same time fights on the side of the Estonian cadets.” Vöölmann was a Fontannik (a member of an oppositional group of communists named after the Fontanka River in St Petersburg) and wrote the article on Anvelt when the December uprising had already failed and the Estonian soviet organisations in Leningrad had taken a close look at Anvelt’s past.⁹

Eessaare Aadu is saying that Virbus has some faint idea about the future too, but in order to get closer to it, he needs to get his hands on a committed woman and reap the benefits of her curves and her warmth. If Papp is the one who is keeping up the fight with the materialistic

herd and spraying gunfire at policemen, then Virbus’s place is on the high cliff, in the so-called ivory tower. This is the viewpoint of an abstract humanist, which can sometimes be found in literary socialist realism.

There is another aspect as to why the sea is the symbolic archetype of this novel. This becomes evident in the last ten pages. Meeri Ilmar is walking next to Papp and their shoulders touch for a moment. Meeri is as enticing as the sea. Papp, however, is marching on the front-line of class war and there can be no personal fulfilment in this position. A fighting person is like a drop of water in the sea, a blob among blobs who pushes aside all the old and bad along with the other drops of water; capitalism is cast aside until society arrives at a place that is for everybody – a Bolshevik version of the City upon a Hill (p. 149). Papp cannot allow himself to have this outstanding woman because, after all, death awaits all revolutionaries and that is his salvation – death and being remembered. As the song goes: “We will never forget the deaths of those; who gave their life for the cause; because our victorious chant will make; their names honoured by millions of people!”

The last part of the novel was published in the newspaper *Tööline* on March 25th 1923. After the publication of this edition, the authorities seized the newspaper’s offices on suspicion of a political crime. For this reason, the story stops where Papp and Meeri are perhaps about to approach Virbus. Attention turns to the sea, where waves are monotonously breaking on the shore. It is doubtful whether anything more was supposed to happen at all. The author has said everything he had to say and a congress has convened at “the summerhouse of Vidrik Virbus, the most well-known writer among the pharaohs”. But then again: Kill is feeling guilty and is organising a new secret print shop for the party. This turns out to be impossible: Kill wants to get back to work after Illi’s death, but does not truly realise that the underground has excluded him from their activities. Something else is on Kill’s mind as well: “All of a sudden Kill thought that he saw Meeri Ilmar on Vidrik Virbus’s arm on the balcony of the summerhouse.” He is not surprised: the most famous writer of the pharaoh-class has invested a lot in winning the favour of his darling. However, by October 18th 1920, Meeri Ilmar has resolutely moved on from his forceful and relentless admirer, and never again vied for his attention. If Eessaare Aadu was indeed forced to cut his novel short, then there may have been a few more chapters in the works – perhaps, for example, about how the underground fighters convince Meeri Ilmar to play some kind of temporary game with the gentleman writer. The doctor is participating in the underground’s subversive activities for a second time, she is a recidivist. There is no way back to an ordinary life.

Police chief Tent, who once wined and dined with Vidrik, makes a reference to the philosopher Otto Weininger. According to the chief's rather cynical view, a woman is indeed ruthless enough to toy with a man who is hopelessly clinging to her. These kind of women, however, will never mix up true love and some light flirtation. "There is no bigger fanatic than a woman. A woman is ready to gouge her opponent's wounds with a muddy stick, every day." It is as if the author is saying that Meeri Ilmar did not join the underground movement simply for their ideas. "In the face of it all, Meeri Ilmar carried on being a woman, the kind of woman who no doubt attracts attention from others. Papp quickened his pace, as if he was trying to flee from this enchanting feeling." (p. 159) When Meeri and Papp pretend that they are workers living in the countryside, they brush against each other on a forest path. Papp then imagines that Meeri Ilmar is not only looking for support, but also expects him to finally grab her and take her. Police chief Tent's discoveries about women are nothing new. Others also knew of the woman's submissiveness in developing her own tastes, for example, Simone de Beauvoir wrote in her treatise *The Second Sex*: "The emotions of a wife who is fond of her husband tend to be based on his emotions... if the wife is hostile towards her husband, then the situation is different."¹⁰ In Anvelt's view, the purity of women was an integral part of a pure society: to him, a prostitute is an extension of the bourgeoisie state, because she satisfies the desires of the men who can then carry on oppressing the workers with added vigour. A bourgeoisie poet, however, lives off his masters and stands idly by their thrones when the cracks of the whips are heard and the sons and daughters of the labourers are carried out feet first from the basements of *Pol/Pol*. The author's perspective on fallen women was influenced by his short career as a lawyer and is also a reflection of the inescapable realities of the society of his time. Meeri Ilmar had attended women's courses, but even her secondary education was already more than enough to make sure he was socially out of place. Ordinary women like the farm girl Illi expressed naive thoughts, such as the possibility of there being little communist calves in the future. A woman with a secondary education is not put in charge of safehouses or delivering letters because the underground has other members who are more suitable to these tasks.

Eessaare Aadu is not the only Estonian writer to depict how a seductive woman figuratively "devours" her concubine. A man stood before a woman like "a prey before a lioness" in Tuglas's "Vilkuv tuli", where Eva uses her exotic beauty to win over Fabian, "like a cat on a prowl, listening to his breathing."¹¹ If police chief Tent made the more exotic comparison between a woman and a spider, then Tuglas's Fabian opts for a more common analogy (the cat). "Men's fears

of women's independence go exactly as far as they did in every childhood that was dominated by the mother. Traditionally, patriarchal texts suggest that every angelically selfless Snow White is chased by an evil stepmother, that every submissive wife forms a sacred part of a homely atmosphere: in every wholesome portrait of a submissive wife is a little bit of mischievousness that William Blake called the "Female Will", as Susan Gubar and Sandra Gilbert wrote in their seminal work of second-wave feminism *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979). "[The female monster descends] from Patristic misogynists like Tertullian and St. Augustine ... through Sidney's *Cecropia*, Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth and his Goneril and Regan, Milton's Sin (and even, as we shall see, his Eve),"¹² and finally arrives at Vidrik Virbus's harsh muse, who is just as sweet as Sin and Eve.

There is no direct speech in the whole novel, rather there are bits and pieces of different characters' inner monologues. The absence of quotation marks may be a peculiarity the newspaper's print shop. Eessaare Aadu liked to start a significant amount of his sentences with the word *oli* ("was"), which means his constructions are short and clear and sound a bit like Classical Latin. *Oli piinlik, et soovitas kasutada Meeri Ilmarit vabrikus*. ("It was embarrassing that they wanted to use Meeri Ilmar in the factory") *Oli iga kord hea meel ja ühtlasi nagu seletamatu süütunne...* ("Every time, there was a happiness and at the same time an unexplained feeling of guilt...") *Oli vali enda ja seltsimeeste vastu... oli vast liiaks käre* ("Was too harsh on himself and his comrades... was perhaps too aggressive") (all p. 159). These mean *tema oli* ("he was"), but the subject is only present at the beginnings of longer paragraphs of discussion ("Papp was"). There are also many cases of inversion, rhetorical questions and, in Vidrik's speech, exclamations of address. The absence of the subject in sentences creates the illusion that the reader has an opportunity to take part in deciding the characters' fates. Vidrik Virbus is the foremost poet of his time, but his personality is split: "What if I leave the poet and writer Vidrik Virbus here on the cliff and go around town as dr Friedrich Vaarik..." This is an obvious reference to Barbarus: Barbarus / Virbus – Vaarik / Vares. In connection with this Barbarus parallel, it is worth mentioning the rumours that went around about him: it is said that during the Estonian War of Independence, he was often called as a doctor to executions of underground members to rule that they had died.

Linnupriid is a mysterious work of many variables and unknown quantities, a combination of a suspense and a romance novel that has political undertones, and which could be considered to be a close relative of Edgar Allan Poe's

multilayered "The Tell-Tale Heart". The way it is multifaceted and plays around with streams of consciousness and narrative voices places it next to Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, Joyce's *Ulysses* and Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. It is a novel in which there is always something new to explore. The biggest pitfall for a reader of *Linnupriid* is to start believing in its political message and associate it with "the suffering of the working people under the bourgeoisie" or with left-wing ideas. By the way, the name of Eessaare Aadu stayed forever in the early 1920s. Anvelt had a story about the name's origin: Eessaare Aadu's real name was Siim Selle and he was killed in a shootout with the border guard. All his "stories were found in his legacy"¹³ This was a note to the police: Eessaare is dead and there is no use trying to find him. The politician Anvelt died in an interrogation cell in Lubyanka, on December 11th 1937. According to a well known story, he was killed when an investigator hit him with an ashtray. He, a former member of the Control Commission at Comintern, was being interrogated about the "Estonian case". The time from his arrest to his death was two days¹⁴, which was remarkably quick. Anvelt will have probably remembered Stalin's famous words: "So you do not wish to be independent?" And thus he became one of the few historical figures who found out explicitly in their final moments: in all his struggles, something was wrong all along. Aarne Ruben

1 *Linnupriid*, 1984 edition, p. 88.

2 Kingissepp, Viktor 1920. Iseseisvuse ikke all. Kommunistlise partei Eestimaa keskkomitee, p. 98.

3 Waba Maa, December 18th 1918, p. 1.

4 Trakmann, Nikolai 1930. Kaitseseisukord. Õigus 1'1930, p. 1–18, p. 12.

5 For more, see the article "Tulime Eedi poolt, et tõsiselt korteri üle rääkida..." 1924 ja Anvelti saaga. Toomas Hiio (Editor). Mäss. Detsembrimäss / Aprillimäss, p. 78–101. Eetriüksus.

6 Kingissepp 1920, p. 94–95.

7 Rästas, Otto 1961. Põrandaalused. Tallinn, EKP Keskkomitee Partei Ajaloo Instituut, p. 129.

8 Tarapita manifest. Tarapita anthology 2. Tallinn, 1921.

9 Вельман, Вольдемар. Анвельт и другие руководящие силы КПЭ. Москва, 1929, с 1.

10 Beauvoir, Simone de 1997. *The Second Sex*. Vagabund, p. 357.

11 Tuglas, Friedebert 1909. Vilkuv tuli. Noor-Eesti III. Tartu, Noor-Eesti Kirjastus, p. 199–200.

12 Gilbert, Sandra, Gubar, Susan 2000. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven / London, p 30.

13 Välgu valgel. Tallinna Töölise lisaleht, February 6th 1922.

14 ERAF.9461.1.3. Anvelt, Jaan Jaani poeg, p. 89–94.

THE

POWER

OF

NOSTALGIA

TALINNA KUNSTIHOONE
TALINN ART HALL