

'Everyone lives in Helsinki. If you come from 'Helsinki', you come from nowhere. Thousands of artists characterise themselves as inhabitants of Helsinki and their living place does not give them any personal or identifying attributes. People disappear in being from Helsinki.' This opinion was expressed by the Finnish writer Juha Seppälä, a native of Pori (Seppälä 2003).

Tallinn does not seem to have such a standardising effect; however, nobody has really researched the ways in which a writer living in Tallinn can absorb some unique local identifying feeling from it and express it in his work. At the same time a handy, although not so easily definable expression 'the spirit of Tartu' has long been used in the cultural space of Estonia.

Since the period of the national awakening in the 1860s, Tartu had been the unrivalled symbol of Estonian literary life and literary processes. A larger number of writers settled in Tallinn as late as in the 1930s, so that a literary magazine and a branch of the writer's organisation could be founded here. This caused some nervousness in Tartu but did not affect its leading position either in creative processes or in the coordinative area. The situation changed after World War II. According to the principles of Soviet centralisation literary institutions were transferred to Tallinn and more and more creative people followed. However, even as late as in the 1960s, the creative atmosphere of the university town was more favourable for creative talents, especially for young ones. Most of the newcomers of this productive period either come from Tartu or have spent the years preceding their artistic debut in various circles of friends in Tartu. The group of writers having been born in Tallinn, living there or being characterised as Tallinners by some parameters of their works, includes Enn Vetemaa, Arvi Siig, Aimée Beekman and Teet Kallas, and with certain reservations Arvo Valton. They were born in the period of 1933–1943, their first books published in 1962–1964. Arvi Siig is a poet, the others are mainly prose writers, Vetemaa is

also a playwright, and Valton, Kallas and Beekman have written film scripts.

Teet Kallas and Tallinn – why such a combination when the way Vetemaa describes Tallinn has greater aesthetic refinement (Kalda 1971) and Arvi Siig is more consistent in his social criticism (Mäger 1966)? First of all, Kallas's work has never been analysed from this point of view, and secondly, there's the question of quantity. Kallas has focused on Tallinn with its specific city characteristics, Tallinn as a scene and a background to states of mind, Tallinn with its specific range of characters for a very long time, in fact in all his works. His first youth novelette 'The Tall Guy's Tale' (*Lugu Pikast*, 1962) and others were set in Tallinn. Next came several collections of short stories: *The Strange Light of Alleys* (*Puies-teede kummaline valgus*, 1968), *A Bloody Pillow* (*Verine padi*, 1971), *The Case of Engineer Paberit* (*Insener Paberiti juhtum*, 1977), *Arvi's Fireplace* (*Arvi kamin*, 1982). Tallinn-novels in their pure form are *Eiseni Street* (*Eiseni tänav*, 1979) and *St. Nicholas Church* (*Niguliste*, I–II, 1990). When new robust mass produced blocks of flats were built in the suburbs of Tallinn, the writers reacted with work full of social and ecological criticism like *The Autumn Ball* (*Sügisball*) by Mati Unt, *Love in Mustamäe* (*Mustamäe armastus*) by Arvo Valton, the collection of stories *A Night in the Fourth Microdistrict* (*Öö neljandas mikrorajoonis*, 1985) and the model novel *Thirst* (*Janu*, 1983) by Teet Kallas.

In the work by Teet Kallas (TK) one can find such defining expressions as *native-born Tallinner, city of birth, slum home*. In the short story 'Earth' (*Muld*, 1981) he mentions even native Mustamäe people. Kotter, who lived in Õismäe, 'was a third generation city dweller but the forest didn't frighten him' (Kallas 1985: 22). The writer's own geography of life gets revealed in his answers to the *Keel ja Kirjandus* journal questionnaire (Kallas 1974) and in his fictionalised childhood memoirs *Hand* (*Käsi*, Kallas 1997) where he combines autobiographical incidents with the urban folklore of the 1940s. The material recorded in these sources contains some very interesting and specific information. However, for the last thirty years there is not much except short surveys in literary lexicons or articles. Something can be deduced from the writer's work of course but fiction has the rights of fiction. So I addressed Teet Kallas himself and here is the reply that I received:

The way I belong in Tallinn is a little funny. A genealogist has found out that on my mother's side the Järvans (my mother's family) have lived in Tallinn or nearby since

1750 or something like that... My father Vladimir was born in Saaremaa but he was taken to live in Tallinn when he was a child. (According to Endel Nirk, he was distantly related to Oskar Kallas.)

I was born [in 1943 – *M.K.*] in Lilleküla, on Välja Street. I don't remember much of this. In 1947, after my mother and father separated (without a formal divorce), my mother started to work as a cook at the Iru Old People's Home. (She had worked for six months in a similar institution in Eivere, Järvamaa in the meantime.) So in 1947–1962, I lived in Iru but this was and is a part of Tallinn. At the same time, I was so ignorant about the centre of Tallinn that when I started the 5th form at the Raua Street School, I was afraid of losing my way. But then I became a fan of Tallinn and this attitude has lasted. In 1962–1965, I served in the Soviet army in Lithuania, and in the spring of 1966 I moved to Kalamaja, to Salme Street. In the meantime, in 1969–1970, I spent some time in the Patarei prison as a sort of political prisoner – that was also a place of residence and also in Kalamaja, isn't it? In 1972, I bought a cooperative flat in Mustamäe and stayed there until 1983. From there I moved to Raua Street where I lived for almost 20 years until problems connected to the property reform forced me to leave. Since Christmas 2001, I have lived in Lasnamäe, not far from Iru. If you think that Raua Street is Eiseni Street in my novel, then it's not quite true, although I know the neighbourhood quite well because of the school. I have partly used Kunderi Street instead. I had several schoolmates and relatives living there. I have walked everywhere in Tallinn, many times, and the only place where I've never been is Paljassaare.<sup>1</sup>

One more commentary to the question of Raua/Eiseni Street: there is no Eiseni Street in the Tallinn street list, and neither can one find *Kunileiu*, *Hurda* and *Peterson Street*, the parallel and crossing streets to *Eiseni Street* in Teet Kallas's novel. However, all these would fit very well in the block between Tartu and Narva Road where the streets have been named after prominent figures of the Estonian National Awakening. Moreover, *Eisen* is the German word for Raua ('iron'), that is the street where TK went to school and later lived (for a while it was called Gogoli). And still, although the author has mentioned Kunderi Street as a possible prototype for Eiseni Street, it doesn't exclude the possibility that the street in the novel received its name for the reasons mentioned above.

The place name *Iru* also calls for some commentary. Iru is situated on the eastern border of Tallinn and it is still close to the countryside and so picturesque – its small elementary school included – that TK has identified himself as 'a semi-country boy' (Kallas 1974: 425–426). A country boy and not a village boy.

<sup>1</sup> Teet Kallas's letter to the author from March 3, 2003.

'Leho, a boy in my class, he was a village boy. [---] I lived in town. We weren't just separated by a couple of kilometres – these were two totally different worlds. Both were surreal enough but it was more difficult to define my world because I was not a proper town boy. Our settlement, our institution was too specific for me to be able to feel like a town boy among other boys.' (Kallas 1997: 24.) Village life was surreal because it was the time when collective farms were founded. As for TK as a future writer then his difficulty in defining his childhood home on the borderline of two or even three worlds must have been a sheer creative blessing – or at least that's what the theories of Yuri Lotman and others say. The cultural layers of Iru were a source of interest for archaeologists and TK also participated in the excavations during his high school years. His childhood includes a memory of how Kalevipoeg's Mother was ground into the cover of a Russian airfield. (This was a boulder called the Old Woman of Iru, and used by F. R. Kreutzwald in one of the plot lines of his national epic *Kalevipoeg*. The boulder was broken and used in building a military airfield in the vicinity of Iru.) There was another significant fact – since Estonia had once more been occupied in the autumn of 1944, the well-known writer Karl August Hindrey lived in the Iru Old People's Home under an assumed name, hiding from the occupation powers. He died on January 9, 1947, becoming a part of the past for the four-year-old TK, who was taken to Iru in the same year. TK's autobiographical novel *Hand* starts some time in September, 1950 but Mister Korkma, who moves through the book, looks a little like an incarnation of Hindrey: stocky and dangerous; self-confident, overbearing; he goes fishing in the river and hates Russians with all his heart – that is the image of him that has been stamped in the cultural memory of Estonia.

*Hand* also indicates some of the images that run through all TK's books and maybe some sources of his *idée fixes* and recurrent motifs. These will be dealt with later.

So, starting with form 5 TK went to the school on Raua Street. He became a fan of Tallinn and that feeling was going to last. He has walked everywhere in Tallinn and many times. Therefore TK's literary Tallinn is not a tourist place but his hometown, an everyday living environment. The characters go about their business and the city lives its own life, synchronised with the movements of the plot, yet independent. This constantly existing and functioning city is acknowledged in passing, out of the corner of one's eye; it is more felt than thought

about. It is felt, and it is seen but rarely observed. The eyes of the person hurrying towards the editorial office of a newspaper along Pikk Street, register grey and yellowish houses and not more. The natives of Tallinn have their own relationship with the well-known tourist objects of the city, the one that is not in correlation with their profession, education or understanding of art. It is also far from the false-aesthetical sprat tin label Tallinn.

The journalist returns from some object or another beyond Pirita. Busses being full, he walks along the seaside towards Kadriorg. The silhouette of Toompea, 'as it always has been – familiar, recognisable, yet always surprising', triggers a series of memories (Kallas 1968: 6). Two old schoolmates plan to make a film with St. Olaf's Church as a recurrent image, the generator of existential grief. Three good friends occasionally sneak over the fence into the ruined St. Nicholas Church. They know the story of Field Marshal de Croy's mummy and other finesses of the history connected to the church. But they climb the tower because they're looking for danger, for extreme situations. One person discovers a fragment of the Old Town silhouette from the balcony of his flat in Mustamäe city district, another suddenly sees Toompea from the window of a tall building in Pelgulinna, glad there's a 'wrong' angle.

Tallinn is also recognisable in descriptions and routes of vague coordinates and no obvious significant object in sight. Trams, subdued sounds of traffic. Lilac and grey skies. The platform of Nõmme Station, there's a fine drizzle. Liberty Square / Victory Square – Pärnu Road – Valli Street – Viru Street – Town Hall Square – the corner of Harju and Rataskaevu Streets, and everything in this magical circle – a beer cellar, cafés, the sausage bar on Sauna Street, passageways, inner courts, some of them still partly covered with cobblestones – this seems to be the area where TK's essential Tallinn is situated. Liberty Square with its multifunctional character seems to hold a particular attraction for him, draw him like a magnet. Political impulses take TK's brotherhood to the building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Estonia (originally the building of the Estonian Insurance Agency). There is always something you can do – for instance climb the tribune on the anniversary of the October Revolution and shout some parodic slogans. The foot of Harjumäe Hill is a good meeting place. From there even the often abused St. John's Church looks pretty good. TK as a young writer was a sunny character. His writing is characterised by the descriptions of collective feel good moments that have a slightly naïve colouring like the

following passage about a 'beautiful Friday night in June':

The centre of the town at half past eleven was busy and teeming with life. Cafés ran out the last clients, who immediately started a jenka dance or queued up behind restaurant doors. Taxi-cabs hurried to and fro in the square like fast fireflies. High rooftops amused themselves exchanging cryptic neon messages ... Somewhere on a fifth-storey windowsill an imported tape recorder rested, calling down... (Kallas 1968: 167–168.)

'I seem to be susceptible to a collective', Teet Kallas himself admits (Kallas 1974: 426). Jung makes a generalisation:

*Aber es sind nicht nur Begriffe und Anschauungen, die als Kollektiv zu bezeichnen sind, sondern auch Gefühle. Lévy-Bruhl zeigt, wie bei den Primitiven die Kollektivvorstellungen auch zugleich Kollektivgefühle darstellen. Um dieses kollektiven Gefühlswertes willen bezeichnet er die 'représentations collectives' auch als 'mystiques', weil diese Vorstellungen nicht bloß intellektuell, sondern auch emotional sind. Beim Kulturmenschen verknüpfen sich mit gewissen kollektiven Idee Gottes oder des Rechtes oder des Vaterlandes und so weiter. (Jung 2001: 155.)*

TK has a strong sense of hometown and generation. Where did it start, this sense of generation that runs through all his work, obviously expressing his view of the world? Maybe in the everyday life of these boys from Iru, carried away by their imagination – that is in such a fascinating way expressed in his novel *Hand*? But his plots also have a recurrent motif of escaping, of being pursued, a kind of hunted feeling that can be expanded into a desperate blind rush. Perhaps there was the original 'running' like in the shaft episode of *Hand* where a gang of boys looking for 'a bony hand' experiences a kind of mass psychotic rush of horror.

*Eiseni Street* was defined by contemporary criticism as a sociological novel. That is true – in its intrigue, in the way people have been observed and the ideas presented it is really a down-to-earth field study in urban sociology the purpose of which is the survey of the population decrease of the Estonian community in Tallinn.

A typical street in a central district of Tallinn completed before World War II has been taken as a sample. In its heyday, a rather prosperous middle class dominated here, including some quite colourful personage and a couple of people known in the whole town. Even in the age of Soviet standardisation it is a pretty good neighbourhood, where something of the self-confidence and dignity of the people who have lived here for decades still lingers. It is true that the protagonist of the novel (a young man, a third generation resident of the street, unfinished

high school, blonde, quite normal) occasionally suffers acute pangs of envy. The colour of hair is a parameter that is also often mentioned in connection with the fair sex. Since old ladies, younger women and small girls seem to have predominantly light hair, it can be seen as an allusion to an classical Estonian work – the play *Werewolf* by August Kitzberg (*Libahunt*, 1912), where a proper – that is ‘yellow-haired and blue-eyed’ – family embraces their own extinction meekly and willingly under the sign of self-preserving submissiveness. A newcomer to Eiseni Street complains about the stale smell and the cowardly and stagnated mentality of the residents. However, feminism has arrived in this place as well and the same smart-ass finds all the more reason for complaining. Feminism is there not in theory but in reality: younger women, redheads, blondes, auburn-haired alike firmly shape their own and their husbands’ private lives – doing it with the delicacy of a road roller or in some subtler ways.

Whatever the attitude towards the way of life on Eiseni Street, there are no extremes to neighbourly hatred or terrorising mutual social control that are said to be rampant for example in the dwelling areas of German towns (Bergmann 1992). Almost all the residents know each other, at least by sight, and therefore there is no place here for the sense of impunity and bleak anonymity that is so typical of metropolis (this is the central problem in TK’s novel *Thirst*). Anyway, the area is a part of the optimum or ‘cosy’ Tallinn, or so it seems to a Tallinn native of TK’s generation who watches in a ‘quite frightened’ manner the Great Tallinn being built under his eyes.

Existential anxiety is quite a different thing. One of the recurrent characters is, maybe in a way that is typical of Tallinn, a former celebrity, in TK’s work preferably a former top-class athlete, who is not able to adapt to the status of an ordinary man. *Eiseni Street* also asks the question whether it is possible for a certain block of houses or a street to actually be able to suggest suicidal thoughts – with its atmosphere or ‘the spirit of the place’. For instance, Peter Ackroyd has given suggestive descriptions of similar murders occurring in certain places after certain periods of time (Ackroyd 1998).

TK has repeatedly expressed his annoyance at the fact that newspapers euphemistically called the ‘unprecedented hurricane’ in August 1967 just a heavy storm. On the local, Estonian scale it was undoubtedly the natural phenomenon of the century. His short story ‘Something Else about the August Hurricane’ (*Veel*



*midagi augustiorkaanist*, 1981) written years later gives an impression that from time to time TK needs for his creative impulse a powerful shock of some kind. When nature itself provides him with such a shock, he is grateful for it, uses it and feels guilty afterwards.

The short story itself is developed on three levels. First: a night in the Kalamaja slum. 'I walked home with my head down. Suddenly I sensed something disturbing. I stopped, looking around. I had reached a crossing and in a couple of minutes I would have reached home. I knew everything here. A corner of a fence, a shop in a cellar, an experimental vegetable garden of a small school, silent slum houses. [---] Now I know, of course, what it was – the calm before the storm. But at the time I couldn't foresee it. I could just feel the growing tension, anxiety, even horror.' (Kallas 1985: 6.) Kallas proceeds to give an anthropomorphic description of urban flora: trees and flowers and grass and slum weeds say goodbye to each other. Even if it is just a sentimental illustration to the saying 'the calm before the storm', created by sheer imagination, it still remains vivid and organic.

Second: the severe storm itself, the grand devastation of the streets and parks of Tallinn, the deafening roar of the elements. The narrator goes out to the streets with blissful abandon, to be pushed by the gusts of wind and to watch the flowing skirts of women, the breaking of trees and the way a roof was carried away. 'From a reasonable distance it looked powerful, dramatic but not too tragic.' (Kallas 1985: 7.)

Third: the epilogue. In the early summer of 1981, the narrator comes across a letter from an unknown person. The letter has been written the day after the hurricane and it describes a destroyed garden. He reads the letter in a train where the other passengers form a kind of context for it: 'serious and composed inland Estonians', a noisy company of tourists from Moscow, and the narrator with his feeling of guilt about 'youth spent in a superficial manner'.

The superficiality of a city (Tallinn) dweller? Talent combined with some rather flippant values. Slackness and met challenges. Restlessness as a phenomenon – the motor restlessness that you cannot control, and the other kind – the secondary restlessness born out of guilt. That is the general picture of the generation (TK's central concept) presented by the adventures of three slightly faded 'musketeers' in TK's novel *St. Nicholas Church*. Nobody reflects much on why they are the way they are. There are just a couple of platitudes, 'The people here are indifferent and superficial – the sound of their trams and the murmur in their



cafés has made them like this' (Kallas 1990a: 201). TK is not a great thinker on the discursive level. I can't think of any impressive maxims ready for quoting that critics could have found in his text. However, he has his depths in the way he creates archetypal images.

In TK's first book there is a good chapter, 'Kalle in the Well' (Kallas 1964: 141–144). A bucket falls into a well. It is a narrow and deep draw well but Kalle is a strong boy and he is furious. He recites the lines about the national Estonian hero Kalevipoeg going to fight the creatures from hell, and starts descending, finding footholds on almost loose stones in the walls.

The climbing is described in a very bodily and physiologically detailed way but you cannot apply the usual Freudian interpretation here.

Icy air was coming from below. His body was quickly covered with goose bumps.

Kalle was climbing down. This process took all his attention. No other thoughts could distract him. [---]

A frog stared at him out of a crack in a stone. Kalle startled and spat annoyed. (Kallas 1964: 143.)

And he goes on, short paragraphs marking the descending steps. When he gets down and looks up, the faces of those he sees there look distant, he cannot hear their voices and for a moment a very dark thought crosses Kalle's mind. But then some water spills from the bucket that he has sent up, Kalle swears in answer and with this his soul is suddenly free of anger.

There is a similar incident in *Hand*. Some boys discover a shaft of unknown purpose in a wasteland. Two leaders of the gang go to the bottom of the shaft, bringing out a living dog (who goes mad), a dead cat and a large rusty cross that could originally come from the orthodox cemetery. This event is also a ritual but it does not have a purifying effect – it is closer to an incantation, an anathema or a Satanist séance. However ... the dead cat is ceremoniously buried under the same orthodox cross. The boys lose control, the game gets out of hand and they end up running wildly, as was mentioned earlier.

Tallinn is known for its towers, and the vertical dimension here more often means height than depth. In a novel by Jaan Kross a rope trick in the tower of St. Olaf's church is a metaphor for dangerous self-fulfilment; a working class youth in a short story by Paul Kuusberg discovers a wonderful view from the roof of Toompea Castle. For TK's typical hero height and depth are the same,

and his fear of height (for example *St. Nicholas Church* I, pp. 128–136; *A Night in the Fourth Microdistrict*, p. 53) is as poignantly ambivalent as the shaft feeling of the gang of boys from Iru.

Tallinn has traditionally been seen as a grey city. It is described as such in the works of Jaan Kross and in the travelogues of people who come from foreign countries and foreign towns. TK looks for or even strives for the colour green. He who seeks will find.

TK's characters are city dwellers but in several books he takes them out of town on different pretexts: to gather mushrooms, to go fishing, schoolchildren go and work in a collective farm, a band goes on a tour, journalists go to a summer camp. Kotter from Õismäe takes his sick dog and goes to live in a forest to let the animal die with dignity. *Green* as an epithet is definitely positive in TK's work, be it then traditional *greenhorn* or *green voice* in a slightly shifted meaning. Something significant, something that indicates the shape of the future is always going on in the natural environment. The sea is rarely used by TK and even if it is, it usually plays a minor role like in *Corrida* where it is used for the modelling of an island. The sea is not valued the way forest is.

Maybe this preference also has its roots in the landscapes of Iru. 'It was cool, dark and a little eerie under the old bird cherry tree. [---] Branches arched above our heads like a high cave or a church. Other branches bent to the ground forming an impenetrable wall.' That was the place where Leho told Peep about The Bony Hand – with hints that carried a sense of horror (Kallas 1997: 47ff). In their rare days in town together, Mother usually left Peep reading and having an ice cream 'in a small park', while she took care of her errands.

*Alley* is a word that often comes up in the titles of TK's books. According to him, the alleys in Tallinn are filled with peculiar greenish-bluish dusk. His boys and girls and other characters always have their meetings in the patches of greenery in the centre of Tallinn. The person who waits thinks his own thoughts, his ear registers the low hum of traffic and his eyes rest on living nature. This is a conscious interest. 'In the distance a searchlight lit up some linden trees. They were unnaturally bright green. [---] I had been interested in urban greenery, particularly in big urban trees before. I had noticed the strange relationship of these trees with urban lights (for example neon lamps, or a sunset in a slum).' (Kallas 1985: 5.)

One day, TK's natural liking for the colour green happened to coincide with

the activities of the green movement that found some other champions among the creative people in Estonia. TK's collection of short stories, *A Night in the Fourth Microdistrict*, has on its vivid green cover a giant apple tree, growing out of the roof of a Mustamäe building. But as early as in 1974, TK had written in the *Noorte Hääl* newspaper the review of Toomas Vint's first collection of short stories. The title of the book was *On Two Sides of the Tree-lined Road*, the title of the review was 'Inside a Green Picture, Between Prohibitory Signs'. 'Toomas Vint's paintings are usually so greenly green that one can't help wondering and worrying whether the green is really green and whether there're some other less green thoughts hidden behind it. Vint repeatedly emphasises his programme inserting rather bandit looking red-and-yellow prohibitory signs in his greenery – these signs that are customary or even suitable on city streets look horrible against the background of a green field or an alder thicket.' (Kallas 1982: 93–94.) This is also a classic sample of 'poetics', that is of the way the reviewer hid some political barbs in his text, in this case not even between the lines but in the way the words were arranged (...bandit looking ... red ... prohibitory ... horrible). But that was not the main purpose of TK's article; such small tricks were just a part of the game. The message was a different matter:

- The green ungreen of Toomas Vint's paintings affects emotions and seems mysterious and unexplainable like all art;
- Toomas Vint's short stories also promote the 'green' cause ('Humanity has in the course of civilisation's progress repeatedly invited itself back to the green world' – Kallas 1982: 95) but with a little too much emphasis on his programme conceptions, so that it flows
- into the joint chorus of the prose and poetry of the beginning of 1970s, condemning brutal townspeople who contaminate nature. 'Cursing towns and urbanisation has become as common a topic as the weather.' (Kallas 1982: 96.) True enough, that was a nuisance. But as new towns expanded, the anxiety created by them increased as well.

TK himself has lived in Mustamäe long enough but he has never achieved with it such an organic contact as with 'proper' Tallinn. He is nevertheless more tolerant of the new districts than creative intellectuals in general. It can't be said that the people in his novels, living in five- and nine-storey houses, feel too harassed by their environment. TK even admits the possibility of an aesthetic dimension, in the light below a cloud, for example, but first of all TK focuses

on the caricature features of the buildings, their superficial uniformity and the peculiarities of the road system (NB! The short story 'Earth').

He is not so tolerant of what happens in Lasnamäe, and especially from an ecological point of view: 'Man has too strongly interfered with what only recently was a natural environment that has been stabile for centuries' (Kallas 1982: 234).

Girls in the young TK's short stories were depicted according to the accepted female ideal of the 1950s and 1960s: they were pretty, plucky, active at school and determined to forge a future for themselves. If a pretty city girl happens to astonish a boy with some of her allures, then everything gets explained in the next page. Starting with TK's first novel *Jingle (Heliseb-kõliseb...*, 1972) it becomes more difficult for the male protagonist to understand his partner, although her activities and attitudes are still more or less reasonable. In *St. Nicholas Church* another, irrational dimension is added; it is irresistible and almost fatal.

They all know how to attract – but how can they find out who they really are? Considering TK's liking for the colour green, it is quite predictable that the landmark is green (*versus* red). You know a good woman from her green coat, green dress or green negligé. 'Meeli was wearing a light green morning gown. A green lamp burned in the room. A pine green blanket was on the bed. Rein suddenly had a vision of a forest in summer. A radio was quietly playing in one corner. A saxophone solo. The light on the panel burned green and calm.' (Kallas 1979: 119.)

This green cosiness is a bit kitschy. But Meeli is Rein's girl, his future wife and stands by him, come hell or high water.

In TK's gamma of greens there is also *green as grass*, the colour of fairies (cf. 'This lady had on a silk gown that was green as grass, and a velvet robe of the same colour, and her light hair fell on her shoulders. Her horse was milk white...' – Torupill 1978: 184). TK like many other writers has admitted being fascinated by fairy tales in his childhood (Kallas 1974: 425) but in his own work it is also possible to find occasional structural elements of fairy tales and allusions to fantastic stories. The colour red, and specifically the *colour of a ripe plum*, turns out to signify the seduction of a calculating mind. Women themselves, 'the fairy' Ivi Schmidt in the novel *Thirst* and the ripe red Viivika Mitt in *Eiseni Street* turn out to be symmetrical characters forming pairs (similar names, the same age, the same family situation), so that this 'binary opposition' can also be illustrated with TK's typical description of a street in the evening, where you can always see red

and green neon signs, traffic lights (and rain). In short, Viivika, Meeli and TK's other women from Tallinn are a little too conventionalised and therefore a little too unvarying.

In *St. Nicholas Church* TK introduces two young women from Southern Estonia, so they could have something of the natural green in them (and they do indeed) but first of all we see the typical case of self-assertion in a city.

'Ever since she was a little country girl, Ene had wanted to go and live in a big city'. She grew up and went there, she went by herself taking the risk, without a profession or education or useful connections. She starts very low, she has a high threshold for pain and she can live unbelievably frugally. At the same time, she is absolutely determined to achieve her aim. Using to the maximum effect her natural potential, her flexible mind, she soon finds her way into bohemian circles. Her perfectly designed image is spoilt only by one remnant of the past, 'coarse and uneducated stable laughter'. 'The former village girl must have forgotten for a moment her careful, her absolute city polish', thinks her partner, an artist (Kallas 1990b: 163). She affects the other sex strongly and on different levels, friends believe that she has a telepathic capacity or that she has some psychometric abilities. She doesn't leave dead bodies in her wake, just some living ones. So that she is almost a *femme fatale* – unfortunately that is not enough to get a decent living in this city, under the Soviet regime. The quickest way is to marry a man living in Tallinn. Helve chooses marriage, knowing that it will not last. Ene, who sticks to her own principles in her relationships with men, makes one error after another. There are scenes, abortions, elopements: the *look of a fugitive* is in her eyes.

But this type of woman cannot escape conventionalisation either. In the 1970s, the golden decade of fables, allegories, hidden meanings and analogies the possibilities of mythology were rediscovered. Enn Vetemaa wrote *The Memoirs of Kalevipoeg* and created a furor with his 'gender studies' in *The Field Guide to Estonian Naiads*. Mati Unt used the werewolf legend (*And We'll Go on Living If We Are Not Dead*). TK combines in his pastiche of Vetemaa the werewolf and witch images with her women who are new in Tallinn; he makes up their genealogy and drops such telling details as Ene's maiden name, which was *Jänes*, 'hare' (< werehare). Her legs are hairy and her back has scars the origin of which ('our old mare suddenly bolted and ran the hay rake over me' – Kallas 1990b: 62) fits a hare better than a human being.

Teet Kallas has created his Tallinn more or less according to Roland Barthes's principle of reality effect: dropping meaningless remarks in the course of expanding the situation, developing the action, structuring the work as a whole and other 'important' things (Barthes 2002: 105–116). These are random remarks and notes that are or are not (more often) in correlation with the feeling or the attitude of the subject recording them. In most cases it is not even important who is doing the recording – the narrator, some other characters or the omniscient author. The relationship with Tallinn is uniformly natural or even positive – in the case of native Tallinners and newcomers alike. According to the typology of human geography presented in the work *Place and Placelessness* by Edward Relph, and used in Kadri Tüür's study on Karl Ristikivi's novels (Tüür 2002), all the city people in TK's novels would belong to the category of local people, whereas in the two novels by Ristikivi Kadri Tüür managed to find only one group of characters having an unconditionally emphatic relationship with Tallinn. This group consisted of the natives of Tallinn, living in the working class flats in slums: 'For these people Tallinn is such a natural environment that they would definitely find the idea of observing and describing it strange' (Tüür 2002: 151). The relationship of all the other city people in Ristikivi's novels with their neighbourhood is uncertain, flawed, dissonant.

It is not the question of the lack of space and poor everyday life or even the lack of privacy (all these form an inseparable part of the everyday life of Teet Kallas's contemporaries). Tallinn in the end of the 1930s as described in Ristikivi's novels is not aware of these problems. However, there is a certain pattern in his houses and flats – the richer they are, the bleaker the life lived there is. Teet Kallas's Tallinn owes its inhabitants much. Frugality is a norm here. And still his Tallinners do not want to live anywhere else.

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## Teet Kallase Tallinn

### Kokkuvõte

Viljakail 1960. aastail kirjandusse tulnuist olid enamik tartlased või Tartu kultuurisfääris välja kujunenud, puht tallinlased vaid Enn Vetemaa, Arvi Siig, Aimée Beekman, Teet Kallas ja (reservatsioonidega) Arvo Valton. Neist Teet Kallasel on Tallinn ja tallinlased fookuses püsinud praktiliselt läbi kogu loomingu. TK omaeluloolised Tallinna puutuvad andmed sisalduvad tema kirjas M. Kaldale 3. III 2003, mis on kirjutatud viimase palvel ning artiklis ära toodud. Tallinnas sündinud (1943), asus ta siia elama koolipõlves – ”siis sai minust Tallinna fänn ja kauaks” – ja elab siin tänini.

TK kirjanduslik Tallinn on kodulinn, argine keskkond, mis elab sünkroonis tegelaste ning süžee liikumisega ja samas suveräänselt oma elu. Seda kogu aeg



olemasolevat ja funktsioneerivat linna tajutakse möödaminnes, nahatundega, silmanurgast, aga pidevalt. Signaale võetakse vastu vähem visuaalsete, rohkem teiste sensoorsete kanalite kaudu (möödukas liiklusmüra, trammid, peen vihm, lillakashall taevas; sage on hämarus ja õhtune tänav). Mõnede turismiobjektide ja kultuurimärkidega on TK protagonistidel – boheemlastest eakaaslastel – isiklik eksistentsiaalne suhe. Äratuntav on Tallinn aga neiski kirjeldustes ja marsruutidel, kus koordinaadid ebamäärased ega ole käepärast märgilisi aktsente.

TK essentsiaalne Tallinn asub südalinna selles osas, kus kohtuvad vanalinn ja XX sajandi algupoolel kerkinud esindus-Tallinn (Vabaduse väljak–Pärnu maantee–Viru tänav–Raekoja plats–Harju tänav). Siin asuvad ja seda ääristavad teatavasti mitmed Tallinna ajaloo ja arhitektuuri aarded, samas on selle kolmnurga sees ka tihedasti TK protagonistile hingelähedasi kohvikuid, baare ja restorane, koloriitseid munakivitatud sisehoove ja kangialuseid (debüütjutustus “Lugu Pikast”, romaan *Niguliste*). Absoluutseks keskpunktiks on polüfunktsionaalne Vabaduse plats, muuseas ka oma roheline külje tõttu. Tallinna puisteede ja parkide siniroheline valgus on TK proosa estetiseerivaks püsikomponendiks. Rohelise maailmavaate võttis ta spontaanselt omaks enne, kui see globaaltasandilt siinsete intellektuaalide laiema ringi teadvusse jõudis.

Hubane päris-Tallinn asub nendes piirides, milles ta oli TK enese lõplikult tallinlaseks saades, s.o 1950. aastate keskel. Erilise empaatiaga liigub ta näiteks Narva ja Tartu maantee vahelises kesklinna elurajoonis ja selle veidi stagneerunud, kuid põliselanikena eneseteadlikus eesti kogukonnas (romaan *Eiseni tänav*), samuti Kalamajas (novell “Veel midagi augustiorkaanist”). Hilisema Suur-Tallinnaga on suhe distantseeritum, kuid et koduruumina ei puudu Mustamäelgi oma (veidi groteskne) iseolemine, selle möönmiseks jätkub huumorimeelt nii TK-l (novellikogu *Õõ neljandas mikrorajoonis*, mudelromaan *Janu*) kui ka teistel tallinlastest kirjanikel. Tallinna elanike karakterse grupina tuleb eraldi mainida veel teovõimsaid tahtejõulisi tüdrukuid ja noori naisi. Nende seast vastassoole eriti köitvad on maapäritoluga, uskumatult vähenõudlikud, sihikindlad ja läbilöögivõimsad uustallinlannad. Nende areenile toomisega ennetas TK feministliku probleemaatika tulekut.

Käesoleva artikli esimene, umbes kolmandiku võrra siinsest lühem redaktsioon on ilmunud eesti keeles – vrd. Kalda, Maie 2003. Teet Kallase Tallinn. Looming, nr. 4, lk. 594–601.