

TEXTS OF TALLINN AND TARTU in ESTONIAN POETRY

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1. City, language and poetry

In poetry, city motifs are related to spheres that lie outside poetry – primarily to the material culture and different ideologies, as well as to other aspects of verbal culture, which reflect the meanings of material signs. The city as a social cultural environment is studied by sociosemiotics; city poetry is examined by literary theory or literary semiotics. At first sight, we seem to deal with two different fields of study, but a closer examination reveals that such differentiation is only fictitious: when studying the city and texts written about the city, in some way or other there arises the problem of correlation between matter and idea, their interaction and relations to humans. These are the very fields where sociosemiotics and literary theory can find some common areas or a point of contact. This is a border area, where poetry mixes with reality, where the former feed the latter, and where literature acquires an essential function. Sociosemiotician Mark Gottdiener, while writing about the role of material culture in creating ideologies and meanings, does not discuss fiction, but focuses on the city and society. He points out that social context and social environment have an important role in the emergence of meanings and "...all material culture, embodied codified ideology and was, in fact, the material expression of ideology, just as their codified ideology presupposed its expression in material forms. There is, then, a complex relation between semantic fields and material culture..." (Gottdiener 1995: 54.) In addition to that we can mention that ideology is, in its turn, unavoidably related to language and that literature, including poetry, is embodied in it. Stuart Hall also considers language as a privileged medium: "...language is the privileged medium in which we 'make sense' of things, in which meaning is produced and exchanged. [---] So language is central to meaning and culture and has always been regarded as the key repository of cultural values and meanings. [---] Language is able to do this because it operates as a *representational*

system. In language, we use signs and symbols – whether they are sounds, written words, electronically produced images, musical notes, even objects – to stand for or represent to other people our concepts, ideas and feelings. Language is one of the 'media' through which thoughts, ideas and feelings are represented in a culture. Representation through language is therefore central to the processes by which meaning is produced." (Hall 1997: 1.) Thus, while describing the relations between material and ideological spheres, we cannot bypass language, which relates these two spheres, and literature that uses language.

Vladimir Toporov writes in his article "A Material Object in an Anthropocentric Perspective" that language is a medium between human beings and everything else that exists in the world with them in case it can be described by language.¹ According to Toporov, the dependence on language determines two spheres in this world – "the sphere lying under language" (*"подъязыковая"*) and "the sphere above language" (*"надъязыковая"*). Not only does language determine these spheres, but it also refers to both the lower, material sphere and the higher, ideal and spiritual sphere. Language binds these two spheres together (Toporov 1995: 7), or, if we proceed from man, who speaks the language, man relates to these two spheres via language. Toporov's theory is vertical in character, it primarily discusses the relations between the material and the idea, but it is not lacking a horizontal, historical perspective, dealing with the semantic fields related to material culture. When Toporov speaks about the city of St. Petersburg, the foundation of which was strongly ideological in itself (Toporov 1993: 204), which was the material expression of ideology as conceived by Gottdiener, the initial ideology does not vanish even later; it becomes the source material for oral and written texts and works of art inspired by the city, at the same time collecting and drawing new layers from social environment and literature, which, in their turn, become the sources for fiction and art. Thus, a continuous circulation is in process in the semantic fields of the city, which Gottdiener conceives as a symbolic interaction, greatly dependent on communicational processes (Gottdiener 1995: 74).

¹ "... потенциально-универсального характера языка и из его посреднической, в широком смысле слова, функций: язык посреднически связывает между собой как людей, общающихся друг с другом с помощью языка, так и всё, что есть в мире, с человеком, если только это всё может быть выражено в языке" (Торогов 1995: 7).

At the same time, both Gottdiener and Toporov agree upon the point that material signs have their meaning as well. According to Toporov, each city has a "language" of its own, which talks to us through its streets, squares, islands, gardens, monuments, people and history. In its way this is a heterogeneous text, a substratum, which can be reconstructed in certain sign systems – texts.² Toporov uses quotation marks when talking about the "language" of the city, meaning that actually, this is still a language in its metaphorical sense. A material object gives an impulse for the creation of a text, for expressing one's subjective experience. Therefore it is possible to create extremely different texts about one and the same object, and to apply them to serve different ideologies. The stones (of the city) do not talk, but man attributes words to the stones: Toporov believes that texts of fiction and underlying myths often determine the forming of the text of the city, as an example he offers the *text of St. Petersburg*, which he has analysed (Toporov 1993: 209).

Gottdiener differentiates between the practice of signifying and communication, which is a widespread method in semiotics. Material signs have not been created for the immediate purpose of communication: material elements that have initially been related to the city have a denotative meaning, only social environment and different behaviours produce connotations and secondary, social meanings: "Layered on top of this denotative level, however, social behaviours produce connotations that convey a second meaning which represent a more socially inscribed message" (Gottdiener 1995: 66). Thereby, the texts written about the city also have connotative meanings. Gottdiener considers the acknowledgement of the meanings of the material level important: "In semiotics it is as important to recognise the power of first-order significations, which make the objective world meaningful through the creation of sign functions ... as it is to ac-

² "Как и всякий другой город, Петербург имеет свой "язык." Он говорит нам своими улицами, площадями, водами, островами, садами, зданиями, памятниками, людьми, историей, идеями, и может быть понят как своего рода гетерогенный текст, которому приписывается некий общий смысл и на основании которого может быть реконструирована определенная система знаков, реализуемая в тексте. Как некоторые другие значительные города, Петербург имеет и свои мифы, в частности, аллегоризирующий миф об основании города и его демиурге... С этим мифом своими корнями связан миф о "Медном Всаднике," оформленный в знаменитой поэме Пушкина, ставшей одной из главных составных частей Петербургского текста, хотя мифологизация этой фигуры царственного Всадника началась значительно раньше. [...] Пушкин и Гоголь как основатели традиции; Достоевский как ее гениальный оформитель..." (Toporov 1995: 274–277.)

knowledge the way social processes layer meaning upon meaning onto material culture through second-order connotations that may convey communication and intentional messages, or the creation of cultural sign vehicles. It is the latter process, ... which requires recognition of the role of social context or the relevance of semantic fields in any semiotic event." (Gottdiener 1995: 66.) Although one and the same sign may have several aspects – it may be an icon, an index, as well as a symbol, Gottdiener considers indexical relation as the most important in case of material objects (Gottdiener 1995: 67). Based on the work of Charles S. Peirce, he is of the opinion that all signs have not been created intentionally for the purpose of communication, then from the standpoint of communication, an index is an unmotivated sign, the receiving of which is based on stimulation, on the spiritual associative experience of the receiver (Gottdiener 1995: 61). Although Toporov does not mention the index, the essence of the *substratum* related to the beginning of his text of the city also resembles an indexical sign, out from which grows the object, supported by associative experience.

The *substratum* is the central notion in Toporov's analysis of the text of St. Petersburg. He points out two substrata of the text of the city: the first is formed by concrete literary texts about the city, which also shape the attitude towards St. Petersburg as a city; and the second is based on material and spiritual culture, and natural and historical material. These two substrata form the basis for the shaping of metaphysics surrounding the city, which is expressed by language, literature and poetry. From the viewpoint of literature, these substrata can be called literary and non-literary substrata, since Toporov's analysis of the text of St. Petersburg reveals the importance of fiction in the forming of the text of the city. On the one hand, Toporov simply describes how the text about a city as a material environment is formed, and how the material substratum, "lying under language" gets into poetry and becomes poetry/literature, and how it is reflected back into the spiritual sphere surrounding the city. On the other hand, he points out an important factor in the birth of fiction: literature, including literature written about the city, can be born on the basis of the earlier texts, as well as it can be based on the non-literary aspects (nature descriptions, historical memory stored in documents, etc.). Very often, all these components are intertwined and used together (Toporov 1993: 213).

Regarding the spiritual sphere, Toporov believes that myths about the city, which are the basis of literature, are of great importance. In the case of St. Pe-

tersburg, we can mention the myth about the Copper Rider, brought into literature by Pushkin with his poem under the same title. Another creator of the tradition of the theme of St. Petersburg is Gogol, and Dostoyevsky developed it further. There are still more authors who have had a role in developing the text of St. Petersburg. Thus, the text of St. Petersburg joins together the voices of the writers of St. Petersburg, and through them, the whole of Russia. And the text of St. Petersburg gives voice to St. Petersburg itself, which is simultaneously the object and the subject of this text (Toporov 1993: 210). At the same time, all the knowledge, both the present and the past, about the text of the city is layered into literature. In the course of time this knowledge may become a cliché, which very often can influence social attitudes so strongly that one can form a picture of the metaphysics of the city through literature without visiting the city even once.

Toporov's substrata also find their place in the triad uniting the material and the spiritual, created by Gottdiener in the vein of Peirce: "...only socio-semiotics tries to account for the entire three-way complex of material forms, Symbolic Interaction and signs in daily life – that is, the articulation of codified ideology (the form of the content), social context (the substance of content and its "pre-signifiers"), and material forms (the substance and form of the expression)" (Gottdiener 1995: 74).

But while Gottdiener's material forms constitute the subject and form of the expressional plane, which is given its meaning by ideology and social context, Toporov's substrate is a meaningful unity, consisting of a material object and some idea, which this material object may carry in different contexts, or an idea which is expressed by a material object. When such a sign is set into a new (social) context, it may acquire a new meaning, but it also may take its old meaning into the new context. Such horizontal moving and layering of meanings can best be observed in language and literary fiction. At the same time, all this literary material belongs to the semantic field of the city, forming a decisive part of the text of the city, of the things we believe the city stones are telling us. Thus, the city acquires a meaning when surrounded by legends, stories, ideas, spirit and thoughts.

2. City in poetry

In the following we shall examine the depiction and usage of the texts of two major Estonian cities – Tartu and Tallinn – in poetry.

2.1. Tartu

It is common knowledge that no written sources concerning the foundation of the town of Tartu have survived. Foreigners passing through the town during their travels in the 15th century wrote the first descriptions of Tartu. But already these few notes give an idea of the town of the time – there are a number of old buildings, streets and churches mentioned by those long-gone travellers, which are inseparable from present-day Tartu as well, also emerging again and again in the works of fiction. The diaries written in the 15th century and the minutes of the town council of the 16th century describe Tartu as a beautiful small town of stone buildings, among them many churches and large monasteries. The streets of Lai, Munga, Kүүtri and Gildi have been mentioned as important streets (Raid 1999: 1–2). Tartu was glamorous and beautiful for the next couple of centuries as well. A student of *Academia Gustaviana*, Johan Risingh, describes Tartu as a glorious and rich town in his panegyric given in 1637. Among other things he mentions that "the shape of the town of Tartu is almost circular, so it can be considered as heart-shaped, thus the town deserves glorification for this fact as well" (Risingh 1996: 25). These old descriptions reveal the fact that Tartu was famous all over Livonia; it had magnificent churches with tall spires (Risingh counts seven of them in the town) and it was surrounded by powerful fortifications and high and thick walls (Risingh 1996: 25). The university was founded at about the same time; it inseparably belongs into the text of Tartu, and into the spiritual atmosphere, which at the beginning was created by foreign students and professors. Customarily to the Classicism of the 17th century these foreigners loved to describe Tartu as a location resembling the Greek idyll. A friend of Risingh's, Ericus Litorius, seconds this in a dedication poem of his own: "...this oration is about the town of Tartu, / about the Tartu loved by the nymphs" (Risingh 1996: 38). It seems that before the devastating Nordic War, Tartu, being an architecturally and spiritually typical town of the Middle Ages, strove towards new heights, and the image of Tartu as a low and planar town came into being much later. But Estonian poetry is dominated just by this later Tartu, much ravished by history; the originally wonderful buildings as the material substratum of the text of the town are represented in an entirely different shape in the texts of poetry and in the text of Tartu. Although Tartu had repetitiously been ravished by wars in earlier times as well, the ruins had never been so

significant in the text of the town as after the Nordic War. Risingh mentions ruins as well: "Houses were once magnificently built. The fact that there stood the most imposing buildings is confirmed by the most truthful stories told by people who once lived here; on the other hand, we are in the most obvious way convinced in this also by the ruins that are standing as the witnesses of the madness of the war. The heights of the roofs of the bigger houses tell the same story." (Risingh 1996: 27.)

Besides the university, the Emajõgi River has attained a permanent place in the text of Tartu. The nickname of the town – Athens-upon-Emajõgi – nicely joins together the referral to the town of university and wisdom and to the river flowing through it. It also refers to the capital of Attica, an Old Greek centre of culture and education, the protecting goddess of which was Pallas Athena, the goddess of wisdom and reason. Risingh's Emajõgi is a deep, navigable river of slow current and clean, healthy water, rich in fish. There are many clean and healthy springs in the town. The climate of Tartu is also mild – not too cold or hot, and the soil is extremely rich; all conditions favour trading (Risingh 1996: 29). We can see that the natural substratum of Tartu predominantly carries a positive sign; it is not hostile or dangerous, contrary to the myths of many other towns. In the case of Tartu, nature and culture are not opposed, although the Tartu of the time is treated as a big city, and its historical fate is compared to those of Rome, Troy, Jerusalem, Samaria and Carthage with the aim of showing how many wars it takes to make a city into a waste-land (Kivimäe 1996: 42).

Thus, in the 17th century, the semantic field of Tartu still carried the idea of Tartu as a city, and due to the mixing of the substrata of spiritual and natural cultures, Tartu was seen as a town that resembled those of Ancient Greece. It was seen as an Arcadian place that created the impression of a mild and friendly town despite its strong fortifications and dominating stone buildings. Together with the material and natural substrata, this mildness is still reflected in the present-day text of Tartu and in the modern poetry created about Tartu.

The first known poem created by an Estonian, representing Tartu as a town, was written in the beginning of the 18th century. This is the well-known "Lamentation for the Destruction of Tartu," also known as *Oh, ma vaene Tarto liin!* ("Oh, I Am the Poor Town of Tartu") by Käsü Hans, depicting the story of the conquest and destruction of Tartu during the Nordic War. This text retrospectively reflects the previous ideology of the city, which had praised the glamour of

Tartu, and the material substratum of the previous centuries, but Käsü Hans rather sees the glory of the town as a negative feature, as a reason for its downfall, and he uses the material substratum of the text of the town in the service of another – religious – ideology. August Annist points out two thematic and ideological aims of the lament: "first, to depict most truly and factually the sad fate of Tartu in 1704–1708, stressing the sentimental element; and second, to show that everything that had happened in this story of suffering was God's punishment meted out on the citizens of Tartu for their sins, and to morally (and patriotically) influence other Livonian towns" (Annist 1993: 142).

First, Käsü Hans renders the picture of the town before its devastation and of its meaning for the whole of Livonia: "I was a very famous town / in the whole of Livonia: / all precious things / were inside me; / academy had been set up, / a great court of justice was here / inside me before" (Sõnarine 1989: 19). Although Academia Gustavo-Carolina was operating in Pärnu during the war, in his text Käsü Hans mentioned the university as an important element, which had brought fame to Tartu. The author also depicts lively trading and how Tartu had lived in wealth and happiness, but also in arrogance, callousness and ungodliness. Although this description is mostly based on the same material substratum, which had inspired the foreign students of the 17th century, the Estonian parish clerk sees such pride and glory as a sin: we can see two opposing ideologies – classical ideology, which is oriented to Ancient culture, and Lutheran ideology. Another important source to this text is the historical background, the depiction of the events that took place in the town during the Russian conquest.

Käsü Hans did not use the previous literary substratum of Tartu in his text; at the same time, the characteristic style of chorales, promoting godliness, refers iconically to the Bible: "The whole structure of the text is then completely normal and in accordance with the customary philosophy of the history of the Christian church, where great disasters are seen as God's punishment for all kinds of sins of masses of people, and as an edifying lesson for the rest of the world" (Annist 1993: 142). Annist also points out the fact that in the composition of Käsü Hans's lamentation, some authors have found some similar features to the appendix to Johann Hornung's and Adrian Virginius's *Ma Kele Koddo ning Kirgo Ramat* ("The Country-Language Home and Church Book"), titled *Jerusalemmi-Lina Ärrahäetamissest* ("About the Destruction of Jerusalem"), which is a translation of the adaptation of an German-language study *The Jewish*

War by Jewish historian Josephus Flavius. After some comparison of these texts, Annist concludes that Käsü Hans had not consciously imitated the story of the destruction of Jerusalem, although he had, without a doubt, beforehand read the story, as well as the occasional poems of the time written by Germans. "The introduction of Käsü Hans's story is completely different, giving a broad overview of the general situation in Tartu, and attempting to underline certain moral crimes, but the element of prediction (in the bellowing of the priests) is of small importance here. The above-mentioned Christian morale is rather unnoticeable in the story of Jerusalem, but it is an overwhelming main principle in Käsü Hans's story..." (Annist 1993: 145.) Annist believes that Käsü Hans had been influenced by other stories in the Bible, for instance, by the lamentation of Jeremiah, which "...resembles Hans's lamentation in its tonality, and where Judaea had been personified in more or less the same way as Hans has personified Tartu" (Annist 1993: 147). The Bible is a work where texts are deeply intertwined with each other, and where one event is repeatedly referred to in different wordings and with different symbols. The Old and New Testaments are closely connected with each other and the arrival of the Messiah or Jesus Christ has repeatedly been predicted in the Old Testament. The Bible also repeatedly reflects the wrath of God because of the sinful life of the people in different texts, and describes the catastrophes caused by this wrath. Everything begins with the Flood, followed by the descriptions of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and Jerusalem and other cities or kingdoms up to the apocalyptic visions of the Book of Revelations. A repetitive scheme has been followed when describing these great destructions, where God is angry with the sinful people, whom He decides to destroy; but there are also godly men, such as Noah and Lot, who are saved and spared, so that the mankind would be able to carry on. In such stories of destruction, there are two important aspects – historicity, as well as the propagation of Christian morale and godliness. Intertextuality of the Bible serves, thus, the aims of prophesying the arrival of the evangelical Jesus Christ as the Saviour, and the propagation of Christian ethics and morale. The latter aim is also served by Käsü Hans's lamentation for Tartu, which could as well be a kind of story like Sodom and Gomorrah, Jerusalem or any other place destroyed by God – in the Peircean sense, these are iconic signs. The prophets of the Bible very often spoke about the places that had already been destroyed and about the places that were still to be destroyed in the future. For example, the

Book of Isaiah tells about the destruction of Jerusalem: "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. [---] Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." (Isaiah I: 7–9.) "For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord... The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not... Woe unto their soul!" (Isaiah III: 8–9.) While in the 17th century, when comparing Tartu with these destroyed cities of old times, it was a sign of pride to show that Tartu could be added to this glorious list, then this glory just as it came to its end with Käsü Hans, because the material substratum that had carried a positive sign before, suddenly acquired a negative meaning. Such transformation emerges again and again in the poetry of later times, although, nowhere near to such force.

According to the new ideology, which became fixed in Käsü Hans's text, Tartu was a town built by humans; it acted against the will of God and was punished so that the others could learn their lesson. As a comparison, we can examine the ideological city of Moscow, as treated by Yuri Lotman and Boris Uspenski – the Third Rome, a godly city chosen by God and set as a model to the others, but also the inheritor of political power (Lotman 1999: 303–319). Although the idea of Sodom does not dominate the text of Tartu – the lamentation of Käsü Hans only represents its time, and the ideology of an arrogant and sinful town is not prevalent in the semantic field of Tartu – the town has nevertheless been deprived of its godly glory. Rather, in the texts of later times we can observe a quiet, low-lying town, where only ruins bear testimony to its former glory, and in a sense, it really resembles a ravaged place, a figurative waste land.

Another antithesis reveals itself in Käsü Hans's text besides the ideological one – the age-long opposition of town and country: "Here, we can hear the embitterment of Estonian peasants over the arrogance and greed of the townspeople, who unconcernedly observe how country people are burnt by their common enemy. The relative wealth and luxury of the townspeople, when compared with the hard life of the peasants, who suffer under serfdom, had already bred much bitterness. The same had been the result of the merchants' customary attempts to cheat their buyers from the country with too scanty or even falsified measures and extremely high prices. [---] We can be sure that there were also real discrep-

ancies and contradictions between the common townspeople and "intellectuals," especially academic citizens, as it has been observed in many university towns." (Annist 1993: 143–144.) Thus, everything that had inspired foreign travellers and students proved to be negative for Estonian peasants, and the semantic field of Tartu acquired new oppositions between the townspeople and country people, peasants and merchants, familiar and alien – all these being the features that spoil the previous Arcadian image and underline tensions.

Regarding the depiction of conflicts and tensions, we could include Henrik Visnapuu in the same list with Käsü Hans, since he does not see Tartu as the Athens-upon-Emajõgi or the Town of Taara (an ancient Estonian god), but as a corrupt town, which he opposes to the country and nature:

*Butchers are lurking in the country inns of
Reola, Kilgi, Tõrvandi, Parve and Valgeristi;
Women watch where the road enters the town,
Shouting: give us pigs, calves, eggs!
The peasants are robbed of their merchandise,
Before they even enter the town.*
(Sõnarine 1992: 86.)

Visnapuu's Tartu again resembles a sinful town such as Sodom. The material substratum, similar to Käsü Hans's lamentation, again has proved to be with a negative sign; but most clearly, Visnapuu opposes the country and the town. Again, we deal with poetry depicting the life of its time, and its aim is to draw attention to the dark sides of life. The social background of the poem is so wide that the connotation forcibly inclines towards the general criticism of the times – the main subject of Visnapuu's verses is not specially Tartu, his soul is tormented by the lack of morals of the town as a phenomenon. We could say that this time, the voice of the country people is heard through the poems about Tartu.

The idea of Tartu as a university town has persisted up to our times. The poetisation of the spiritual atmosphere of Tartu in the vein of Athens-upon-Emajõgi from the viewpoint of national romanticism was begun with Lydia Koidula's second collection of poetry, "The Nightingale of the Emajõgi" (*Emajõe ööbik*) (1867):

*O, Emajõgi – I see again
Your good smelling banks!
[---]
You holy Estonian river!
How you inspire my thoughts!
O, Emajõgi, where Vanemuine's language
Still flourishes,
Where we can still hear
His song and zither;
Where the young still remember
The words and deeds of Kalev
And recall the glory
Of old times
Where tall pillars stand
On his grave
And give spiritual light
To my Estonia.
(Koidula 1969: 77).*

Tall pillars mark the university (Koidula 1969: 520), the influence of which spills over the whole of Estonia. The academic reference is seconded by a mythological substratum, which is important for the national identity of Estonians – Vanemuine, Kalev's son and all the spiritual atmosphere has been drawn together upon the natural substratum, the Emajõgi. In Koidula's work nature dominates, not the substratum of material culture; the only exception is the university, but even the university is metonymically signified and related to the Emajõgi. At the same time, we are dealing with one of the most classical texts about Tartu, which is, in an indirect way, even today still shaping the text of Tartu.

Contrary to this, Juhan Sütiste represents a realistic, nonidealised vision of Tartu. Of natural substratum, he mentions the meadows of the Emajõgi, dusty streets, the dusty hill of Toomemägi and the drying Emajõgi river. The university, which at the beginning seems to be a Mecca, acquires a negative meaning, since the tuition is for a fee (Sütiste 1999: 473–480). Sütiste represents the viewpoint of poor people, without any idealising or mythologising, he is worried

about the real state of values in his home town; this is a message of a disintegrating, derelict home town, which is still dear to his heart:

*There is still an inscription
On the bridge on Toomemägi,
Telling us that rest brings new strength,
But we cannot help the fact that
The bridge itself is rather tired.
Everything changes, fades, sags,
My hometown becomes mute,
And a thorn pierces my heart...
(Sütiste 1999: 479).*

In the poetry of later times the material sphere of Tartu acquires additional meanings and the text of Tartu begins to discuss the fate of the whole of Estonia. Political hints obtain a special importance and the sphere of material culture rises to the foreground. When Kalju Lepik writes about the Tartu of the Soviet times in his poem, "The Shadow of the Stone Bridge" (*Kivisilla vari*), he counts the characteristic buildings and other objects of Tartu and personifies them. The ruins of the Stone Bridge, the shadow of Lake Peipsi, other ruins and other objects become indexical signs that point to the occupation and the war. He uses almost all elements of the material substratum of the text of Tartu: Jaani Church, red brick ruins of the Dome Church, the conglomeration of the Kauba-hoov shops, Barclay Square, the Observatory, Toomemägi and the Emajõgi. "Students in colourful caps / on Rütli and Kүүtri Streets" refers to the university (Lepik 1990: 420). All these objects acquire the function of indexes in relation with Tartu, being as signs, in an immediate relationship with the objects they signify. At the same time they also form a metonymy, depicting the atmosphere of the Tartu of the Soviet times. Some characteristic features of Tartu stand in ruins; they have collapsed and express the life that has been turned upside down. Therefore we can say that in Kalju Lepik's poems, the present of the occupation and the past of the memories are opposed: Tartu as it had once existed has again been wiped from the earth just as Sodom was, or Jerusalem or Zion, and only memories are left. The substratum of material culture simultaneously carries a negative sign in the form of ruins, and a positive sign in the form of memories. The ruins are so depressing that even nature suffers from them:

"The shadow of the collapsed Stone Bridge / lies over the Emajõgi as iron fog" (Lepik 1990: 420). Lake Peipsi as an object bordering Russia acquires a negative meaning as well – the ominous shadow of the lake threatens to bury even the memories, the symbol of which is the material sign – the Stone Bridge.

Jaan Kaplinski has skilfully hidden political hints under the natural substratum. His poetry again gives rise to the ideology of Tartu as a quiet and friendly town, this ideology is carried by the undoubtedly positive natural substratum – nature lives its customary life despite all political regimes and is opposed to the silent political reality. Tartu seems to be passive just in spheres related to human activities:

*Winter night no people only lanterns in the windows
snow traces and that what remains if you withdraw for a time
from cars everyday life – big and good Pax Tartuenssis
Tartu peace Sunday holds a child by the hand
and takes him to Toome to watch swans in the botanical garden...*
(Kaplinski 1972: 17).

Such silent resistance also refers to the continuity with the 1930s – Kaplinski's poetry reveals the old substratum of spiritual culture in all its concealedness and intelligent ignoring, in its turning to nature as an apolitical sphere. At the same time, just this silent resistance, this being in opposition is one of the most important substrata of spiritual culture that characterises the text of Tartu of the 20th century.

The poetry of the recent years greatly uses the same substrata of the text of the town, but it attempts to break its former meanings. Generally, the image is realistic and thus resembles the version offered by Juhan Sütiste, but it is much more exaggerated: Sven Kivisildnik writes that the Emajõgi stinks and it is drying up, garbage flows under the bridge. The university has acquired importance, since it transforms a fishermen's village into a university town (Kivisildnik 1997: 2–9). Just as it used to be, the town district across the river, situated on a low flood plain, is again important for the poets (Hirv 2000: 1738–1739). The streets of this district had once been characterised as swampy and full of holes, as health hazards with an almost unbearable stink (Raid 1999: 44–45). The stink has disappeared long ago, but the river is still here and it still inspires poets. Maybe many people still think about Tartu as a low, quiet and peaceful small

town because despite its new, negative meaning, Emajõgi has still preserved its previous positive meaning, expressed in the poetry of Lydia Koidula and many others. We could say that the old meanings have not been entirely dissolved, since the substrata of the text of Tartu are firmly embedded in the Estonian language and the collective memory of the people.

2.2. Tallinn

Tallinn is best characterised by the phrase, "one or two epithets do not suffice to reveal its uniqueness. Tallinn is an ancient city, a sea city, a stony city, a city of towers, a capital city" (Kaplinski 1995: 5). The first written sources from the 12th century tell us that at that time Tallinn was a small town resembling a large castle. Throughout history, it was more and more fortified; the city wall was built, which was the "biggest, most expensive, and most impressive erection in the Tallinn of the Middle Ages" (Kaplinski 1995: 10–18). Therefore, it is only natural that due to its material sphere, due to the Old Town with towers and modern high-rise buildings, even today Tallinn seems to strive for new heights. The text of Tallinn is diverse and the ancient Old Town, especially its walls and towers, form its primary substratum of material culture. Thanks to its long and complex history, the material substratum of Tallinn is related to numerous legends and myths, applying to concrete places and houses, as well as to the whole of the city (see Goldman, Kaldoja 1991). Some motifs, moods or impressions of the legends have found their way into the works of fiction. They also reflect the spiritual sphere of the city, which seems to be positive as a rule, and the overcoming of hardships. For instance, one legend about the foundation of the city relates: "The city emerged and grew to be the pride of the fathers, the arrogance of the sons, a hideaway for young men, a place of joy for girls; it gave joy to the youth and inspired the old" (Goldman, Kaldoja 1991: 4).

But Tallinn became the motif for poetry much later than Tartu. In the text of Tartu, we can find different relations between architecture and nature, but the text of Tallinn seems to be based mainly on the substratum of material culture, and the fact is reflected in poetry as well, but the text still carries a positive meaning as a rule. Lydia Koidula already wrote: "In Tallinn tall towers / Rise to the sky, / Alert guards stand at its gates, / Proudly keeping watch." (Koidula 1969: 500). The substratum of the material culture of Tallinn is something reli-

able, it remains almost unchanged throughout many centuries and as such, enters literature – the towers are always tall, the walls are wide, the Old Town is full of interesting corners and nooks, on Toompea stands a firm and powerful castle. According to one legend Tallinn was called a virgin, because no enemies had been able to conquer it. The legend also stressed the smartness and unanimity of the townspeople, which helped them to defeat their enemies (Goldman, Kaldoja 1991: 15–16). The semantic field, ideologies and social context of the Old Town of Tallinn are continuously changing and the strong substratum of material culture enables any (political) ideology to use the material sphere in their own interest. Due to the fact that Tallinn is the capital city, it is very closely connected with power and very often that power can be heard in the text of the city, since the poet may serve the power. At the same time, the connection with power reaches far back into history – the very name of Tallinn reflects the fact that it had once belonged to Denmark, and its other widely known name Reval (Ревель) tells us about German and Russian powers. Thus we can also understand Juhan Liiv, whose poem "Tallinn" creates an unusual environment for the city:

*You, old castle, you stand
Surrounded by fog,
Just as if the darkness and fog
Boiled and swirled out of you.
(Liiv 1989: 73).*

Actually, fog is not a characteristic natural substratum for the text of Tallinn, and in this text it renders the meaning of darkness and mystery, rather being negative than positive, and transferring this meaning to the old castle, which may seem neutral in the beginning.

This poem by Juhan Liiv is exceptional in its nature. In the usual interpretation of the text of Tallinn, the positive and firm substratum of material culture is harnessed to serve ideology, just as in the following poem by Johannes Barbarus:

*Manly town – robed in the embroidery of centuries.
Bearing itself proudly– the heavy cloak of the past
[---]
Is open, it does not withhold your steps,
You have escaped the bloody yoke,*

*And your brave sons have pushed the deathly
Sign of swastika off Tõnismägi and Toompea
And for ever hoisted the flag of freedom.
(Barbarus 1970: 88).*

A number of signs of the ancient Tallinn have been burdened with a new ideology: Toompea, the old walls, the old name of the town Lindanisa, and several elements of the natural substratum, such as the sea, the wind and others. Barbarus, just like Koidula, first of all finds the unconquerable masculine castle in the text of Tallinn; its firm and strong walls offer support to any ideology.

While Barbarus has harmoniously harnessed the substrata of material culture and nature to serve one and the same theme, Debora Vaarandi's poem "The Threshold of Tallinn" (*Tallinna lävi* – Sõnarine 1993: 8) from the same period has been constructed upon contrasts: the sea and the waves express permanence, and the wind – tenderness. The boulevards and the trees, being the sphere related to human culture, have already grown wild and the substratum of material culture has been destroyed in the war. Vaarandi's poem does not bear any ideology, but stems from human emotions and sympathises with those who had suffered in the war.

Just as in the case of Tartu, the material substratum of the text of Tallinn also acquires a negative meaning right in the sociocritical poetry. The poem "A Walk in Tallinn" (*Ringkäik Tallinnas* – Sõnarine 1992: 129), written by Jaan Kärner in 1929, is a sociocritical image of a rather big town, containing such elements characteristic to the text of Tallinn, which can be related to the city of modern times as well: speed, swirling, speeding, a market, a factory, an office, a shop, and cars. For Kärner, Tallinn is not only an ancient Old Town any more, but a modern industrial and market city, which is even hostile to people; and the spiritual substratum is orientated to the material one.

The more important substrata that had been layered into the text of Tallinn up to the year of 1940 have been exposed in Juhan Sütiste's large cycle of poems, "Old Tallinn" (*Vana Tallinn* – Sütiste 1999: 183–194). "It unrolls descriptive panoramic views and reminiscences of history, witnessing the festivities of the anniversary of the Republic, and concluding with the call for independent up-building of the state" (Muru 1999: 535). Sütiste uses a number of buildings from the material substratum in his work: St. Olof's Church, Tall Hermann, Toom-

pea, Nevski Cathedral, Fat Margareete, Jaani Church, the Town Hall tower, the power station, city walls, towers, factories, workers' dwelling houses, etc.; streets and places in the city: the Palace Square, the streets of Lühike Jalg and Pikk Jalg, Viru Street, Rannamägi hill, Harjumägi hill, Paljassaare peninsula, etc. Of natural objects, he mentions, for instance, the grey sky, sharp wind, the damp air, storms, the windy coastline, water, rain, snow and snowstorms, ice, the sun – all of which in most cases refer to changeability and form a contrast to the material substratum, which expresses firmness and steadiness. Hints to history originate from the spiritual culture: the reigns of the Teutonic Order and Russian Czar, the Middle Ages, the celebration of the anniversary of the Republic, etc. The mythical sphere of life is referred to in the verses: "And it is told: in this house of ghosts / painful sobs can still be heard" (Sütiste 1999: 185), or "the lake made up of Linda's tears" (Sütiste 1999: 194). And Sütiste concludes with a feeling of invincibility, originating from ancient myths: "Stay forever on the coast of the bay of the blue sea / and powerfully guard the door to the Gulf of Finland! [---] Renounce the glitter of foreign powers / and find a path among your own people. / Reject all obsolete, / create yourself a new life from spirit, land and water!" (Sütiste 1999: 194). When Debora Vaarandi, being far from her homeland a few years later, wrote poems about Tallinn, she mostly used material from the same substrata to render her memories about her home town (see e.g. Vaarandi 1966: 5, 6, 32, 44). Some of these substrata have found their place in Estonian post-war poetry, but a number of new aspects have been added to them.

Tallinn stands at the crossroads of different cultures and ideologies; the fact renders variety and diversity to its text, and Tallinn gets more and more prevalence as a big city. In this sense, we can see the continuation of Jaan Kärner's line in poetry, depicting the life of the city as a dizzy whirlwind. Debora Vaarandi's poem, "A Dark Tunnel" (*Tume tunnel*), written in 1971, focusing on a picture of Viru Street, swaying with crowds, depicts a really hellish, vicious environment as seen through the eyes of a child, who still does not "...understand what it means to choose / between evil or good" (Sõnarine 1993: 29). There are many legends related to the devil, the main theme of which is being for sale, in the mythical sphere of Tallinn. The best known among them is probably the story about the trader in human skins, Pontus (see Goldman, Kaldoja 1991: 44–45), written into a ballad by Marie Under in the 1920s (Under 1981: 265–269). Thus, the devil has always been present in Tallinn, and there are many devilish temptations in

the city: "I want to get silk stockings / I want shimmy shoes / the pale figure of the Shadowman / strolls to meet me on the corner of the street" (Sõnarine 1993: 30), wrote Debora Vaarandi. The same theme, but in a more modern shape, has recently been used by Toomas Liiv in his collection of poems, *Achtung* (2000). He also imagines that the devil exists everywhere and enjoys himself in his altered self among the capitalist abundance of goods and shopping boom: "...I see the devil among the heaps of clothing ... [---] he is a Baltic-German devil, the bastard of barons, / the devil in the (Tallinn) Supermarket, the common brood of / Toompea and downtown, / the slavery of seven hundred years..." (Liiv 2000: 16). Liiv binds together historical material and modern vision, stemming from daily politics, emphasising, for instance, the geographical location and military functions of Tallinn as a fortified city. At the same time we have to mention that individuals – the townspeople – who often cause or determine the course of events, occupy an important position in the mythical sphere of Tallinn and also in poetry. Even Toomas Liiv writes: "...The devil is not in the Supermarket at all, / he is in yourself, you cannot shoot him with a Makarov pistol..." (Liiv 2000: 17). In such a way, we are justified to say that modern poetry treats the text of Tallinn as a place, the walls of which rather contain an abundance of personal feelings, not social ideologies.

The romantic side of the text of Tallinn reveals an ideal place for lovers and flower children, since in its selfishness it is much freer than many other cities. But still, the authors do not underline closeness to nature, quiet or intimacy; even when writing about personal things, the material background is still that of a city. For instance, in Jaak Jõerüüt's poem about love set against the background of Tallinn, the natural substratum is dusty and dirty; it has been influenced and spoilt by the substratum of material culture. Such dirty nature is even more negative than, for example, the town wall, the Patkuli Stairs or the sounds of trains:

We meet at the wall at noon. Below us are the pond and dusty trees.

The steps of the Patkuli Stairs. Lonesome months of August.

I see myself in that summer. I stroll and debate and drink.

[---]

The winds get stronger. The train whistles in front of our feet.

The bitter skins of chestnuts. The smoky waters of Tallinn.

(Sõnarine 1995: 411).

The ancient romanticism and some characteristics of the big city in the text of Tallinn allow the authors to introduce play into poetry and art, or to really believe that they live in a big city and are the real representatives of the culture of (big) cities. Hippies and punk poetry are undoubtedly a part of city life and therefore the representatives of the style in Estonian poetry – Liisi Ojamaa and Tõnu Trubetsky – use plenty of motifs from Tallinn. Liisi Ojamaa mostly uses the substratum of the Old Town; in recent years she has been seconded by Jürgen Rooste, who connects the ancient Taanilinn (this is the name he gives to Tallinn) and the motifs of a modern big city: trains, a bus stop, halls, and a cinema from the material substratum; and schizophrenia, English-language films and other items related to world culture from the substratum of spiritual culture.

Liisi Ojamaa's hippie poetry of the 1990s, which playfully wanted to identify with somebody else, has by now developed into a poetry reflecting a serious way of life; it draws strength from the city and could, as well, enrich the mythical and spiritual spheres of the city. The city she writes about is often called Tallinn. The slum as such has disappeared; instead, the author depicts an interesting old town of ancient stones and protective walls, full of comfortable corners and nooks. The city has become a safe, Eden-like place, where carefree, childish lovers enjoy life. The city of Ojamaa's poetry is the classical city, organised around its centre; it is a semantic unity, embodying the social practice of a mutual co-effect of specific politics, religion, business and culture. The centre of such a city is a square, a market place, and a church or a cathedral, also banks, courts of justice and other civil buildings (Gottdiener 1995: 81–82). The activities depicted in Ojamaa's poems take place in the centre of the city, but she chooses such objects from the material substratum of the text of the city that have historical and social memory, that are related to the past: the walls, ruins, nooks and passages.

Tallinn is situated on the seashore, being, according to Yuri Lotman, rather an eccentric city (Lotman 1999: 328), which is located on the edge of the cultural space, on the seashore or the mouth of a river; it has its ancient legend about the Old Man of Lake Ülemiste, who wants to drown it. Suddenly the city becomes a paradisaical place, but also a closed space – an ancient wall surrounds it; outside the confines of such a place it is probably impossible to enjoy the paradisaical life. The danger of drowning establishes a contrast between things going on inside the city and the threatening outside world. Water has occupied an important place in the text of Tallinn all throughout time: there are legends about

Lake Ülemiste, located high above the downtown, and historical data exist about repeated floods in the 18th and 19th centuries, when water was flowing on the streets of the downtown (Goldman, Kaldoja 1991: 9–10). The legends say that the water surrounding Tallinn is harmless as long the city keeps growing and developing and the townspeople unanimously resist all dangers. Such inner fortitude, the feeling of one's strength, optimism and joy of living, reflected in the legends of Tallinn, or in the substratum of spiritual culture, transforms the spiritual sphere of Tallinn – the city endangered by water – so that it differs from those of many other cities located by water. The water surrounding Tallinn does not create a foreboding of disaster or a feeling of oppression. Such a feeling of safety has reached poetry, and may explain why Liisi Ojamaa presses herself trustingly against the town walls in the pictures on the covers of her books: self-forgetful love and paradise on earth is possible only in the protective shade of these walls.

The stones of Tallinn are, thereby, a part of the constancy of the world – something firm and immovable, differing from St. Petersburg, the stones of which are, according to Y. Lotman, ghostly, since they stand over a swamp and water. St. Petersburg is continuously threatened to be ruined by water; here we can see the contrast between man and nature (Lotman 1999: 329–335).

But even Ojamaa's city is finally dominated by the foreboding of doom, by the knowledge that paradise is not everlasting, and that this time its ruin will come through the workings of the sea, just like in the ancient Atlantis:

*An endless summer in the city.
You come & disappear.
And then snow comes again.
[---]
And then the city so holy and sad
Goes to the bottom of the sea.
(Ojamaa 2000: 14).*

The motif of sinking to the bottom of the sea is a new phenomenon in the spiritual substratum of Tallinn. Ojamaa's city is not a sinful place any more, punished by God for its sins, neither is it an unfriendly place, but rather a world where everything is moving in an eternal circle, and where life and death inevitably accompany each other. This is a city where stones and flowers exist together,

where nature is not opposed to the city, but they complement each other: "Delicate flowers of hepatica / cobblestones and limestone / once I saw you there..." (Ojamaa 1990: 9). Ojamaa's city is no Sodom that one has to flee, because this city is the very model of the world, there is nowhere to go outside it, since there are only strange cities there.

The poetry of Liisi Ojamaa and Jürgen Rooste do not break the earlier meanings of the text of Tallinn, but add new meanings to it, which proceed from the modern social context. Rooste brings out the substrata that originate from modern Western culture; Ojamaa's poetry enriches the mythical sphere of the text of the city.

The texts of Tallinn, just as Tallinn itself, develop and move constantly; Tallinn rises high in space and strives to broaden its historical perspective, drawing new substrata into its text from outside the city and leaving the older ones intact – the ancient legend of the city that will never be completed is confirmed over and over again:

*The ancient city may never be completed –
It may only change its life and colours.*
(Sütiste 1999: 194).

Conclusion

The constant changing and heterogeneity of the text of the city can clearly be seen in the poetry written about Estonian towns, it finds expression in the substrata layered into the texts of poetry written at different times. Although the vision of the city, the culturological background and narrower imagination of one person – the author – are the determining factors in poetry, the wider social context and the earlier meanings embedded in the substrata also play their role, when the motifs of the city are used. In Estonian poetry, we can clearly see how the dominating spirituality of the time, the silent protest, satisfaction, social status, social protest, historical memory, etc., are conveyed using the motif of the city.

Differences in the texts of Tartu and Tallinn are well-reflected in poetry. The material substratum of the text of Tartu, the university excluded, has much suffered and changed in the course of history, thus obtaining a meaning dissimilar to the original one. On the other hand, the natural substratum, the main representative of which is Emajõgi, expresses permanence in the text of Tartu.

The substratum of spiritual culture in the text of Tartu opposes the town to the power, and this resistance is revealed in a form of silent intellectual ignoring of the power and its offices. The new meanings of the substratum, reflected in modern poetry, mostly remain confined within the limits of the town itself and tend to destroy old meanings.

The substratum of material culture gives lasting value to the text of Tallinn, since the spiritual substratum has been very changeable here: the material sphere of Tallinn has been taken advantage of by different political powers throughout history. But modern poetry reflect the liberality, openness, selfishness, and individualism of the text of Tallinn, the constant complementation of the text with both modern spiritual and material substrata of world culture, and the relating of it to the earlier substrata without destroying them.

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