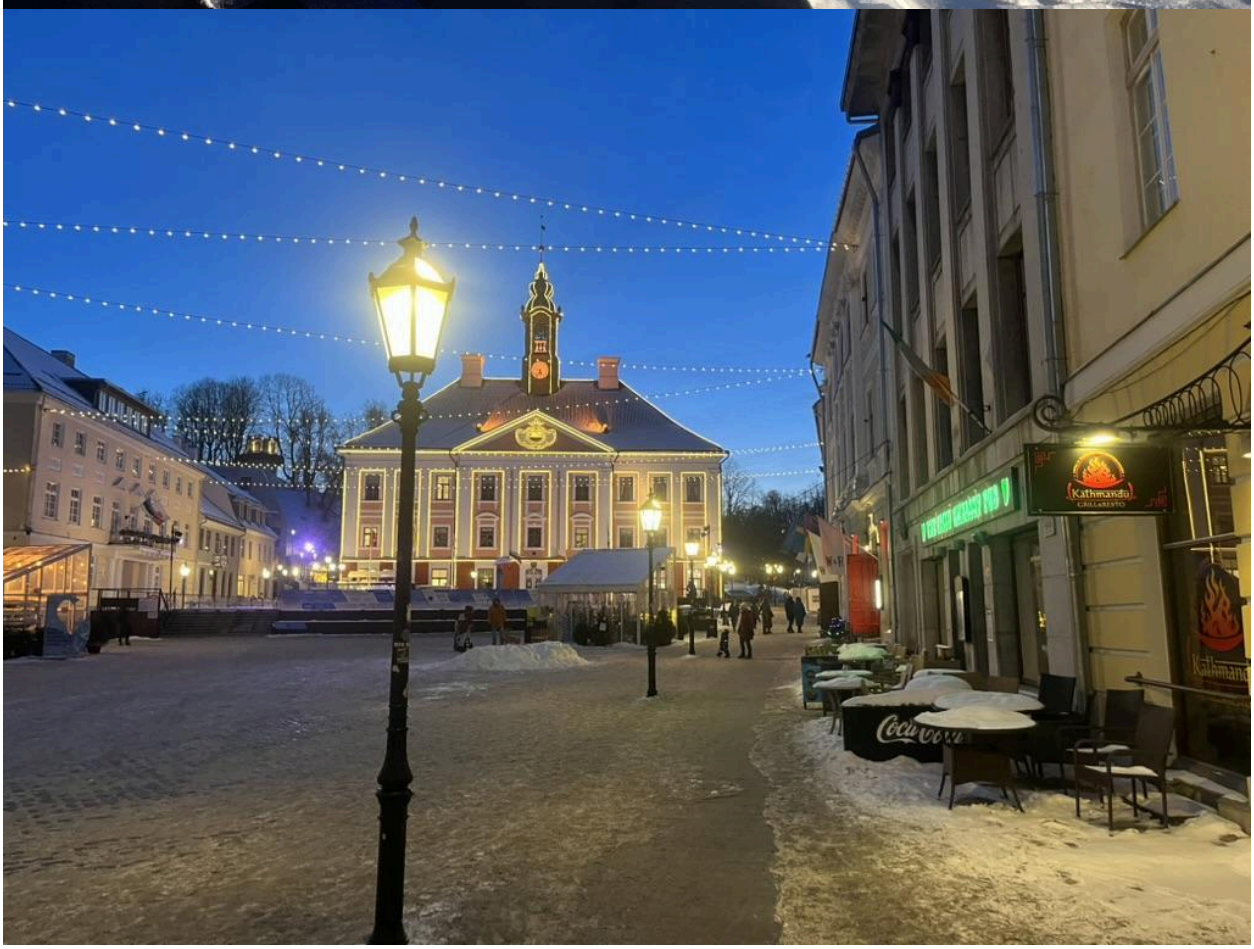
My Estonian winter journey started when I arrived in Tallinn, the weekend before my two-weeks residency at Susimetsa - Estonian for ‘wolf’s retreat’. I was immediately struck by the crispy cold, the calmness, and beauty of Estonia. Especially after my medieval tourist trip in Tallinn, I happily arrived at Susimetsa when I saw the little frozen lake, clear skies, the diamond-like snow fall, the wooden villa, hot tub, and warm sauna. Anu and her husband settled me in, and I met co-philosophers and roommates Björn and Evita, and later Sebastian. Together with Björn, we watched episodes of David Lynch’s Twin Peaks after long days of study, and he (unsuccessfully) tried to convince me that cinnamon rolls are better in Sweden than in Estonia.

Relaxed by the Estonian cold, I put my phone away in a locker for the entire stay. I decided to enjoy my work at the house and its surrounding nature. For two weeks long, I only focused on virtue ethics and humor - a very fun topic! This residency allowed me to solely investigate this topic for two weeks, without any (digital) distractions whatsoever. At the end of my stay, I had the privilege to present my preliminarily work at the Center for Ethics at Tartu University. During this presentation, I discussed the normative – virtue-ethical – dimension of my dissertation on humor in far-right politics, showing how humor can mobilize and radicalize political support. I argued against seeing humor as a virtue, and for incorporating a ‘dark play’ humor vice which captures the potentially ambivalent and deceptive nature of political humor. Besides the beauty of Tartu, Susimetsa, and Tallinn, I was impressed by the great Estonian hospitality I received by all the people at the Center for Ethics and Susimetsa. I got great feedback, comments, but most of all great friendliness from them.

To be frank, I am still nostalgic for Estonian cinnamon rolls and warm saunas. Especially the 1-euro cinnamon rolls from the local supermarket are to die for. Where I live (Amsterdam) cinnamons rolls are at least 5 euro and do not even come close to the Estonian perfection.

Due to this residency, I know two things for sure. The first is that investigating a normative angle of my dissertation is worthwhile and philosophical interesting, and the second is that Estonia – especially Susimetsa and the Center for Ethics – is a great place. I am really going to miss it, and I hope to return one day.





Report Susimetsa, February 1-14