

Report on Theda Rehbock's Philosophy Residency at Susimetsa

by Jonas Pöld

Institute of Ethics, Theory and History of Medicine

University of Münster, Germany

During my stay as a resident of *Susimetsa Philosophicum* in April 2025, I worked on a postdoctoral research project critically assessing Jerome Wakefield's harmful dysfunction analysis (HDA) of medical disorders. The quietness of the beautiful house with its garden surrounded by forests provided an excellent research environment throughout the two weeks. Theda Rehbock's comprehensive philosophical library located in almost all rooms of the house provided a constant source of inspiration. I also benefited from extended dinner table discussions with the great team of colleagues with whom I shared the residency – Emily Daly, Maja Mateas and Ozan Altinok. Together, we explored the surrounding area with hikes and bike tours to Uulu, Reiu and Mereküla. Nearby is also the city of Pärnu, Estonia's summer capital, where we visited the beach and met friendly locals.

Previous to our stay at Susimetsa, we participated in an academic workshop that took place at Tartu University. In this context we met colleagues and motivated students while also learning from Prof. Margit Sutrop about the eventful history of the country, the city and its university. This was also personally interesting for me, as my grandfather grew up in Tartu and his father oversaw the transition of Tartu Ülikool into an Estonian-language institution. Following the workshop, we had the chance to take a guided tour through the stunning Estonian National Museum and discussed moral dilemmas of daily life based on the Values Game developed by the Tartu ethicists.

The weeks at Susimetsa were an opportunity for me to think and read about ascriptions of function and dysfunction in biomedicine and the evaluative and descriptive aspects associated with disease ascriptions. I finished writing the first draft of a research paper criticizing Wakefield's account of disease from the perspective of evolutionary medicine, with the intention of submitting a reworked version for peer review as the next step. The feedback to my talk that was provided by the audience in Tartu turned out to be very helpful in preparation.

Susimetsa was a great place for gathering ideas in an inspiring atmosphere involving concentrated work, supportive discussions and reading sessions with one of the many books from the library. Many thanks for making it possible to Prof. Margit Sutrop, Anu Gentalen, and everyone else involved in the residency program.

Aitäh ja nägemist!



*Residency Period: April 2nd – April 15th 2025
Ozan Altinok, Emily Daly, Jonas Pöld, Maja Mateas*