Haziran Zeller

-Short Report about my Stay in Susimetsa-

30.11.– 12.12.2025

I had the privilege of spending a two-week research residency at Susimetsa, during which I was able to make substantial progress on my ongoing research on *Adorno in Oxford*. This project examines Theodor W. Adorno's intellectual activities during his years in Oxford (1934–1938), a period that has received comparatively little scholarly attention despite its significance for the development of his later work. The Susimetsa residency provided precisely the conditions necessary for concentrated research, sustained conceptual reflection, and focused academic writing.

During my stay, I commenced drafting a journal article specifically devoted to Adorno's intellectual exchange—direct and indirect—with Gilbert Ryle. The paper forms a component of the larger research programme, in which I seek to reconstruct the philosophical landscape of interwar Oxford and situate Adorno's interventions within it. In particular, I was exploring how Adorno deploys the concept of *objektive Schlüsselgewalt* in his critique of Walter Benjamin and how this concept illuminates deeper structural commitments in his philosophy.

Apart from the focussed work on my project, I could not resist but browsing the large library that Theda Rehbock has left. There is a wide range of literature and philosophical books here which I enjoyed very much. You will find most of the classics here, so don't bother carrying Tolstoy's "War and Peace" with you.

The working environment at Susimetsa is, as you might expect, peaceful and quiet. There is no bad surprises. If you do not need the panoptic situation of an institute or people in a library surrounding and surveilling your work, this residency is perfect. Whenever you need a break, you can just walk a little bit into the forests. Don't be afraid: There are no actual wolves, although "Susimetsa" translates "Wolf Forrest". I had a room from which I could see the lake from my desk. If you need the compensation of sports, you can run along the road or use the bicycle. And of course there is the wood heated (!!) Sauna that will clear your mind after a day of hard work in front of books. This in fact contributed to maintaining my work routine.

And don't be afraid of the loneliness: Since you are in a group there is not only the chance for nice intellectual encounter but for collective cooking sessions and walks to the supermarket (things like that will be your rural 'adventure' of the day ;). But of course, I also had luck with my Co-Fellows Eva, Jürgen and Chagajeg!!

I am grateful for the opportunity to undertake this residency. I wish to express my sincere thanks to Anu Gentalen, Margit Sutrop, and Kadri Simm for their hospitality and attentive support, both in Susimetsa and during the day-trip to Tartu. The excursion to the Centre for Ethics at the University of Tartu was a particularly enriching experience. I highly recommend doing it. Resembling one of those small little German university cities like Marburg or Tübingen, Tartu is a definitely worth a visit. Don't miss the Botanical Garden!

Also intellectually you should not let go the opportunity to see the Ethics Centre. I am very much looking forward presenting the "Values Games" we played there to my friends and colleagues. In Tartu, we were lucky to be able to participate in the colloquium and listen to Kadri Simm's talk on "Ethics Work". The conversation afterwards in the German Restaurant was short, but I will remember it as both a very warm and substantial encounter. A special thanks to Margit Sutrop who – between all her work – found the time for discourse and cared very welcoming for us!

The Susimetsa residency has good for advancing my research. It was even better on a human level. I leave with more clarity for my project and in the awareness of this nice little philosophical Island of Susimetsa in Estonia which I will not forget. Thank you!