

*Emigration in Estonian Literature: “Self” and “Other” in the Context of European Literature*¹

ANNELI MIHKELEV

Abstract. The experience of emigration generated a new paradigm in Estonian culture and literature. After World War II Sweden became a new homeland for many people. Estonian culture and literature suddenly became divided into two parts. The political terror imposed restrictions on literature in homeland and the national ideology limited literature in the initial years of exile. Both were closed communities and were monolingual systems in a cultural sense because these systems avoided dialogue and the influence of other signs. It was a traumatic experience for nation and culture where the totalitarian political power and trauma have allied. The normal cultural communication was destroyed. But the most important thing at this time was memory, not just memory but entangled memory, which emigrants carried with them to the new homeland and which influenced people in Estonia. The act of remembering becomes crucial in the exile cultures.

Estonian literature in exile and in the homeland presents the fundamental images of opening or closing, escaping or staying, and of flight or fight. Surrealism as well as fantasy and science fiction as the literary styles reveal what is hidden in the unconscious of a poet or a person or even in the collective memory of a nation. Surrealism has played a certain role in our literature, but it has been different from French surrealism, it is a uniquely Estonian surrealism. At the same time Estonia was already a new homeland for many refugees from Russia who had escaped during the Revolution of 1917 and World War I. August Gailit and Oskar Luts wrote about that issue in different literary works. Luts entangled different memories in his novel *Tagahoovis (In the Backyard, 1933)*: the memories of Estonians and the memories of Russian emigrants. He also entangled historical narratives about World War I, the Russian revolution and the young Estonian state in the 1920s. Luts wrote about common people who interpret historical narratives. The novel was also published in exile in 1969 in Toronto.

Keywords: (Estonian) exile literature; surrealism; entangled memory; cultural memory; identity; trauma; remembering

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I will begin with some verses from the poem *Elada vabana vōi surra* (*To Live Free or Die*, 1945) as a motto by the Estonian exile poet Ilmar Laaban (1923–2000). Laaban's surrealist poem as well as all literary works which used fantasy and science fiction (August Gailit, Enn Nõu *et al.*) as their literary styles reveal what is hidden in the subconscious of a poet or a person or even in the collective memory of a nation during the tragic years of wartime and after World War II.:

To weigh the sun on the scales of leaves
to proclaim truth to each gust of wind
to bear on the brow the reflection of wells
to live free or die
[...]

To gather up all lost words
to sway in the orgasm of flowers
which shatter the opaque sky
to live free or die

...

(Laaban 1999: 8–9; transl. by R. Adang and A. Ehin)

The avant-garde movement surrealism came to Estonian literature in the 1930 and 40s. The first surrealist book of poetry was Ilmar Laaban's (1921–2000) *Ankruketi lõpp on laulu algus* (*The End of the Anchor Chain is the Beginning of Songs*, 1946), published in Sweden.

Estonian literature in exile came into being in 1944 when the Soviet Union occupied Estonia for the second time. This experience generated a new paradigm in culture and literature. Estonian culture and literature suddenly became divided into two parts: one had the language but not country, while the other had both the country and the language. The political terror imposed restrictions on literature in homeland. It was a traumatic experience for nation and culture. Maire Jaanus has written in the article "Estonia and Pain: Jaan Kross' *The Czar's Madman*" that "Power and trauma have always been allied. Trauma is the destruction of the fragile layers of civilization covering a human being or a nation. [...] Stripped of the symbolic and imaginary identifications that are our support against dissolution – such as our name, nation, citizenship, language, gender, profession, our constitutional and legal rights, and our beliefs and families – we encounter the voided self or the nothingness that we are." (Jaanus 2000: 257)

Jaan Kross (1920–2007) was an Estonian prose writer whose historical novels have attracted attention all over Europe. His literary works chart the beginning and the continued existence of the Estonian people as a nation in time

and history, and also about the relationship between power and the individual. (see Org 2009: 158–159) Jaanus wrote about Kross' novel *Keisri hull* (*The Czar's Madman* 1978) but a similar experience happened to Estonians in exile after World War II: the nothingness was in us, "... in our bodies. The avowal of the void is the avowal of what we are: a need, a want, a desire, a temporary becoming of a nothingness, rather than fulfilment." (Jaanus 2000: 257)

After World War II Sweden became a new homeland for many people. It was a time when the Estonian exile community experienced desperation and tribulation when intellection was "under threat of imminent cessation, where the threat in only counteracted by an insane amount of more thinking. As with a body forced to excess labor, the threat of death is *only* kept at bay by ever renewed activity which alone assures the mind of its continued existence." (Jaanus 2000: 258)

The protagonist of the Kross' novel, Timotheus von Bock, is declared mad for criticising the Czarist regime. Mardi Valgemäe indicates that Kross plays with Soviet censorship: it seems that the plot of the novel *The Czar's Madman* is about the Russian Empire in the 19th century, but actually it is a connotation and the 19th century Russian Empire stands for the 20th century Soviet regime in the book. (Valgemäe 2005: 74)

Timo, the protagonist of Kross' novel, fights against the power of the Russian czarist regime and totalitarian politics and it is "a need to establish control and gain surety, to halt his panic, to think himself and his identity." (Jaanus 2000: 258) The Estonian society in exile had metaphorically a similar experience: the same need to establish control and gain surety, to think itself and its identity, and finally halt its panic. The most important activity in that situation is active mental suffering which is "already an emergence from the pure helplessness that is the condition of the void as well as from the pure anxiety that arises from the perception of absolute danger." (Jaanus 2000: 258–259)

Maire Jaanus explains the tragic situations with Lacan's theory: "...suffering is already a tragic tolerance of anxiety. In Lacan's schema it is a drive and drives are active, circular, and self-reflexive. Suffering is beyond anxiety because suffering is a drive, and although it is painful, repetitive, and hooked to the gravity of death, it is nonetheless an active striving against death and thus a very rudimentary form of sublimation compared to pure anxiety." (Jaanus 2000: 259) According to Lacan, "anxiety is a terrified falling, the drive of destruction of the self, but suffering is the repetitive, circular activity of thinking or running that is the other side of the drive, which is the desire to begin again" (Lacan 1992: 212; Jaanus 2000: 259). It means that "a signifier is binary and can be repeated, unlike infinite anxiety which has no binary or any polar opposite. Thus, compared to pure anxiety, even suffering is already a bit of mobility, and, therefore, of

freedom.” (Jaanus 2000: 259) Jaanus explains the difference between the two notions “pain” and “suffering” and she thinks that Estonians have survived because they have known how to turn pain into suffering: “Our unwritten philosophy would [...] encompass a belief in pain as a radical truth equivalent to the truth of pleasure. [...] In a radical conception, pain [...] is something ineradicable in us to which we are subjected. It is a natural, unavoidable encounter with evil, which we must learn to transmute and sublimate, but which we cannot eliminate.” (*Ibid.*) We need the metaphors of pain and pleasure, although “pleasure very obviously wants repetition, continuance, extension, and prolongation. Such excess disturbs and disrupts consciousness and because it can do so, it makes an impact. Making metaphors of pain [...] is far more difficult, and we ourselves resist making them. The resistance comes from the pulsion of the death drive and its immobilizing force. Classical tragedy and the Passion of Christ [...] are eminent examples of the metaphorical conquest of pain” (Jaanus 2000: 262). Kross’ novel represents how the protagonist Timo and Estonians turn pain into suffering, it is also a metaphorical conquest of pain.

Kross’ novels and also Estonian literature in exile present the fundamental images of opening or closing, escaping or staying, and of flight or fight. Jaanus has suggested that “it is the issue fundamentally of freedom as the interplay of desire and law” (Jaanus 2000: 262). Kross’ novel *Paigallend* (*Treading Air*, 1998) contains a metaphor of a static sublimation or the writing in place:

It is a painful metaphor in that it is an image of a bird confined and restricted in the exercise of its most fundamental activity. But it is also a pleasurable image in that flying is inherently a dream image of freedom, both spatial and erotic. [...] Thus, flying even if only in a limited space and in a limited way, is still a way to continue to assert one’s essence: the human drive for self-symbolization, love and an ethical thinking that is a special human privilege and consequence of its unique condition. (*Ibid.*)

Surrealism and freedom

Ilmar Laaban was the most innovative and surrealist Estonian poet in exile. Surrealism as a style reveals what is hidden in the subconscious of a poet or a person or even in the collective memory of a nation. Laaban was already innovative in his homeland although surrealism was out of the mainstream in Estonian literature before World War II (actually it has never been in the mainstream in Estonian literature). Surrealism has played a certain role in our literature, but it has been different from French surrealism, a uniquely Estonian phenomenon.

In 1945 the poem *Elada vabana vōi surra* (*To Live Free or Die*) was published and it is very similar to Paul Éluard's (1895–1952) poem *Liberté*. Laaban remained close to French surrealism till 1944; after that his style became more distanced from it. French surrealism was connected to political movements and the Communist Party. Laaban's surrealism was against the Communist Party after 1944, because he had escaped from his homeland when the Soviet occupation began. But the idea of freedom was still one of Laaban's main ideas and most probably this was due to the influence of French surrealism.

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the first manifesto of surrealism, Laaban published the article "The perspectives of Surrealism" in 1944. He wrote that surrealism was a new world-view, not only aesthetic, but also ethical and moral (Laaban 1944: 82; Olesk 2002: 114). Laaban's texts are sometimes ironic, and that aspect is revealed in sound and intonation when these texts are read. Irony and surrealism are actually problematic phenomena: the question arises as to whether it is possible to write automatically if the text must be ironic.

Laaban belonged to the literary group Elbumus with his friends Ilmar and Olev Mikiver, Ivar Paulson, Ilse Lehiste and Ea Jansen. These young people were innovative and radical in their homeland before they emigrated. The opposing literary group was called Tuulisui. The members of the group were Kalju Lepik, Ilmar Talve and Raimond Kolk, and they were concerned with preserving the Estonian identity. They were writers and poets who had a very clear and lasting cognizance of (national) identity. The main topics in their works were the homeland and its destiny, as well as nationality and the nation. Kalju Lepik, who lived in Stockholm, was the main national ideological poet in exile. Although in Lepik's later poetry memories were connected with the new experience of life and culture, his poetry still mainly focused on the collective memory and collective national identity.

Entangled Memory

The period after World War II was a very complicated time for Estonian culture because the normal cultural communication was destroyed. But it seems the most important thing at this time was memory, not just memory but entangled memory, which emigrants carried with them to the new homeland and which influenced people in Estonia. The concept of entangled memory came from memory studies, and it "...brings to the fore the entangledness of acts of remembering. [...] Every act of remembering inscribes an individual in multiple social frames. This polyphony entails the simultaneous existence of concurrent interpretations of the past. In a diachronic perspective, memory

is entangled in the dynamic relation between single acts of remembering and changing mnemonic patterns” (Feindt *et al.* 2014: 24).

The meaning of historical narratives depends on the interpretation of the text, which works as a mnemonic signifier. Different interpretations may be distant in time and space, and at the same time these interpretations attribute changing meaning to the mnemonic signifier. Interpretation requires acts of remembering and different memories: the author and the reader use the intersemiotic space to create or interpret the text and at the same time they have their own individual cultural memories. The concept of entangled memory involves the entangledness of acts of remembering and the complex process of interpretation in different times and spaces. Emigration is a situation which creates entangled memory and the act of remembering becomes crucial in the exile culture. There are different entangled cultural memories in the poem by Laaban that I mentioned above. It is a combination of the idea of surrealism from French culture and Laaban’s individual memory, which contains different historical images, some of them tragic. But the main idea of the poem is very optimistic, exalted and full of the pathos of freedom. There are not very many grotesque images and motifs in this poem, and those which are grotesque are represented as evils which are no longer frightening: the message of Laaban’s poem is that evil is defeated and there is no need to fear it. In the fourth strophe there is a grotesque picture of decayed eyes, but the next verse connects it with hope:

To know that the decayed eyes of traitors
become the spawn of the fish of hope
(Laaban 1999: 10; transl. by R. Adang and A. Ehin)

And the last strophe is about a murderer’s grave, but it is possible to live there as grass, holding onto a rock and joy:

To live as grass on the murderer’s grave
to live a rock in one hand and joy in the other
(Laaban 1999: 11; transl. by R. Adang and A. Ehin)

The text of Laaban’s poem works like the protagonist in Kross’ novel *The Czar’s Madman*: “Timo’s repeated torrents of language are his response to trauma; they are his way of remaining active, of not passively succumbing.” (Jaanus 2000: 258) Laaban’s surrealistic liberty gave freedom to poetic language and metaphor in Estonian literature. His surrealism was more a liberation of the language than the liberation of the mind from logic. His surrealist liberty brought metaphor and

freedom to the Estonian poetic language. Laaban's poetry expresses freedom on every level, and his grotesque, ugly or terrible images have a comic and positive function in his poetry. Laaban's surrealism works like the grotesque did in the medieval carnival, as described by Mikhail Bakhtin: "The acute awareness of victory over fear is an essential element of medieval laughter. This feeling is expressed in a number of characteristic medieval comic images. We always find in them the defeat of fear presented in a droll and monstrous form, the symbols of power and violence turned inside out, the comic images of death and bodies gaily rent asunder. All that was terrifying becomes grotesque. [...] This grotesque image cannot be understood without appreciating the defeat of fear. The people play with terror and laugh at it; the awesome becomes a "comic monster"." (Bakhtin 1984: 91)

Literary texts have played a major role in the formation of national and cultural identity and cultural memory. Estonian literature is quite young and most of our early texts are connected with the construction of national identity. For example, the main aim of our epic *Kalevipoeg* (1857–1861), written by Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald, was to construct Estonian national and cultural identity, which means that a society can create its cultural memory because some historical pictures are reinforced in the memory through literature. Literature can be one of the tools with which societies construct and interpret history and their identities, according to Aleida Assmann (see Assmann 2006).

According to the concept of entangled memory, which understands memory as a plural phenomenon, "a mnemonic signifier is the juncture of concurrent interpretations with an unlimited variety of possible constellations. [...] Since memory scholars wish to understand the meaning of an actor's intervention in the field of memory, subject positions are of primary hermeneutic value. The analysis of subject positions includes their localization in time and space..." (Feindt *et al.* 2014: 32). For example, political terror imposed restrictions on literature in the homeland and the national ideology limited literature in the initial years of exile in Estonian history and culture: the national ideology was preserved in exile, while the communist ideology emerged in the homeland; both were closed communities and were monolingual systems in the cultural sense because these systems avoided dialogue and the influence of other signs. These systems passed through a stage of self-description and underwent changes assigning to themselves "clear boundaries and a considerably higher degree of unification. [...] Thus, the self-description of culture makes a boundary of the fact of its self-consciousness. The moment of self-consciousness defines the boundaries of cultures and the inclusion of governmental and political considerations has repeatedly added a dramatic character to this process," according to Lotman (2009: 172). These dramatic developments took place

in Estonian culture in the homeland and also in exile. Those who escaped to Western countries did not assimilate in their new homelands, because they thought that the exile would be temporary, and that they could return to the homeland very soon.

Kalju Lepik was one of the authors who represented cultural memory with a very strong connection to the homeland. Different cultural memories are entangled in his works. He described the nature of the homeland and his childhood, he alluded to Estonian classics etc., and he used biblical references to describe the emigration and a people without a homeland. He expressed the spirit of a nation without a homeland, while expanding the boundaries of the national imagery. His essential themes were the fight for freedom, the love of his native country, the sense of nationality, the earthly happiness of mankind, the future of the world etc. He connected collective (national) memory with cosmopolitan identity, which was also connected with his individual identity. The plurality of entangled memory is expressed in Lepik's poetry. Lepik's poetry also interprets historical narratives: the time before World War II, the Soviet occupation and life in his new homeland.

August Gailit

August Gailit (1891–1960) and his family fled to Sweden in September 1944. The occupation of Estonia and exile had a frustrating effect on Gailit. In his novels *Leegitsev süda* (*Flaming Heart*, 1945) and *Kas mäletad, mu arm?* (*Do you remember, Dearest?*) I–III (1951–1959), Gailit became more serious; the warm humour, wit, irony and healthy laughter so familiar in his previous work occur with diminishing frequency. Some of Gailit's novels were forbidden in the Soviet period, including the novel *Do you remember, Dearest?*. This novel was published in his homeland after Estonia regained its independence, in 1997, with an afterword by Ülo Matjus. Gailit's novel reflects the art of remembering, as Matjus writes in his afterword (Matjus 1997: 619–628). The title of the novel alludes to the poem by Charles Baudelaire, “Une Charogne” (“A Carrion”, 1857):

Do you remember the thing we saw, my soul,
That summer morning, so beautiful, so soft:
At a turning in the path, a filthy carrion,
On a bed sown with stones

(Baudelaire 1974, transl. by Geoffrey Wagner)

This is a connection which unites the beautiful and the ugly, nature and art, and it makes Gailit's novel more artistic. The composition of the novel is similar to Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*, although everything written abroad is associated with his lost homeland (Matjus 1997: 625; Vaiksoo 2002: 9).

Jaanus Vaiksoo has written: "Despite the obvious seriousness, the writer's style remained much the same. It is still playful, grotesque, and instantly recognisable. His work is still based on oppositions: beautiful v. ugly, good v. evil, warm v. cold, nature v. civilisation, God v. the Devil. Gailit's works thus resemble fairy tales. His characters indeed often tell fairy tales, whether these are Nipernaadi's fantasies to his summer loves, or memories of the seven exiled lumberjacks' amorous affairs in the trilogy *Do You Remember, Dearest?*" (Vaiksoo 2002: 9)

The first part of the trilogy *Do You Remember, Dearest?* has a fairly cheerful tone and the situation is close to Boccaccio's. There are seven Estonian exiled men who work in the Swedish forest industry, and sit idle in a cottage, waiting for a storm to abate. To while away the time, they sip moonshine and tell one another stories of their past amorous adventures in Estonia. The memories of their homeland are happy and youthfully enthusiastic. The eleven short stories in the book offer colourful adventurous pictures that no doubt greatly nourished and soothed exiled readers.

At the same time, the allusion to Baudelaire's poem is there in the stories. The idea that every beautiful but alive thing may become ugly continues in the second story *Peipsi (Lake Peipsi)*. The protagonist is a painter of impressive lake landscapes. He sees a beautiful young woman one day and he uses her as a model. It is significant that Gailit describes the young lady as a Slavic aristocrat who has most probably escaped from the war and revolution in Russia. The author stresses the difference between the Slavic aristocrat and simple peasant women. The protagonist and the lady strike up a conversation and the lady tells the protagonist that he and his nation are masters in their country only for one hour. And he thinks that all bad things come from the East. It is a foreboding of the protagonist's fate and a reflection of Gailit's poetic ego. A thunderstorm begins and the protagonist goes to the lady's home, a dilapidated old summer house. They spend the night together and the morning is beautiful: the storm is gone and the air is fresh. But when the protagonist opens his eyes he sees an old woman beside him: the beautiful young woman has changed or disappeared! The protagonist escapes from the house, but very soon turns around and comes back. The old lady is cooking something which has a terrible smell. She smiles and quotes the first verse of Baudelaire's poem "A Carrion".

It is a mystical situation and Gailit shows in his story how remembering works: the protagonist wants to forget the ugly woman and the terrible situation

and he tries to remember the beautiful young lady and their romantic night near Lake Peipsi. He finishes the painting of the beautiful young lady by the lake and forgets the terrible episode with the old lady.

Some years later the protagonist is in Paris and meets both ladies again in a Russian emigrants' restaurant. These ladies are a mother and daughter who escaped from the Russian revolution; one of the friends of the protagonist has helped these ladies to get visas for France.

Gailit entangles historical memory with cultural memory in this episode. He interprets these memories and combines them in his novel, where readers interpret these memories again.

Gailit's story goes on, with the storm continuing for several days. The second part of the trilogy is not in the form of short stories, but a confession by Ene Leevi, an emigrant whose story is told by the narrator. In the third and last part of the trilogy Gailit returns to pessimistic discussions of contemporary mankind. The writer's resignation and weariness are most strongly perceived here. The title of the last story in the novel is *Võõras veri* (*Alien Blood*). This story is also mystical: reality and dreams are mixed in the story and the main idea is the lost homeland. An alien woman makes dark predictions, but it is still a dream. Other problems exist in reality:

Today's world has blinded our eyes and turned our hearts cold. We can only see ourselves and bemoan our own troubles. What else can be expected of us standardised robots? We are, like all the others, in a permanent hurry, in search of new things to possess. Not to lag behind others, not to be any worse, but stretch out all ten greedy fingers to reach and grasp. Heaven forbid a crumb fall in the lap of another human being! Everything for oneself: wealth, power, pride! Even more: the whole world, together with everything that breathes, grows and emerges there! (Vaiksoo 2002: 9)

The end of the novel and trilogy is more positive: the sun is shining and the storm is over. But it is not the sun that these emigrants have longed for during these several years.

It is notentirely clear whose the "alien blood" in the last story of the trilogy *Do You Remember, Dearest?* is. It is the alien woman in the protagonist's dream, but at the same time all of these men who work in the Swedish forest feel like aliens in Sweden.

Oskar Luts

At the same time Estonia was already a new homeland for many refugees from Russia who had escaped during the Revolution of 1917 and World War I. August Gailit wrote about that issue as a memory from his homeland in his novel *Do You Remember, Dearest?*. Oskar Luts (1887–1953) was a very popular Estonian writer who has sometimes been called the Estonian Dickens, due to the humour and melancholy intertwined in his literary style. His best work of the 1930s was the novel *Tagahoovis* (*In the Backyard*, 1933), which has been compared to naturalism, Kafka and Italian neorealism. It is a book about Russian emigrants in Estonia. Estonian critics have pointed out two contrasting endings: the Russian lady escapes from her disconsolate backyard home, but the washerwoman's daughter Veika-Roosi commits suicide.

According to Endel Nirk, the novel *In the Backyard* concentrates on most of the ethic and social motifs that occur in Luts's works of the period. This story, with its characteristic title, is full of sympathy for the downtrodden of society (Nirk 1987: 177).

At the same time Luts's Russian emigrants in this novel long for the czarist regime and they do not take seriously the little country they live in at the moment, although these emigrants are not aristocrats like the ladies in Gailit's story. Luts wrote about common people who interpret historical narratives. *In the Backyard* was a popular novel and it was also produced for the stage and as a film in the Soviet time (1957). The novel was also published in exile in 1969 in Toronto.

Luts entangled different memories in his novel: the memories of Estonians and the memories of Russian emigrants. He also entangled historical narratives about World War I, the Russian revolution and the young Estonian state in the 1920s.

Enn Nõu

Enn Nõu (1933) presented a different Swedish-Estonian experience, combining fantasy with documentary motifs in his novels. His radical political science fiction works were based on his own memories and fantasy.

Nõu was born in Estonia and his family fled from Estonia to Sweden in 1944 before the approaching Red Army reached Tallinn. Enn was eleven years old at the time. He studied medicine at the University of Uppsala, and he worked as a lung specialist and lecturer at the Medical Faculty of Uppsala University.

Nõu visited his homeland Estonia in 1967 and after that he wrote his political science fiction novel *Pidulik marss* (*Festive March*, Uppsala 1968), in which the Swedish army enters Soviet Estonia, and its main aim is to destroy the Soviet Union. According to Pekka Lilja, Nõu's first novel is a political utopian novel (Lilja 1997: 183). The year 1968 was significant in Europe: there were student rebellions in Paris and in Prague, Soviet tanks entered Czechoslovakia, and students in Tartu, Riga and Vilnius supported the "Prague Spring". All of these protests were suppressed by the Soviet government. In this context, Nõu's first novel was banned in Soviet Estonia and Nõu himself could not visit his homeland, because he was a *persona non grata* in Soviet Estonia. The novel was banned till the 1990s, when Estonia regained its independence (Haug 2003: 1531).

His first novel also expresses opposition to the older generation of exiled Estonian writers: Bernard Kangro, Karl Ristikivi, August Gailit, Albert Kivikas et al. The older generation of refugees was not as radical and active as Enn Nõu in his life and in his novels. His first novel presents World War III, in which Estonia regains its independence. After the publication of his first novel, Nõu understood that literature was a much better tool when fighting for freedom of Estonia than real exile politics, because literature had no borders (the protagonist of the novel, Ants Nuger, is a doctor born in Estonia and working in Sweden. Ants Nuger can be seen as the author's *alter ego*). Nõu's novels contain autobiographical motifs and sometimes he himself is a character in his novels, although under fictional names.

The author also presented the radical fight for freedom in his second novel, *Lõigatud tiibadega* (*Cut Wings*, 1976). Young Estonians hijack a Swedish plane and demand the recognition of an independent Estonia and the end of the occupation of Estonia by the Soviet Union.

Nõu's novel *Presidendi kojutulek* (*President Returns Home*, Tallinn, 1996) repeats the motif of refugees returning to the homeland. The protagonist Eerik Vabanõu, who has lived in Sweden as a refugee, returns to his homeland of Estonia to become the president of an independent Estonia. The surname Vabanõu contains two words "vaba", which means "free", and "nõu", Nõu's surname. This indicates the fantasy of the author: to be president of a free Estonia. At the end of the novel, the protagonist faces the dilemma of which country is his homeland. The protagonist's personal identity is ephemeral and dynamic.

Nõu's most important novel is *Koeratapja* (*Dog's Killer*, Stockholm, 1988), where he presents Estonian society in exile, and the main topic is betrayal, or more precisely how easy it was to become a traitor, and how the KGB recruited secret agents from among Estonian exiles. These people were traitors but also

victims. Enn Nõu in his novel describes Johannes Alvik's activities in 1944 in Otto Tief's government before the Red Army entered Estonia, and how this influences his son Hannes Alvik's life in Sweden in the 1970s and 80s, during the Cold War. Political betrayal is not the only betrayal in this novel. Nõu combined political betrayal with betrayal in marriage: Alvik's wife Ester is unfaithful to him. Mart Orav has written that it is possible to read Nõu's novel as a psychological, historical or family novel, or even as a love story, crime novel or thriller. There are several levels of betrayal presented in this novel, but the mechanism of betrayal is the same and all of the betrayals are connected (Orav 2009: 313–314). The main topics in this novel are truth and lies, freedom and responsibility, morality and conscience (Orav 2009: 317).

Nõu's novels work in the same way as Imar Laaban's poem "To Live Free or Die": through fantasy hidden ideas are expressed.

Conclusion

Emigration generated a new paradigm in culture and literature. The most important phenomena at this time were memory or memories, which emigrants carried with them to the new homelands, not only Estonian emigrants but also all other refugees from different countries. The concept of entangled memory brings to the fore the polyphony or the entangledness of acts of remembering. The act of remembering became crucial in exile and literature has played a major role in the construction of cultural memory. At the same time the literature of exile represents the dynamics of identity of both the national collective and personal levels. Estonian exile literature was both experimental and imitative after World War II: Ilmar Laaban developed his own original style that used European avant-garde, but at the same time gave freedom to poetic language in Estonian. Estonian surrealism developed from the political fight for freedom in a wide sense, including creative freedom and free thinking. Surrealist art as well as fantasy and science fiction had the ability to hide some aspects of reality and the ability to reveal what is hidden in the subconscious.

Anneli Mihkelev

anneli.mihkelev@tlu.ee

Tallinna Ülikool

Humanitaarteaduste instituut

Narva mnt 25

Tallinn 10120

EESTI / ESTONIA

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