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IN MEMORIAM

Varpu Lindström
1948–2012

This issue is dedicated to the life and memory of Professor Varpu Lindström, the chair of the editorial board of the Journal of Finnish Studies since its founding in 1997. She passed away peacefully among family members at her home in Beaverton, Canada, on June 21, 2012. She was born on September 13, 1948, in Helsinki, and at the age of fourteen she migrated to Canada with her parents.

Varpu Lindström is a well-known figure in the field of migration studies, not least through her contribution to the Journal of Finnish Studies. Together with her husband Börje Vähämäki, she created the journal. She was the Chair of the Editorial Board up until the time of her death. Producing a journal involves a lot of work, including numerous practical tasks. Varpu looked after these with her heart: subscriptions, subscription lists, billing, and other logistics. As an expert in migration studies and history, she was referenced in numerous articles. She also wrote articles for the journal herself, for example, an article about Sointula and articles on sensitive topics of Finnish-Canadian immigrant research. For some volumes, she served as a co-editor. She proofread nearly every issue. All this she did with such dedication and commitment that without her contribution the Journal of Finnish Studies would not be the same. She had a special talent for seeing synergies in the most unlikely places, thus enabling us to perform to our full potential.
She founded the Canadian Friends of Finland friendship society in 1982 and fostered cultural relations between Canada and Finland in a variety of ways.

In her academic life, Varpu Lindström studied the humble immigrant. In her own life, she was able to transform that humble experience into a career worthy of international recognition. During her distinguished career as a professor and scholar at York University, Canada, she specialized in North American social history, migration studies, and women studies. Her first book, now a classic on the experience of Finnish immigrants to Canada, was based on her PhD thesis: *Defiant Sisters: A Social History of Finnish Immigrant Women in Canada, 1890–1930*. She also published *From Heroes to Enemies: Finns in Canada, 1937–1947*. Inspired by *Defiant Sisters*, filmmaker Kelly Saxberg invited Lindström to be researcher and historical consultant for her 2004 National Film Board documentary, *Letters from Karelia*.

Throughout her career, Varpu Lindström conducted hundreds of interviews among Finnish Canadians and collected letters, diaries, and other kinds of written materials for her research. This legacy is now housed at York University’s Clara Thomas Archives & Special Collections; it is an invaluable resource for future immigrant studies researchers.

Shortly before she died, she was presented with a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal as a tribute for her lifetime of scholarship and her pioneering work documenting the history of Finnish Canadians.

It is hard to imagine anyone who would better deserve the title “defiant sister.” She gained respect, gratitude, and love, both in her academic community and the immigrant community.
EDITORIAL

Two years ago, in August 2010, the Publication Forum Project (Julkaisufoorumihanke) was launched, initiated by Finnish universities. The purpose of the project was to evaluate and rank scientific publication venues (journals and book publishers) in all fields of research. Hosted by the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies (Tieteellisten seurain valtuuskunta), the project is funded by Finland’s Ministry of Education and Culture. The evaluation covered nearly 20,000 national and international scientific journals and series. Twenty-three panels, each consisting of six to thirteen members, chosen according to their fields of expertise, were charged with the task of evaluating and ranking hundreds of scientific titles, defined as such because they subject their submissions to peer review to guarantee the quality of published articles. The publication venue also must have an editorial board. The evaluated titles included print and digital journals, conference series, and book and anthology series.

The titles were ranked in two categories: scientific (level 1) and leading scientific (level 2) publication channels. Level 1 publication venues meet the scientific publication criteria (editorial board of experts and peer-review process); level 2 titles publish articles that represent their international authors’ best research. Only 20 percent of the titles evaluated by each panel were ranked at level 2. The Journal of Finnish Studies belongs to this elite group. Few titles (only up to one-fourth of those ranked by each panel at level 2) were given the ranking of level 3.

The panel on history, archaeology, and cultural studies, chaired by Professor Pirjo Markkola (University of Jyväskylä), provided JoFS’s high ranking. Naturally, we JoFS editors are more than pleased. This ranking brings deserved prestige for our journal, now in its sixteenth volume. We have known of our rigorous peer-review process, the international prestige of the members of our editorial board, and the high level of the articles published by a wide range of nationally and internationally recognized experts. Our knowledge has now been objectively validated. Because funding of Finnish universities and departments will be based partly on articles published in level 2 and level 3 journals, we can expect to continue to receive excellent submissions and to publish the very best in the future. (For more information on the Publication Forum Project, see http://www.tsv.fi/julkaisufoorumi/english.html.)

Another excellent piece of news that we wish to share with our readership is that the Journal of Finnish Studies has signed a contract with EBSCO Publishing. In the future, the journal will also be accessible via subscribing university libraries.
in an electronic form. We will not, however, abandon the hardcopy format of the journal because we believe that this is the form that our subscribers value and will continue to support. The decision to sign the contract with EBSCO Publishing was made after considerable deliberation and was based on the notion that if the journal can be accessed by all university libraries that are EBSCO subscribers, our reach will multiply enormously. We trust that citations of *JoFS* articles will grow in number, and the exposure that we will receive can only benefit us and those who publish with us.

In preparation to submit our fifteen volumes to the EBSCO research database, all the past articles had to be scanned and stored in a specific electronic form. The College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Sam Houston State University made this enormous task possible by allowing us to hire two graduate students to complete the scanning. As a result, Travis Franks and Michael Chad Meiners, SHSU graduate students in English, can probably claim to possess the most in-depth knowledge in East Texas of our journal’s contents, having courageously scanned and formatted every page of the fifteen past volumes. Our acknowledgements to both.

These positive developments are shadowed by the recent death of Varpu Lindström, the Chair of our editorial board, an inspiring role model, and a dear friend and colleague. With Professor Lindström’s dedication to the cause of women, it is perhaps appropriate that this issue, dedicated to her life and memory, brings to the readers articles by six Finnish researchers, who in this context might be proud to be referred to as “Defiant Sisters.” Anna Kuismin’s article addresses peasant writers in nineteenth-century Finland—a topic that would be close to Varpu’s heart, as her sympathies were on the side of the poor. Sinikka Aapola-Kari writes about Finnish girlhood in the twentieth century—formative years that Varpu shared with Aapola-Kari’s research participants until she, at the age of fourteen, emigrated to Canada with her parents. Frances Willard, an American suffragette and the protagonist of Sirpa Salenius’s article, crossed the Atlantic in the opposite direction and, like Varpu, made keen observations about the country that she encountered. Outi Fingerroos, in her article on Karelianism in today’s Finland, like Varpu, addresses issues connected with recent history in the areas beyond the border between Finland and Russia. Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj’s Finnish dreams and Kirsi Hänninen’s encounters with the unknown, at a most metaphorical level, parallel Varpu’s experience as a fourteen-year-old Finnish girl who entered the unknown and fulfilled a dream—of a successful academic career and a rewarding life.

As with these six researchers whose work we present here, all of us affiliated with the *Journal of Finnish Studies* continue to be inspired by Professor Lindström’s legacy and will continue her work to foster the relations between Finland and the larger world, promoting Finnish research and the study that concerns Finland, the Finns, and the Finnish diaspora.

Hanna Snellman and Helena Halmari
BUILDING THE NATION, LIGHTING THE TORCH:
EXCURSIONS INTO THE WRITINGS OF THE COMMON PEOPLE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY FINLAND

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ABSTRACT
The article illuminates some of the ways the common people—people who had little or no formal schooling and who earned their living by doing physical work—contributed to nation-building in nineteenth-century Finland. The first case study deals with the “Peasant Poets” from the 1830s to the 1850s, whereas the second focuses on the diary and the hand-written newspapers of Juho Kaksola (1835–1913), an “enlightened peasant” of his time. The third case concerns Elämäni (“My Life,” 1877), an autobiographical story by a self-taught cantor Pietari Päivärinta. The article demonstrates that the non-elite people who took up the pen were not just echoing the nation-building discourse of the literati, even though they adopted the rhetoric of the Fennoman. Among other things, it was in their economic and social interests to promote the rights of the Finnish language in government, law, and education. Involvement in literary endeavors produced profound emotional experiences as well.

INTRODUCTION
As in many other countries, literacy has a dual history in Finland. From the seventeenth century on, the Lutheran church took care of teaching people to read, but writing was not considered necessary for everyone. The fear that schooling would wean children from manual labor was often shared by both the clergy and the common people themselves. Acquiring the ability to read the Scriptures was considered sufficient training. In practice, reading was often a mechanical skill, and the required religious texts were learned by oral repetition, rather than by studying them. The percentage of Finns who knew how to write in the early nineteenth century was very small, but as the century wore on, the number of people with writing skills increased as more and more primary schools were established. However, at the turn of the twentieth century only 40 percent of the Finnish adult population knew how to
write (Leino-Kaukiainen 2007, 430). Even though women were often better readers than men, they took up writing later than men, which undoubtedly reflected the patriarchal ideology of the time. Writing, associated with power, belonged to the men’s sphere.¹

What, why, and how did the common people write before the era of compulsory education? How did writing affect their mental and emotional worlds, and what kind of an impact did it have on society and the Finnish-language literary institutions created in the nineteenth century? These kinds of questions have been largely neglected in Finnish research, probably because of the assumption that texts written by the common people were rare and hard to find. But when an effort is made, a great variety of material can be unearthed—material that can be employed in many disciplines. For example, a catalogue compiled by Kaisa Kauranen (2005) lists information on the texts written by more than two hundred unschooled people born in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. These documents have been donated to the Finnish Literature Society by the writers themselves or posthumously by their families. In several cases, the material has been gathered by scholars. There are devotional texts, secular verse, diaries, personal letters, memoirs, stories, plays, and hand-written newspapers. These texts have been written by land-owning farmers, crofters, cottagers, rural craftsmen, church wardens, farm hands, and even beggars. This kind of material opens up new avenues for research into the processes and practices through which an oral or semi-literate society became increasingly permeated by writing. The motives for writing may have belonged to a private or a restricted sphere in society—noting down expenses or the weather in the almanac, keeping in touch with a friend by correspondence, jotting down memories, summing up the course of one’s life, searching one’s soul. On the other hand, letters to the editor, speeches to be read at a meeting, and hand-written papers circulated or read aloud represented ways to present one’s views in public. Both private and public motives made the common people write, and practical and ideological motives were intertwined.

The purpose of this article is to illuminate some aspects of how the common people took up the pen and participated in nation building in the nineteenth-century Finland. My first case study deals with the “Peasant Poets” of the 1830s and the 1840s. Next, I present Juho Kaksola as an example of an enlightened man of his time. The third case concerns the autobiographical story of Pietari Päivärinta and its reception in the late 1870s. My aim is to show that the processes of nation-building were more nuanced than previously thought. I want to shift the focus from a top-down approach that sees the educated people as handing down their ideas to the

¹ Because of the scarcity of reliable sources, it is difficult to know how many non-elite women were able to write during the first decades of the nineteenth century. When C. Ch. Böcker sent inquiries concerning literacy, among other things, to Finnish parishes in the mid-1830s, he did not even ask how many fully literate women there were in the parish (Leino-Kaukiainen 2007, 426).
uneducated, to a bottom-up approach that originates from the “new social history” movement in Great Britain in the 1960s. According to Martyn Lyons, the history of popular writing practices currently represents a new history from below, because it emphasizes individual rather than collective experience and relies on what ordinary people actually wrote. It re-evaluates individual experience and searches for the personal and private voices of la gente commune, and considers ordinary readers and writers as active agents in the shaping of their own lives and cultures (Lyons 2009). In studies from below, the focus is on non-privileged people, their experiences, writing practices, and points of view. During the past decade, there has been a growing interest in Finnish research in these developments, and similar work has also been done in many other countries.

In spite of the somewhat negative connotation, I speak about the common people to signify rural people who earned their living by doing physical work and who had little or no formal schooling. One could talk about “ordinary people,” but fully literate people were exceptional in their communities, though less so during the last decades of the nineteenth century. There were, naturally, social differences between land-owning farmers and cottagers or skilled craftsmen and farmhands, among others, but many distinctions separated them from the nobility, the clergy, and the civil servants, who were able to speak Swedish (Wirilander 1972, 1–11; Laurila 1956, 31).

THE RISE OF FINNISH NATIONALISM
The introduction of Catholic Christianity into Finland during the first centuries of the second millennium resulted in the inclusion of Finns in the Swedish Kingdom. The Protestant Reformation meant the turn to the Lutheran faith. Vernacular Finnish was first used in writing in the sixteenth century in the Biblical translations by Mikael Agricola (circa 1507–1557), a student of Martin Luther. The language of instruction at the Royal Academy of Turku (founded in 1640, now the University of Helsinki) was Latin. Government, the judiciary, and secondary education were conducted in Swedish. From the last decade of the eighteenth century, the Fennophiles, such as

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2 An interdisciplinary research network coordinated by Anna Kuismin under the auspices of the Finnish Literature Society has initiated seminars and conferences, as well as a campaign for obtaining manuscripts and the compilation of special archival catalogues. The network has also inspired many publications (e.g., Kauranen 2007, 2009; Laitinen 2009; Laitinen and Nordlund 2008; Leino-Kaukiainen 2007; Mäkinen 2007; Makkonen 2005; Nordlund 2007a, 2007b. See also a special issue of Kasvatus ja Aika 3/2008. In 2009, two Nordic explorative workshops (The Common People and the Processes of Literacy in the Nordic Countries: Excursions to the Scribal and Print Cultures in the 18th and 19th Centuries) were organized with the help of an NOS-HS grant, and a Nordic research project, Reading and writing from below: Toward a new social history of literacy in the Nordic sphere during the long nineteenth century, initiated by the Finnish network and financed with the NORDCORP grant, was launched in the fall of 2011 (see http://blogs.helsinki.fi/nord-corp/).

3 E.g., Lorenzen-Schmidt and Poulsen (eds.) (2002), Lyons (ed.) (2007); Ólafsson (2012), Fet, (2003). The approach “from below” has also been applied to the field of sociolinguistics, among others (e.g., Vandenbussche and Elspaß 2007).
H. G. Porthán (1739–1804), professor of rhetoric, and the scholars belonging to the “Turku Romanticists,” contributed to the study of Finnish language, mythology, geography, and history, as well as to the establishment of the first newspapers.

The idea of Finland as a national entity came to life after 1809 when, following Sweden’s defeat in the war against Russia, Finland’s long history as a part of the Swedish Kingdom ended and Finland became an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire. However, Finland’s former constitution and laws as well as religious and social institutions were retained. The Finnish Diet that Czar Alexander the First convened in 1809 had four estates: nobility, clergy, burghers, and peasants. Russia appointed the Governor-General, who was in charge of foreign affairs. Paradoxically, the Russian period facilitated the rise of Finnish nationalism. It was fostered by the fear that annexation would ultimately mean the Russification of the country’s government, education, and culture. It was believed that this threat could be met only by the creation of a sense of national unity. Benedict Anderson’s notion of the nation as an imagined community is to the point in the Finnish context. However, Anderson (1991) mistakenly states that Russian became Finland’s official language after the annexation of 1809 (74). During the first decades of Finland’s autonomy, Russia approved the new Finnish nationalist sentiment because it served to weaken the old ties to Sweden.

Finnish cultural nationalism first focused on the language question. Finnish (or rather, dialects of Finnish) were spoken by the majority of the population, whereas the elite and a small minority of the common people spoke Swedish. J. W. Snellman (1806–1881), a Hegelian philosopher and politician, emphasized the importance of the Finnish language and literature written in Finnish to the fostering of a national spirit and consciousness. Finnish was to be developed into a language used in all fields of life. Some members of the Finnish-minded intelligentsia came from the lower strata of society and spoke Finnish as their mother tongue, but there were many Swedish-speakers who faced the challenge of learning Finnish. Patriotism and Finnish themes were expressed in Swedish, too: J. L. Runeberg (1804–1877) depicted Finnish common people in his Fänrik Ståls sägner I–II (1848, 1860, The Tales of Ensign Stål), soon translated into Finnish. The first poem of this cycle, “Vårt land” (“Our Land”) became the Finnish National Anthem, first performed in 1848.

One of the first measures of the Finnish Literature Society, founded in 1831, was to fund the excursions made by its first secretary, Elias Lönnrot (1802–1884), to create written records of oral poetry in the easternmost parts of Finland and in eastern Karelia where the epic oral tradition was still alive. The Kalevala, an epos compiled by Lönnrot and published in 1835 (the second, enlarged edition came out in 1849), had great symbolic value; it enabled Finns to embrace the richness of their oral tradition. The genesis of the epos was influenced by the ideas of the German philosopher, J. G. Herder, who argued that a nation could exist only if its identity lay
on the language of its people. In the 1860s, the “Fennoman” campaign became more intense. The aim was to raise Finnish to the status of an official language. The campaign met opposition from the “Svecomans,” who defended the status of the Swedish language and cultural heritage. In 1863, Finnish was granted equal standing with Swedish, with the expectation that this goal would be realized within twenty years; however, in practice, it took longer before Finnish achieved the position to which it was entitled. But ideology was not enough; it was also necessary to modernize the country and to develop its material progress as well as to improve the possibility of social mobility. Kansanvalistus, popular education (literally the “enlightenment of the common people”), was part and parcel of the Finnish nation-building project. Lectures, newspapers, and popular books were tools in this struggle.

One way the Finnish Literature Society encouraged literary production was to organize writing competitions. Aleksis Kivi (Alexis Stenvall, 1834–1872), son of a village tailor, started his career by responding to the call for plays written in Finnish. Kivi’s groundbreaking novel Seitsemän veljestä (Seven Brothers) was published in 1870. Set in the countryside in the 1830s, the novel begins by presenting the protagonists, seven orphaned boys, in conflict with the authorities. When they are faced with the task of learning to read—a requirement for the Lutheran rite of confirmation, a passage to adulthood—they flee into the wilderness. After ten years of life in the forest, the brothers are ready to return to society. All of them have acquired the skill to read, but only Eero, the youngest one, knows how to write. This ability brings him extra income and esteem in his community. He subscribes to a newspaper and starts sending his contributions to be published in it. Reading and writing change his worldview in a fundamental way; his vision is enlarged to include a concept of a nation and the work that needs to be done for its progress. The portrait of the mature Eero captures the essential characteristics of those Finnish common people who had adopted patriotic ideas and contributed to the modernization of the country, having put their reading and writing to active use. Eero is the driving force behind the foundation of the primary school, and he wants to educate his eldest son to be a “man of knowledge and action” (Kivi, [1870] 1944, 452).

THE PEASANT POETS AND THE LANGUAGE QUESTION
My first case study concerns the self-taught “Peasant Poets,” who mostly produced poems in the traditional meter, used in The Kalevala. Many of them came from eastern Finland, especially from the provinces of Savo and Karelia. For the Finnish-minded literati, meeting common people who wrote poetry was a phenomenon met with warm approval, even though illiterate Homeric bards were more welcome for those influenced by Romanticism. There were indeed some poets who did not know how to write; their creations were written down by others. Dissemination of poems occurred in both oral and printed forms.
Elias Lönnrot, philologist and a medical doctor, son of a village tailor, was a significant mediator of the work of vernacular poets. According to Kaisa-Marja Perttunen (1975, 118) Lönnrot’s archive holds nearly three hundred poems written by the common people; thirty-four of them were published in his periodical Mehiläinen (The Bee, 1836–1837 and 1839–1840). Lönnrot introduced each writer and added a commentary on the language and meter of the poem, encouraging the writers in their pursuits. He also edited a collection of poems written by Paavo Korhonen (1775–1840), perhaps the best known of the Peasant Poets, published in 1848.

In 1828, Lönnrot had met Korhonen for the first time, and, in 1834, he suggested that the Finnish Literature Society pay attention to Korhonen and support him in his pursuits. As Korhonen had already subscribed to a newspaper (Turun Wiikko-Sanomat), he was sent Kultala, the first publication of the Finnish Literature Society. There is a telling characterization of the book on the title page: “a useful and entertaining story, to be read by the common people.” Kultala is the Finnish translation of Das Goldmacherdorf (The Goldsmith’s Village, 1817) by the Swiss writer Heinrich Zschokke, portraying an ideal society. Korhonen rewarded the Society by writing a poem, printed in Sanan Saattaja Wiipurista on May 25, 1835. The poem, dedicated to the city of Helsinki and the Finnish Literature Society, mentions the foundation of the Academy of Turku and its relocation to Helsinki (incidentally, Korhonen mentions that the world’s first academy was founded by Plato) and goes on to praise the Finnish Literature Society and the light it has spread in promoting the Finnish language. Kultala moves the poet to tears and touches his heart like the best of prayers (Korhonen 2001, 242).

Even though Kultala, the first publication of the Finnish Literature Society, was intended for a wide readership, the academic members concentrated on scholarly activities. On the other hand, popular education in the form of common readers and public lectures was advanced by the Savo-Karelian Fraternity of the University of Helsinki, in particular. Paavo Tikkanen (1823–1873), son of a well-to-do peasant, was the major force behind the establishment in 1847 of the weekly Finnish-language newspaper Suometar (Finland personified as a female spirit), which welcomed the common people as contributors. It was an important forum for publishing poems and newsletters written by non-elite Finns.⁴

Peasant Poets were published in albums and in Swedish translations, too. According to Vihtori Laurila (1956), they wrote about local history, farm work, natural disasters, wars, nature, love and courtship, the seasons, the dangers (or pleasures) of tobacco and alcohol, and the Emperor (who was praised). Some of the poems were moralistic, but there was also satirical verse about the clergy or other local

⁴ At its high point, the print-run was 4,500 copies (Kemiläinen 1984, 118). Suometar was discontinued in 1866 but restarted under the name of Uusi Suometar (New Suometar) in 1869.
dignitaries (Laurila 1956, 192–96). In a slightly condescending tone, Kai Laitinen and George C. Schoolfield (1998) summarize the significance of these writers:

> Whatever may be said about the technical qualities of the peasant poets’ “labor” (which they took seriously, calling it “plowing with the pen”), it is a remarkable example of a demotic and democratic literary tradition, representing an element of Finland’s population that would find its voice again in the Finnish novel, from Kivi onward to the twentieth century. (Laitinen and Schoolfield 1998, 57)

Poems about the Finnish language encapsulated the significance of nation-building for the common people. Paavo Korhonen saw Finnish as a baby in swaddling clothes, tied up like a prisoner (Korhonen 2001, 238). “A Hymn of Mourning on the State of the Finnish Language,” written by Pietari Makkonen (1785–1851) in 1837, laments the fact that the laws were written in a language that the unschooled people could not read. This foreign language (Swedish) keeps people in darkness, it said. The poem includes a plea for the Emperor to pass a law to expand the use of Finnish (Pakarinen 2006, 29–30). Another poem by Makkonen, “Song of Joy on the Progress of the Finnish Language,” written down in 1845, depicts Finnish as an orphan child forced to beg until the [Finnish Literature] Society starts teaching her. She is washed with white soap, flowers are pinned to her chest, and she is dressed in the best linen. At the end of the poem, the poor orphan girl has become a beauty courted by the gentlemen of Helsinki (Pakarinen 2006, 119–20). The image of Finland as a maiden is drawn from *The Kanteletar*, a collection of lyric folk poetry edited by Elias Lönnrot, and from August Ahlqvist’s “The Fairy Tale,” published in the first issue of *Suometar* in 1847 (Pakarinen 2006, 80).

Another peasant poet, Antti Puhakka (1816–1893), wrote as many as twenty-six poems on the language question (Laurila 1956, 185). For example, “Jussin juttereissu” (“Jussi’s Trip to the Courthouse”) is a satire about greedy scribes who skin the common man of his money and bureaucrats who refuse to read documents written in Finnish (Puhakka 1984, 59–62). In 1845, a broadsheet called *Neljä runoa suomen kielestä* (Four Poems on the Finnish Language), published by the Savo-Karelian Fraternity, was sold cheaply along with a reader intended for the common people. Besides two poems by Puhakka, the broadsheet included contributions from Paavo Korhonen and Pietari Makkonen. The same year, Makkonen, Puhakka, and Olli Kymäläinen (a semi-literate poet, 1790–1855) were invited to visit Porvoo and Helsinki to be immortalized in paintings and drawings. The trio was feted at student gatherings and at the meeting of the Finnish Literature Society. As Hannes Sihvo concludes, the Fennoman celebration of the Peasant Poets had turned into a cult (Sihvo 1975, 53–62).
Vernacular poets reacted in their way to the changing political climate. According to Michael Branch (1998), “the once benign attitude of the Russian authorities changed to one of suspicion and fear as the political power of nationalism asserted itself in various parts of Europe” (28). The unrest in Europe in 1848 made the Russian authorities anxious about Finnish nationalist tendencies. One resulting measure was a statute that forbade publications in Finnish, other than those with religious or economic content. The statute was viewed as a serious threat to the efforts of the Fennoman intelligentsia to disseminate their ideas to the common people. It was a blow to the Peasant Poets, too, as Kirsti Salmi-Niklander has shown in her unpublished paper (2008), and was met with criticism, although with a twist. Two poems by Antti Puhakka, included in 1851 in a hand-written newspaper edited by students from the Ostrobothnian Fraternity, reflected the sad state of affairs. Puhakka’s poem entitled “Lintujen neuvonta” (“Advice to the birds”) is an allegory easily decoded, as Russia is mentioned in the last line of the poem. The speaker of the poem, a bird lamenting the fact that he is not allowed to sing any longer, says that little birds should learn to hold their tongue. “The little birds” refer to the students who had aroused the suspicion of the Russian officials. “If those long-beards / hear you brawl / they will think / that we are teaching you to sing” (Puhakka, cited in Salmi-Niklander 2008). The Peasant Poets did not want to become the object of Russian surveillance, the poem seems to say. Puhakka shows that the language statute targeted the people like him, writing only in Finnish, much more so than the students who could publish in Swedish (Salmi-Niklander 2008).

Even though Antti Puhakka actively co-operated with the learned Fennomans in nation-building efforts, he did not spare his words when needed. In 1859, K. F. Calonius, pastor of the Tohmajärvi parish in eastern Finland, published a long article in Suometar under the pseudonym “—Ins.” The Crimean War had inspired many scribblers, who had produced a flood of songs, but their quality did not meet Calonius’s standards. Puhakka’s “War Song” is quoted by Calonius as one of the poems that went “against the laws of beauty and honor of literature” (Calonius 1859). Creations of this kind, he argued, ought to be censored because of their poor artistic merit; freedom and responsibility should go together in literature, too, and if writers broke the (aesthetic) rules, they were like unruly children. It was the role of the reading public to provide reproof and punishment in their reviews (Calonius 1859). Enraged, Puhakka sent Suometar an article in which he defended the broadsheets and criticized “Mr –Ins” for his patronizing attitudes. He treats the common people like children, Puhakka declared, and in doing so he, Calonius, follows the example of many learned men before him. According to Puhakka, Finns had waited for seven hundred years for maturity, but would they ever attain it? he asked. The writings of the common people had their own worth, and, Puhakka concluded, they should not be treated like weeds (Puhakka 1860).
Juho Kaksola, an Enlightened Peasant

On May 3, 1915, Arne Rossander, a secondary-school teacher from Helsinki, wrote to the Finnish Literature Society that the widow of Juho Kaksola, a farmer and former representative of the peasantry at the Finnish Diet, had given Rossander some papers belonging to her late husband. According to Rossander, Kaksola had belonged to “the respected core of men who had the spirit of spring of our national awakening,” and he had “quietly, faithfully and assiduously worked for the enlightenment of his village and its disadvantaged people.” Rossander wanted to donate the documents to the archives of the Finnish Literature Society in the hope that they would “contribute to the understanding of the tireless struggle of the Finnish common people towards the spiritual light and popular education” (Rossander 1915, 350). Indeed, these documents—a diary that consists of yearly entries covering sixty-three years of Kaksola’s life, eighteen issues of hand-written newspapers, some speeches, and hymns—provide interesting material for the study of a writing peasant. However, this material exists only in typescript.

Juho Rolig, later known as Juho Kaksola (1835–1913) from Hartola, Central Finland, started to jot down his autobiographical notes in 1859, at the age of twenty-five. The first entries in the “Book of Remembrance of the Most Remarkable Events in My Life” are retrospective, starting from 1849: “My father became unable to see and so ill that people thought he would die; that brought the first tears in my eyes, as I had spent the time of my childhood in a playful way and was totally unused to these kinds of misfortunes” (Kaksola, cited in Kauranen 2009, 59). In 1850, Juho accompanied his father on a trip to Helsinki to find a cure for his eyes. Another event recorded is the boy’s own illness, probably a paralysis on the left side of his body. The year 1851 was remarkable because of the first communion received, and the entry of 1852 contains a mention of revivalist meetings attended and the moving effect they had on him. The year 1853 saw the death of Kaksola’s mother and his two nieces. The year 1858 consists of a line written in a secret code. It is interesting that even though the “Book of Remembrance” is dated 1859, that particular year is not covered in it. In 1861, Kaksola was looking for a cure for a bad pain in his leg. He was away from home for three months, and his condition improved only at the beginning of the following year.

After this, there is a gap from 1862 to 1865. The other documents in Kaksola’s archive come in handy, because they include two sets of hand-written newspapers, Leivonen (The Lark, 1862) and Kirjelmiä ystäville (Letters to Friends, 1863). Kaksola’s
“village papers” were probably produced as a single copy and circulated from house to house in Putkijärvi, his home village, and Vuorenkylä, the neighboring village. On the first page of *Leivonen*, the editor states that he intends to give out the paper once a month. There will be stories, news about the village and the parish, as well as “advice on the general advancement of education (civilization).” The editor predicts that his endeavor will be treated with caution and that some people will wonder how he can spend so much time in this kind of pursuit. However, continues the editor, it is everyone’s duty to work for the nation, the common good, and the enlightenment of the people. As Kirsti Salmi-Niklander notes, the pages are mostly filled with Kaksola’s own writings or texts he had copied from books and newspapers, even though the idea was that the villagers would contribute to the paper. Kaksola’s documents contain interesting information on the “reading co-operative” he founded in 1862. The idea was to subscribe to newspapers and purchase books. Twenty-three people became members; eleven of them were women. Farmers, farmhands, and maids, and even a shepherdess named Wilhelmiina joined in. At the end of 1862, there were thirty-six people listed as members. However, enthusiasm seems to have soon waned (Salmi-Niklander 2007, 170–72).

According to Salmi-Niklander (2007), Kaksola propagated the benefits of reading and writing both in his speeches and his hand-written newspapers. Reading is a weapon against roughness and coarseness, he argued. Books can move the human mind, melt the heart, and make one long for something better; they have spiritual power in their capacity to enter one’s heart and start a new life there. To encourage common people to write, it was necessary to wean them away from the old way of thinking. Peasants could be as educated as gentlemen, Kaksola argued, referring to parish clerks and constables who often acted as scribes. He even encouraged women to write letters and to record their memories as well as to keep household records (Salmi-Niklander 2007, 168–72).

Kaksola must have been aware of the debates in the Finnish press about the necessity or futility of common people’s writing skills, and he might have read Antti Manninen’s manual for farmers, first published in 1856. Manninen—a self-educated man himself—dedicates a chapter of his book to writing, in which he lists the practical benefits of the skill, explaining how useful it could be in running the farm. For example, it was important to note down wages, loans, and debts, because documents could prevent quarrels and even court cases; in a written contract, facts remained unchanged. Money could be saved for not having to pay for a scribe to do the paperwork. Last, but not least, it was amusing to read letters written by friends and to record one’s thoughts to be read by others. There was no danger that a writing peasant would become a “mock-gentleman,” Manninen concludes (1863, 5).

The excessive use of alcohol, one of Kaksola’s favorite topics, echoes the views expressed in the temperance debate of the 1860s, in which the enlightened peasants
and the Fennoman intelligentsia found common ground (Salmi-Niklander 2007, 173). Kaksola’s essay, “On the advancement of education and civilization,” calls for a move from the “bewildered old times” towards civilization. Refinement in dress and manners is an important part of civilized behavior, not a luxury, he argues. As Salmi-Niklander (2007) notes, Kaksola’s defensive tone leads one to believe that his views must have been criticized. He writes in disgust of how women in the old days had not minded to bare their thighs when spinning wool into yarn. Kaksola advocates a chaste and enlightened woman (177). Interestingly, the image of a maiden appears in a piece he wrote about the monthly paper Luonnotar (Nature personified as a female spirit) that had begun to appear in December 1862. Kaksola is tempted by the new maiden, even though he has been engaged to Suometar for many years.8 Luckily, Kaksola soon found a muse of flesh and blood. On June 29, 1865, he married a young woman more than ten years his junior. Although he was happy to be eternally united with his beloved companion, the wedding day was filled with contradictory emotions:

Joy and sadness, desire for revenge (bad as it was), patience, doubt and hope, pretension and all kinds of light-mindedness, graveness and seriousness—but the former ones tended to win over the latter ones. No single thing ruled over the other. A ghost of badness aroused a sparkle of revenge and made it aglow to excite my heart, fluttering in the storm, but I did not want to lose my reputable name and give in and break the pact of peace with my conciliatory nature. [. . .] If somebody could have seen my heart then he would have said that it was lunatic and in need of a doctor’s cure. (Kaksola, cited in Kauranen 2009, 60–61)

What caused these conflicting emotions is not explained, but they probably had to do with some former disappointment in love. Marriage meant a move from the old home to his father-in-law’s farm and the change of his surname into Kaksola as the estate was called. The wedding day was a farewell to the old life, but it sparked thoughts about the future, too:

So remarkable was 26th of July. It was then that I said farewell to all those places where I had been working and found my amusements. All the places I had looked after and cared for seemed to look at me as if they would miss me. [. . .] But now at my new home, everywhere I go, I hear the wind hum quietly: you are new to this place, unknown and perhaps unused to us, but you probably are our present master, or our future one.

8 In his preface to the first issue of Suometar (January 12, 1847) Antero Warelius had presented his weekly paper as a maiden who gives her love to the poor but trustworthy and hard-working Finn.
If you understand the land and have the desire to improve it, perhaps you will find here eternal joy and happiness. (Kaksola, cited in Kauranen 2009, 61)

From then on, Kaksola wrote his yearly entry on his wedding day to commemorate this happy event. Children were born; their births, christenings, and progress were recorded. The first son was named Johan Wilhelm, probably after J. W. Snellman, the leading Fennoman, and the second son got the lofty Latin name, Optatus. Happiness gave way to grief, as five of the eight children died, and the son whom Kaksola had hoped would succeed him as the master of the farm did not want to settle down. Kaksola was a deeply religious man who comforted himself with quotations from the Hymnal; sometimes the entries take the form of a prayer. The emphasis of the diary is on the inner life and family events. Kaksola barely mentions the fact that he was chosen as a representative of the peasantry at the meeting of the Finnish Diet in 1882, and he does not write about his duties in the parish and municipal administration. In the entry for 1880, he writes about his devotion to raising his children and working for their future. His concern extends to the children of the other people, too. Because of this, he works hard to have a school started in his village. Again, Eero in Seven Brothers, by Aleksis Kivi, comes to mind; he was to become the spokesman for a village school.

“My Life”: An Exemplary Story of Pietari Päivärinta

Kansanvalistusseura, the Society for Popular Education, was established in 1874. According to Ilkka Liikanen, it was the nucleus of Fennoman hegemony and organizational endeavors, forming an ideological and organizational center for the movement (Liikanen 1995, 350). One of its aims was to establish contacts with the new local elite in the countryside. In 1876, a writing competition on the theme of “Family life of the Finnish people” was launched. Pietari Päiväranta (1827–1913), a peasant and a self-taught cantor from the western coast of Finland, was bedridden at the time and needed something to help him pass the time. He saw the announcement in a newspaper, began to write, and sent his text to Helsinki. Päiväranta’s autobiographical story was awarded a prize and published in 1877. This modest book contains sixty-three pages.

In his review in the Swedish-speaking newspaper Östra Finland, Dr. Gabriel Lagus assumed that Päiväranta’s book was a work of fiction written by a learned man. He criticized the portrayal of the narrator-protagonist; a peasant would not have written about the development of the Finnish press or used phrases like “the dawn of the national spirit” (Lagus [1877] 2002, 80). Finnish-language newspapers were delighted by this misunderstanding. They were eager to point out that there were, indeed, peasants who wrote and understood what a nation was. “My Life” was a
proof of the success of the Finnish nation-building project and popular education. For the leading figure of the second-generation nationalists, Georg Zacharias Forsman (1830–1903), who used the penname Yrjö Koskinen, Päivärinta was a dream-come-true. However, Forsman regarded “My Life” as a lucky coincidence that would not be repeated (Forsman, cited in Päivärinta [1877] 2002, 92). This guess proved out to be wrong. Päivärinta subsequently published more than thirty books.

Päivärinta’s success story is not exactly a rags-to-riches tale, but a narrative in which the protagonist is poor as a child, so poor that he even has to beg. But because of his talents and efforts—and because of his habit of finding useful information by reading—he is able to improve his situation and rise socially. The story is not strictly autobiographical. When compared to a memoir Päivärinta wrote later in his life (Makkonen 2002a, 62–97), one can see how some details are twisted to make “My Life” into a more general and dramatic story. For example, Päivärinta does not mention his year of birth or the places where he lived. Nor does he write about his becoming a cantor (he taught himself to read notes and took an exam at the town of Oulu) or his earlier literary efforts, such as some contributions to a local newspaper or editing a hand-written paper. It is apparent that the writer’s motivation stems from his desire to present an exemplary story of a Finnish-minded, enlightened peasant. He has a double audience—learned Fennomans and those peasants who have not seen as much light as himself (Makkonen 2002b, xiv).

Päivärinta was a good reader as a boy. He was praised by the local pastor who examined the reading skills of his parishioners. Pietari tells the pastor that he would like to learn to write as well, and when asked the reason for this, he explains that he would like to become a clergyman himself, “because they eat well and walk self-confidently” (Päivärinta [1877] 2002, 18). Everybody laughs at this clever observation. Class distinction and writing are also connected in an episode where Pietari is taught to write by another boy. He asks why the Finnish alphabet includes the letters b, d, and c—he does not know any words that would include them. His teacher has an explanation: these letters are for the “better people.” Pietari understands this immediately; of course it is so. After all, there are people who have an easier life, better food and clothes. But why then, Pietari wonders, do they not have a completely different alphabet (Päivärinta [1877] 2002, 19)? Naturally, the mature Päivärinta, portraying the scene from his childhood, knew that the strange letters he had found were used in Finnish words borrowed from other languages. Interestingly, he presents language as a site of class distinction.

An incident from Päivärinta’s childhood brings newspapers to the foreground, showing their importance for social change. As a young boy, Pietari has had to go on a begging trip to alleviate the desperate situation of his family. It was his first evening away from home, and he was sitting by the fire in the common room of a farmhouse and listening to people telling ghost stories, which as a regular reader of newspapers
he does not regard highly. Somebody asks him to tell a fairy tale; after all, beggars usually know many stories. He agrees, and his memory is admired. Another listener notices that the story Pietari told is not a fairy tale. The boy reveals that he had read it as a *feuilleton* in a newspaper. As the audience is eager to hear more, he volunteers to go and borrow the paper from the farm where he had read it. When the boy comes in, the master is reading an article on house painting. He refuses to lend his paper to a beggar boy and locks the precious paper away. Bitter, Pietari goes to sleep that night, but has a dream in which he is a master of his own farm. Of course, this incident foreshadows the situation of Päivärinta as a grown man. He owned his land, and was not only subscribing to a newspaper but contributing to it, like Eero in Aleksis Kivi’s *Seven Brothers*.

When Päivärinta was young, J. W. Snellman started to edit and publish a periodical called *Maamiehen ystävä* (Farmer’s Friend/Patriot’s Friend, 1844–1855). According to “My Life,” at that time there were only two other men in the whole parish who read everything they could lay their hands on. For Päivärinta, Snellman’s journal, lent by these men, was like a torch shedding light for the people in the dark. The journal was like a wise parent who knows how to feed a sickly, weak child. It treated its readers tenderly, addressing them by their first names, so that the message reached even the lowest strata of society (Päivärinta [1877] 2002, 41). More than fifteen years had passed since Puhakka’s criticism of the patronizing attitudes towards the common people, but the metaphor of children and parents came up again, this time in a positive light. Päivärinta also mentions the common reader and a book about nature that the Savo-Karelian Fraternity had given out; these books opened up new worlds for their readers. When *Suometar* appeared, Päivärinta and his friends did not at first think much of this newspaper because they were used to articles one could learn from, not to news items, debates, and arguments. They had not realized that parents knew of their need for stronger food, Päivärinta concludes, but it took time before they could stomach it.

Looking back on his progress, Päivärinta presents his old views with self-irony. For example, he had thought that newspapers were no longer needed because everything that was worthwhile had already been told. He clearly writes for educated readers, having achieved a position equal to theirs. But when writing about child care, Päivärinta directs his words to his own peers, whom he wants to enlighten in turn. He describes his farming methods and the importance of breast-feeding, a fact that he had learned from a popular publication of Elias Lönnrot. At that time, child mortality figures were high, but most of Päivärinta’s eight children survived, because the parents did not follow the old ways of child care nor did they seek help from lay healers or sorcerers.

Päivärinta juxtaposes his earlier thoughts and opinions with later ones to show how his understanding had become wider and deeper. For example, he had read in
the newspaper that the government had started to give prizes for the advancement of horse breeding. Why on earth, Päivärinta wondered at the time, would anyone give without any hope for reward? Later he realized how blind he had been. The government aimed at the common good and social progress. When Päivärinta had first read a collection of folk poetry put together by Z. Topelius the elder, he had had no clue why it was published. He had not been satisfied with an explanation given by a villager who had claimed that it was a guide for sorcerers and witches. That could not be true, because Päivärinta knew that books were meant to enlighten, not to teach witchcraft. Another man, a village cobbler, had said that the book had been published so that people would understand that everything was vanity under the sun. This opinion, with its Biblical echo (“Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity,” Ecclesiastes 1:2, KJV), had not been satisfying either. Finally, with The Kalevala, Päivärinta found an explanation he could accept: oral poetry reflects the ancient times of Finland and forms the basis of the country’s history ([1877] 2002, 44). Päivärinta had espoused the current Fennoman interpretation.

There is another interesting process that Päivärinta describes. When he had first read J. L. Runeberg’s poems in Finnish translation, he had not been able to relate to the poems at all, but in the end they brought tears to his eyes. Even though these words are not used in “My Life,” Päivärinta shows that he has learned that literature is *dulce et utile*, and that it could lead to an aesthetic experience. He had travelled far from the mere acquisition of literacy and entered the field of literature in the large sense of the word. In Päivärinta’s text, narrative agency is gained. “My Life” documents one process that led to the democratization of the literary field.

**Conclusion**

As can be seen from the case studies presented above, nation building and the active practices of writing in various genres went together in nineteenth-century Finland. Some of the work was done in a local setting, like Juho Kaksola’s hand-written newspapers promoting popular enlightenment, while Antti Puhakka and Pietari Päivärinta were actors on a national level, too. The contacts between the Fennoman *literati* and the common people contributed to nation building in many ways. The Fennoman intelligentsia needed the support and cooperation of the common people who benefited from the exchange in their turn. The “enlightenment” worked both ways. Self-educated writers who had read popular books put together by educated men, responded by illuminating their own lives; in this way, they educated the learned Fennomans. This can be seen in Päivärinta’s exemplary story, which was aimed to be read both by the educated people and by Päivärinta’s peers. Compared with Kaksola and Päivärinta, Puhakka was a more radical player even though he entered the field earlier than the other two men. His criticism of the patronizing attitudes directed at the common people was much stronger.
Perhaps the smallholder Kustaa Kallio (1846–1901) from central Finland had read Päivärinta’s life story because the image of the Fennoman intelligentsia as a good parent comes up in his autobiography, written for his children in 1897. Son of a poor crofter, Kallio was aware of social inequality, but he did not criticize the class society. He learned as a young man that it was a duty for every citizen to live not only for himself but also for society and the nation: “Even if we cannot have the kind of influence Snellman or other great men had, we can add our mite to the pile in building our nation by being diligent and honest working men” (Kallio, cited in Makkonen 2002a, 153). Kallio writes about the inventions he has witnessed over the years, like the steam engine and the railway, which he was building in the late 1860s. But society has changed as well, he argues. The great gap that separated the noble from the humble, and the rich from the poor has now become narrower:

It is a joy to see an educated man in the company of a common man and even the owner of a manor house with his tenant. Civilization has brought its bright rays to the darkest nooks and corners where some generations ago people wandered in the darkness of wild customs and magic. All this has been brought about by schools and books put together by our country’s great men who have reached out their hands to lead us, children of the forests, to the common battleground of our nation. (Kallio, cited in Makkonen 2002a, 153)

The metaphor of children and wise parents may seem amusing from a present-day perspective, but one can interpret it as a sign that the ideas of popular education touched many self-taught people to the core. Being hungry and even having to beg was a familiar experience for many common people who took to the pen; in this light, nourishment is a natural symbol for someone who has starved. Like Eero in Aleksis Kivi’s Seven Brothers, Kallio must have wanted a better future for his children. When he wrote his autobiography, “children of the forests” could enjoy further education in Finnish. Perhaps Kallio was thankful of the fact that one of his sons had entered the university and become a medical doctor: nation building and popular enlightenment had indeed contributed to social mobility. Eero’s son had reached the goal of his father.


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FINNISH GIRLHOOD IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: 
PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS AND PRIVATE STORIES

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ABSTRACT
This article focuses on change and continuity in the meanings of girlhood and adolescence in Finland during the twentieth century. There is an emphasis on the time period from the 1960s to the 1990s, but the article also includes a historical summary of early twentieth-century debates on girlhood and education, based on earlier research.

In the article, public, normative views of girlhood are contrasted with the private experiences of girls and linked with an overview of the changing social and cultural ideals of femininity.

Two main data sets will be drawn from: firstly, advice books for girls from the 1960s to the 1990s, and secondly, autobiographical stories written by girls and women of different ages in the mid-1990s. The analysis of the texts has been inspired by feminist poststructuralist theory, narrative analysis, and discourse analysis.

In the course of the article, it is shown that Finnish girls’ position as individuals and citizens has constantly been questioned. Their sexuality has been seen as particularly vulnerable, and their relationship to parents has often been full of tension. However, towards the end of the twentieth century, positions invested with more agency were gradually opening up for girls and young women in Finland, especially in relation to the neo-liberal individualist discourses that had become more and more prominent during that time.

TWENTIETH-CENTURY IDEAS OF YOUTH AND GENDER IN FINLAND

15 years! It feels like a signpost, like a wall that separates childhood and youth. Now I am after all still a child. A passionate, ignorant, dreamy—powerless child. And then it begins. Youth! I think youth is so enchantingly, reassuredly blue, sometimes lighter, sometimes darker.¹ (Saima Harmaja [1926] 1945, 38, translation from Finnish by the author)

¹ I am grateful for Leena Koski (2003) for drawing my attention to Saima Harmaja’s text.
At this age I bump all the time into situations where I wonder whether I am a child or an adult. Different people classify me differently, and every once in a while my own opinion changes too. Sometimes I feel quite like an adult and mature, but sometimes I feel very childish and immature. At times I want to be an adult and equal with grown-ups, but then there are moments when I want to be a child and let my parents take care of everything. –On the threshold to adulthood increasingly difficult decisions have to be made all the time. I must make independent decisions, like adults do. But I am not treated as an adult. I am not given the same rights, and sometimes I feel that my abilities are underestimated and I am not trusted enough. Sometimes I feel that I have more responsibilities and tasks than adults and that I don’t have enough strength for all that, I am still young! –I know pretty well what I’m doing and that I can take care of my business and at least almost always I have been trustworthy. I ask for help when I need it and I hope that I will be trusted and that I will be told about things and that I will be given the right to decide in matters that concern me! I have a positive attitude towards life, and I understand my parents’ concern: they want to see their children as little girls/boys. –But I think young people should not be given too much work and responsibility so that they won’t perish under the load. Because young people must have space to LIVE, with a capital L, and they must be able to enjoy their youth! Luckily, summer comes soon and I can fully enjoy my age and my life. I am quite content with my age; I live the best time, although sometimes I long for childhood, but there is no turning back because now I aim with full speed towards adulthood. (“Wrong-aged,” Girl, Helsinki, 1996, translation from Finnish by the author)

In the above quotations, two young Finnish women, separated by seventy years, write about their feelings at the age of fifteen. The first quote is from the diary of Saima Harmaja (1913–37), a well-known Finnish poetess who died at a young age. The other quote is from an essay written by an anonymous fifteen-year-old schoolgirl from the Helsinki region in the mid-1990s.² While Saima Harmaja in the mid-1920s sees herself as first and foremost still a child, on the threshold of a poetic youth, her counterpart seventy years later has a very down-to-earth approach towards youth as a phase of life. Both agree that youth is a time to be enjoyed, but while Saima Harmaja positions herself as an ignorant child, the other girl does not hesitate to present herself as a competent actor “who can take care of [her own] business” and who does not want to be belittled. At the same time, however, she asks not

² The essay was part of a data set consisting of high school students’ autobiographical essays that I collected as part of my PhD research.
to be overburdened with responsibilities. Both writers see themselves as relatively powerless, but the more contemporary young woman demands more control over decisions concerning her own life.

These examples serve as a prelude to the general theme of this article: how has the position of girls in Finland changed during the twentieth century? What kinds of meanings have been attached to girlhood in different decades? What kinds of problems and vulnerabilities, and what kinds of ideals have been linked with young femininity in the Finnish context, and how have these changed in relation to historical changes in society? What kinds of narratives have Finnish girls and young women produced about themselves at various times, and how have they been represented in the media and other forums?

It has often been suggested in feminist research that twentieth-century discourses of femininity have tended to position women and girls outside prevailing definitions of individuality and adulthood (e.g. Hudson 1987; Johnson 1993; Aapola, Gonick, and Harris 2005). While it can be claimed that the discourses of femininity are widely shared throughout the Western world, there are nevertheless interesting differences between these discourses as they come from different cultures and political systems. It is also evident that the discourses of femininity have changed markedly during the past hundred years. The aim of this article is to highlight some particularities of Finnish girlhood in the twentieth century and to discuss historical changes in the cultural representations of young femininity.

In the 1990s, there was a growing media concern about “tough girls” in Finland. The definition of “tough” varied contextually, but usually it was associated with girls’ aggressive behavior and with the drastic increase in young women’s drinking and smoking (Aaltonen and Honkatukia 2002). Girls were seen as having become more visible and vocal in society. This was sometimes celebrated as a rebellion against restrictive ideals of femininity (Aaltonen and Honkatukia 2002). To give an example, a monthly supplement associated with the largest newspaper in Finland, Helsingin Sanomat, declared on its front cover in August 1999 (Hiltunen 1999):

Beware! There are new types of gangs out and about in the city. They threaten, boast, and flirt. Tough girls. (Hiltunen 1999, translation from Finnish by the author)

This article about “tough girls” received a great deal of attention in Finland, and was often referred to as proof that a new breed of girls—a potential problem—actually existed (Aaltonen and Honkatukia 2002). Similar discussions and even moral panics regarding “mean girls” have arisen elsewhere in the Western societies (see Aapola, Gonick, and Harris 2005, 48–53).

These so-called new girls were also labelled as sexually active—even aggressive—and critical about heterosexual relationships and potential partners (Hoikkala
1996). There were claims that the future of femininity was threatened, as these “tough” young women seemed to abandon most of the traditional female virtues, such as modesty and sobriety, as well as romantic ideals, such as aiming for a lasting heterosexual relationship. They had adopted behaviors that were previously thought of as typically male. It was even feared that the whole moral fabric of society was crumbling as a result, although such claims were far less pronounced in the Finnish media as compared, for example, to the British press (Aaltonen and Honkatukia 2002).

Another discourse circulating at that time in the Finnish media and in educational debates was that of “young women on top.” According to this discourse, young women were doing much better in school than boys, and had even started to outnumber young men in higher education and many professions (cf., Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma 2000). Unprecedented numbers of women had also entered high-level positions of power in political organizations (Kuusipalo 1999, 72–73). The popular slogan “girl-power”—although less prominent in Finland than in some other Western countries—also suggested that young women had become more self-reliant and visible, particularly in the entertainment sector. It was claimed by some that feminism had paved the way for a whole new generation of “new girls” whose futures would be unaffected by gender inequality and traditional gender ideologies (see Aapola, Gonick, and Harris 2005; McRobbie 2001).

These media-powered discussions around girlhood in the 1990s served as an interesting background for views concerning Finnish boys and young men, who were seen as in need of protection, especially in the sphere of education (see Lahelma 2005). Special measures were debated in order to support young men’s schooling, careers, mental health, and general well-being (Heinonen 1997).

These three discourses—“tough girls,” “women on top,” and “vulnerable boys”—presented gender issues and youth in the late twentieth-century Finland in a highly selective way. Each of them, when scrutinized more carefully, proves problematic. The “tough girl” media discourse actually turns out to be more about girls as vulnerable victims of tough circumstances, in need of support, rather than deliberately violent actors in need of strict punishments (Honkatukia and Aaltonen 2001). The “women on top” discourse is equally questionable. The average educational level of young women in the 1990s was higher than that of young men, and young women actually formed the majority of students in the educational sciences and humanities at the university level; however, they had nevertheless remained quite marginal in many future key educational fields such as engineering and computer science (Repo and Kaukonen 1995, 37). There were also clear class differences in educational success: not all boys did poorly at school, many upper- and middle-class boys excelled (see Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma 2000). Also, it was still harder for young women to get a permanent position in the labor market, and their earnings continued to be
considerably lower than those of men with similar training (Lehto 1999, 125). In addition, very few women in the private sector had been able to reach positions in the upper levels of management (Lehtinniemi 1995, 107). Even in political organizations, despite some progress, women were easily outnumbered by men in higher positions (Kuusipalo 1999, 69).

There is a need to move beyond simplifications in any discussion concerning the relevance of gender in society, as the above examples show. In order to understand recent debates on young femininity in Finland, a look at their historical formation is necessary. There are interesting links between late twentieth-century debates surrounding gender and adolescence to those that prevailed in Finnish society almost a hundred years before, albeit in a remarkably different social and political context.

The Finnish gender system has been greatly transformed during the twentieth century, as Finland has undergone tremendous social and political changes, many of which were delayed but sudden, as compared to the rest of Western Europe (Julkunen 1999, 68). The Finnish gender system has been characterized by its early equal political rights for both genders and a high involvement of women—even mothers of young children—in the paid labor force. It can be described as a blend of traditionalism (for example, professional gender segregation and a gender hierarchy in public arenas) and modernity (public child-care and an ideology of equality) (see Julkunen 1999).

**Ideal Girlhood? Early Twentieth-Century Gender Debates**

The roots of the current discussion around girlhood can be traced in the early twentieth-century international educational discourses. G. Stanley Hall, the American educator and psychologist and the “founding father of adolescence,” expressed an influential early view of adolescence and gender. In his encyclopedic publication *Adolescence* ([1905] 1914), he declared that adolescence was a turbulent and chaotic phase of life, and also a prototypically feminine phenomenon. Boys and young men were expected to go through the mental “storm and stress” and develop into adult individuals who function in the public sphere. Girls and women, on the other hand, would never grow beyond adolescence. They would be forever dependent on the “support of a strong arm”—that is, in need of a husband—in order to cope in life (624–25).

According to Hall, female nature would be distorted if women tried to pursue careers that were considered masculine. This could only result in serious negative consequences not just for the individual, but for the whole nation. Hall saw men as prototypical human beings, and women as weaker, although “more sympathetic” and “humanistic.” He argued strongly against mixed-sex schooling and feared that the whole nation would suffer from what he viewed as the resulting “feminization” of men and “masculinization” of women (624–25).
It has been suggested that Hall’s views about adolescence were analogous to the turbulent and rapid social changes taking place in North American society at the time and expressed anxieties about the future of the nation (Lesko 2001). It is also notable that he did not actually present empirical evidence in support of his views of adolescence as a psychologically chaotic phase of life (see Aapola 1999, 38–45). Nevertheless, Hall’s ideas about adolescence, femininity, and masculinity spread widely across the Western world. They found fertile ground even in early twentieth-century Finland, which was a predominantly agrarian society and still under Russian rule. There was a strong nationalist movement to build a Western civic society and an independent nation-state, and young people were seen as the nation’s future resource. The national struggle to gain independence—which was achieved in 1917—was paralleled by a concern about developing young individuals, future Finnish citizens (Kaarninen 1995, 34).

Gender issues were eagerly debated, and Finland was among the first countries in the world to grant universal suffrage to all its citizens, regardless of gender, in 1906. Women were also gradually given more rights to education and to public positions during the first half of the twentieth century (Haapala 1995). However, there was a heated public and scientific debate about mixed-sex education (Kaarninen 1995). One of the participants in this debate was a prominent Finnish educationalist, Aksel Rafael Rosenqvist. He named G. Stanley Hall’s work as one of his main inspirations, and developed an equivalent Finnish term for adolescence: “murrosikä” (Rosenqvist 1915). In his book *Adolescence and Upbringing*, he shared many of Hall’s views about adolescence as a turbulent and restless turning point in life, caused by rapid psychological and physical changes (3–4). He even echoed Hall’s views of gender and claimed that children’s earlier similarities disappear in adolescence, and girls and boys become increasingly different (19–40). He saw gender differences as biological and natural and claimed that girls develop earlier and at a quicker pace than boys:

> The development of a young maiden’s and a young man’s soul-life differs first and foremost because of the fact that in the former will and intellect do not develop into governing her soul-life, but rather, emotion does. (78–79, translation from Finnish by the author)

Rosenqvist also thought that women were more inclined to pleasing, whereas men were more independent (78–79). For him, femininity was strongly linked with

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3 A direct translation of “murrosikä” is “the age of rupture.” In Finnish lay discourse, the term is used to refer to both “puberty” and “adolescence.”

4 The original title of the book was *Murrosikä ja kasvatus: Sielutieteellinen ja kokeellis-kasvatustieteellinen tutkimus.*
the maternal; women represented love and care, sacrifice and responsibility. The man’s role was to be strong and brave, to sustain the family, and to protect the nation (80–82). Rosenqvist saw fundamental differences in girls’ and boys’ intellect: he considered boys more creative and profound, and girls as superficial and receptive, unable to understand abstract matters (83). He thus linked femininity with characteristics undermining women as rational decision-makers.

Rosenqvist strongly criticized mixed-sex schooling, especially after puberty. According to him, boys needed heavier discipline in order to thrive, but girls could become “mannish” if they were treated as strictly. He also believed that female students needed devoted male teachers to offer a “safe shoulder to lean on” (93). Rosenqvist was not alone in his suspicions of mixed-sex education. In early twentieth-century Finland, there were strong views for creating a special type of education for girls, who were seen as vulnerable because of their “delicate composition.” It was even thought that girls’ sensitive menstrual cycle would suffer, and their future maternity would be endangered, if they received a “too intellectual” education (see Kaarninen 1995, 162). These worries applied only to upper-class girls, however, and not to working-class girls or young women living in the countryside, although most of them had to do physically demanding labor from an early age (Haapala 1995, 130). This was reflected even in the women’s magazines of the time: ideals of young women differed according to the girls’ social background, and depending on the publishers’ political connections (Vehkalahti 2000a).

According to the general opinion, (bourgeois) girls needed to be trained first and foremost to be good mothers and housekeepers, which was reflected in the curriculum of girls’ schools at the time. Girls’ education was actually prolonged by a year in the 1915 school ordinance in order to achieve an “intellectually less straining” education and to allow more time for domestic subjects (Kaarninen 1995, 160–65). However, already in the early 1930s these girl-specific programs were abolished, as many girls could not afford to finish this prolonged education (Kaarninen 1995, 170). A few all-girls’ schools remained in operation until the late 1960s. There were also bitter arguments about women’s right to enter universities; it was argued that higher education made women forget their true task as mothers. Nevertheless, already by the end of the 1920s, one-third of university students in Finland were women (Kaarninen 1995, 221–22).

The contradictory gender ideals became apparent also in women’s magazines. According to historian Kaisa Vehkalahti (2000a), most of the writers and editors in Finnish women’s magazines in the 1920s were “progressive” women, but the magazines advocated for a rather traditional role for women. Particularly strong views were expressed in relation to young women: there were frequent problem-oriented discussions about the dangers to which girls were exposed. The icon of the 1920s, the “jazz-girl” (cf., flapper-girl in the United States), summarized all that was deemed
negative in a modern young woman: she was presented as superficial and hedonistic, dedicated to having fun, spending her time in cafés, drinking, smoking, and dancing, staying up late, having intimate relations with boys, and wasting her youth in immoral or superficial pastimes, such as movies and romantic novels. The “jazz-girl” was repeatedly condemned in women’s magazines (Vehkalahti 2000a, 130–31).

Certain styles of clothing (such as skirts that showed the ankles) and behavior (such as smoking) were linked with immorality (see Koskinen 1998; Saarikoski 2000). It was hinted that they could easily lead the girl into sexual experiments with men and possibly end in the worst fate of all, namely the shame of pregnancy out of wedlock. Girls were strongly encouraged to restrain themselves against excessive vanity, idleness, and intimate relations with men (Vehkalahti 2000a, 130–34.) Even the girls themselves who wrote to the youth section of the bourgeois women’s magazine Naisten Ääni (Women’s Voice) expressed similar views. This sentiment is evident in the following extract from a letter written by a girl, “Tepu,” who discusses decadent school dances: “Away with all the squeezing, panting, cuddling, and ‘smooching’. In its stead I demand decent conversation, sports, a real comraderie” (Naisten Ääni 3/1929, 70–71, as quoted by Vehkalahti 2000a, 132; translation from Finnish by the author).

By expressing strong disapproval of all that was considered “bad,” women’s magazines clarified their ideals about desirable girlhood. “Decency” was a central concept, denoting morally “right” and “honorable” behavior (Vehkalahti 2000a). The countryside was seen as a far better environment for young people than the towns (Vehkalahti 2000a, 133–35; Rosenqvist 1915, 106–108.) The countryside was idealized as a “pure” environment by many artists and intellectuals, even internationally (e.g., Teeter 1995). Young girls’ “problem”-behavior was seen as a sign of a larger process of social change, which was later labeled as the “turmoil of modernity.” Traditional social values and morals were believed to be in jeopardy. Young people were seen as under threat, and it was believed that they did not receive enough support at home (Vehkalahti 2000b).

**Gendered Citizens: Consolidation of a Gendered Nation**

Early twentieth-century debates on girlhood have to be interpreted in the context of an emerging nation. Various groups wanted to create an independent future for Finland, and there was an increasing concern of young people’s development into decent social actors and citizens. In this nationalist project, girls and boys were positioned differently. Femininity was connected to the home, and girls were to function mainly as good mothers and devoted wives, raising new citizens for the nation. Masculinity was linked with independent action in the public sphere: boys were to become active citizens, breadwinners and political actors in public arenas (see Kaarninen 1995; Koski 1999).
Finnish contemporaries expressed concern about whether young people would actually live up to the national expectations. These discussions intensified as a result of the bitter Civil War between socialists and the bourgeoisie in 1918, which divided neighborhoods and families. Thousands of people died before the socialists were defeated. The “cultivation” of the common people was seen by the ruling class as the most important way to prevent such things from happening again: working-class children were to be taught to respect the government and Christian values (Kaarninen 1995; Ollila 1993). After heated discussion, educational reform took place in the 1920s, and the law of compulsory education was implemented and new schools were established all over Finland (Vehkalahti 2000a, 132).

The importance of mothers in bringing up good citizens was emphasized strongly: women were seen as central in defining the moral well-being of the whole nation, and mothers were to set the moral example for their children (Ollila 1993; Vehkalahti 2000a, 139–44.) The Finnish bourgeois women’s movement shared this view. They claimed that women were morally superior to men, and they should be given more rights (Ollila 1993, 76). However, the ideas of women’s “nature” as being morally “pure” and virtuous did not always serve the best interests of working-class women. For example, some bourgeois women’s organizations thought that working-class mothers required guidance in proper homemaking skills. However, the patriarchal nuclear family ideology and the idea of the housewife, which was promoted this way, was alien to working-class women, who needed to earn their living. Even their views about women’s rights to work conflicted (Ollila 1993, 76).

There were other important divisions as well, such as those between towns and rural areas. Gender ideologies in the Finnish countryside differed from those of the urban middle class, which emphasized a clear distinction between the sexes and their life spheres. In the agrarian context, necessity rather than a strong ideology of gender segregation was the basis for the division of labor. (Haapala 1995; Löfström 1999, 180–84.)

Women’s strong involvement in the paid labor force was further strengthened during World War II. Men fought the Soviet Union at the war front, and women—whose military roles were also significant—took over many previously male-dominated positions in civilian life, for example, in forestry and in the industrial sector. Many did not give up these positions even after the war ended, at least not for a while (Lähteemäki 1999, 52–53).

Finland lost large areas of land to the Soviet Union, and more than four-hundred thousand people from these areas had to be resettled (Haapala 1995). There were also heavy war indemnities to be paid, and the level of industrialization increased rapidly in Finland, opening new jobs for rural young people streaming into the growing towns. Between 1950 and 1975, the percentage of people working in agriculture decreased from 36 percent to 13 percent (Alestalo 1986, 64). Often,
young women in particular moved from the countryside to towns in search of education and employment (Heiskanen and Mitchell 1985).

In the decades following the war there was an ideological shift in Finland, with a strong emphasis on the effort to rebuild the society, and later a push for modernization and financial growth (Heiskanen and Mitchell 1985, 69). Even young people were encouraged to take part and uphold the idea of national unification. Education was seen as vitally important. The post-war “baby-boom” generation was the best educated ever; over half of the cohort finished secondary school or qualified for university (Heiskanen and Mitchell 1985, 95). Soon the proportion of girls in senior high schools exceeded that of boys, and young women entered universities in ever-increasing numbers (Kaarninen 1995).

Continued education meant a prolongation of the period of youth and increased leisure time. In the 1950s, international commercial youth cultures entered Finland, first rather marginally, but by the mid-1960s, they had spread more widely (Heiskanen and Mitchell 1985). Young women gradually assumed new positions as consumers. Teenaged girls were targeted with special products, such as magazines dedicated to celebrities, clothing, and cosmetics. Initially, their buying power was limited, but in the years to follow, they became an increasingly important force in the consumer market (Heinonen 2003; Heiskanen and Mitchell 1985).

At the same time, the educational system underwent radical changes. New progressive ideas became more influential. Religious and patriotic values, which had formed the moral basis of education, were replaced with secular, liberal values. The construction of the welfare society became a national project. A new comprehensive school system, dedicated to regional and social equality, was established (following the Swedish example), and gradually it spread throughout Finland (Lappalainen 1985). Previous gender-differentiated educational views were replaced with more egalitarian views (Lahelma 1992).

Changing Girlhood: Advice Books from the 1960s to the 1990s

By the mid-1960s, there were again increasing concerns about young people in Finland. The commercial youth cultures had become more and more visible, and some of them were seen as morally questionable. The first generation of suburban young people were growing up in towns and gradually claiming more public space, which raised concerns about youth delinquency. Young people had also become more politically active, and they often questioned the values of the previous generation and demanded serious changes in the society (Heiskanen and Mitchell 1985, 160–61).

Educational and psychological discussions proliferated in Finland: more books about youth as a phase of life were published in the 1960s and 1970s than ever before. Most of these books were aimed at parents and educators, but even special advice books for young people appeared. Most of these books were dedicated to
young women, who were seen as more vulnerable in their growing-up process than young men (Aapola 1999).

Four such advice books will be analyzed below. The books were published within a period of nearly thirty years, from the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s, one per decade. Although the analysis here is far from all-encompassing, it nevertheless addresses some of the most interesting changes that occurred in the public definitions of girlhood in Finland in the latter half of the twentieth century. Advice books are particularly interesting as texts, as they speak directly to the young women themselves, formulating versions of ideal girlhood for them.

All the books in the sample were published by a commercial publisher, and they were widely distributed in Finland. Two of them were translations from Swedish and English. The Swedish writer Kerstin Thorvall’s *Kirja sinulle* (A book for you), published in 1966, is the oldest in the sample. The second book, *Uman kirja sinulle* (Uma’s book for you), was written by the Finnish journalist Ulla-Maija Aaltonen and published in 1977. Her book can be considered as one of the key texts in Finnish debates about adolescence. She brought the word “adolescent” into the wider Finnish consciousness. Aaltonen published many other books for young people in the 1970s, toured schools and appeared regularly in the media. She has remained a well-known media personality in Finland ever since. The third book in the sample, *Sinulle nuori nainen* (For you, young woman), was written by a British medical doctor, Miriam Stoppard, who has also enjoyed wide media publicity in her country, and published in Finnish in 1988. The Finnish edition was modified from the 1987 original. The book representing the 1990s, *Frendi: Ystävä aallonharjalle ja pohjamutiin* (Your friend from the top to the bottom), was written by a Finnish author and journalist, Riikka Valonen, who has remained less well-known, although she has hosted a section for young people in a Finnish women’s magazine with a wide circulation. *Frendi* was published in 1997.

Although the style and scope of the advice books vary, they address mostly similar themes: adolescence and puberty as phenomena, physical changes, social relationships (with parents, friends, and boys), love and sexuality, health and beauty. Some books even discuss scholastic studies, career choices, money, hobbies and interests, and consumer questions. Individual books raise issues such as travelling, pets, good conduct, idols, social participation, feminism, and spirituality. Often, there is a problem-oriented approach to the topics. The textual styles of the books alternate between prosaic and matter of fact. Dramatized and humorous stories “from real life” are often provided, with plenty of advice to help young readers to steer their lives. The authors frequently write in a very familiar tone, addressing their readers directly, rather than in an authoritarian or neutral style. Some of them refer to letters.

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5 The titles of the books have been translated from Finnish into English by the author.
from young people, or to their own experiences in youth. The advice books reflect an understanding of what is considered central in young women’s lives, and they define images of ideal youth and girlhood.

Although the advice books are directed first and foremost to girls, gender is only discussed explicitly in one of them. In the older advice books, young people are simply divided into two sexes on the basis of biology. The social aspects of gender are not discussed; there are only a few references suggesting that girls take after their mothers. In the advice books, girlhood is defined implicitly by focusing on rather stereotypical themes: appearance and beauty, dieting, clothes, idols and boys, as well as friendships, family relationships, and educational success. It is mentioned that girls often have a closer relationship with their mothers than with their fathers (Valonen 1997, 26–29), and that parents want to protect girls more than boys (Stoppard 1988, 77, 84). According to Tiina Männistö, who has conducted a historical comparison of advice books directed to young women in Finland, there was an increasing emphasis on the girls’ appearance, particularly in books published after 1950 (Männistö 2003).

In the books, there are few references to historical changes in girlhood. Valonen (1997), however, compares the life of a contemporary girl (studying for an occupation) to the life “in the old days,” when she claims most girls ended up as housewives. (Actually, this never happened in Finland, where most women have worked outside of the home during the twentieth century.) The authors of the advice books encourage girls to study for an occupation. The more recent books also advocate for sexual autonomy for young women, reflecting the gradual liberalization of attitudes towards sexuality (Kontula and Haavio-Mannila 1993).

The oldest book, by Thorvall (1966), devotes more attention to motherhood and homemaking skills than its more contemporary counterparts (see also Männistö 2003). Thorvall constructs an ideal girl, who gets on well with her parents and does not drink alcohol or practice premarital sex. The girl does not seem to have independent sexual needs outside of marriage, and even when married, sex is for having children. An ideal girl is feminine and attractive, self-contained and flexible, works hard at school and does not engage in intimate relations with boys. Her problems are rather easily solved, by discussions with either her parents or a doctor (Thorvall 1966).

The second oldest book in the sample, by Aaltonen (1977), was published during a turbulent time, full of young people’s cultural and political activity. Aaltonen describes an endangered young person, who faces many risks: neglected health concerns, risky behavior, emotional problems, “the gang,” and a premature sex life, to name a few. Aaltonen is nostalgic about the supposedly more innocent childhood of the past. She encourages young people to just play and have fun, to enjoy the outdoors, and to look for help if they have problems. As a reward, they are promised a mature and happy adulthood, good social relations, and a satisfactory sex
life. Aaltonen seems unaware of or untouched by egalitarian/feminist discourses, although they had been in circulation since the 1960s. For Aaltonen, gender is not a particularly relevant category, other than in sexual relationships, where girls are given more responsibility: “It is wrong to believe that only girls are shy, vulnerable, dreaming, irritable, unbalanced and grumbling during adolescence. Girls and boys are often largely similar because the mental pressures in adolescence are the same” (13, translation from Finnish by the author).

In her book, Aaltonen exhibits a strong investment in developmental psychology, and she outlines a certain normative path to adulthood. Haste and “shortcuts” in youth are described as fatal, particularly for girls, who could run into problems, especially in social relationships and in sexuality. In sexual relations, the girl is even held responsible for the boy’s behavior. An ideal young girl is “natural” and sober. She is affectionate, but does not engage in sexual relationships until she is sure about her feelings. It is not necessary, however, to wait for marriage. Both Thorvall’s and Aaltonen’s books contain strong moralistic opinions about the ways a girl should (not) behave, particularly in the sphere of sexuality.

Miriam Stoppard’s book (1987, translated into Finnish in 1988) is the most openly feminist of the books: she strongly encourages girls to take action against gender oppression, to take command of their sexual rights, and to enter new fields of occupation. She emphasizes girls’ agency and autonomy, and encourages them to break free from abuse and exploitation. She does not appear to judge; rather, she advises, consoles, and emphasizes the young girl’s rights. For example, she leaves the final decision about starting a sex-life to the girl herself. The girl is defined as a subject, who needs information about contraceptives and ways to enhance sexual pleasure in sexual relationships. She even mentions lesbian relationships, presenting them as potentially positive. At the same time, however, Stoppard emphasizes a girl’s responsibility in sexual matters and urges girls to think carefully about when to start their sex-lives: “I am also against any girl having a sexual relationship before she’s emotionally mature and has established her sexual feelings and sexual values. For most of us, this is quite a problem and it takes years to do; even adults find it difficult” ([1987] 1999: 62).

Valonen (1997) is the most recent of the advice books and reflects the individualistic orientation of the 1990s: everyone is considered responsible for her own life. Young girls are described as active agents, both in traditional, gender-typical spheres, such as the home and social relationships, but also in relation to hobbies, sexuality, and political participation. The argumentation differs as compared to the previous advice books: Valonen does not express her moral stances explicitly; rather, she offers various views, and the reader is left to draw her own conclusions, although some of the writer’s opinions are mediated implicitly. Valonen gives a lot of space to girls’ own voices; many letters sent by girls are included in the text.
There are both traditional and new features in the ideal girls Valonen constructs in her book. On one hand, the girls are encouraged to create a positive atmosphere in family relationships, to negotiate with their parents about their rights, and to assume responsibility for housework voluntarily, all qualities that have traditionally been associated with femininity. On the other hand, girls’ subjectivity expands to the wider world and society. They are encouraged to develop their skills, to participate in social life, to express their opinions, and to bear responsibility for their decisions—even for their mistakes.

In addition, girls are also described as having fun with their friends, taking initiative in relation to boys, and earning their own money in creative ways: they are defined as independent individuals and actors in many spheres of life. Their future is open to interesting careers. Two key words in Valonen’s book are individuality and freedom: girls are depicted as making individual choices, and the world seems to be full of alternatives. Valonen does not, however, discuss equality issues, nor does she give advice about how to overcome obstacles that girls may encounter. Interestingly, she discusses heterosexual romance as a cultural construction:

Ever since childhood we have watched movies where a man and a woman have each other. We have read books where a girl and a boy have each other. We have listened to songs where they talk about happiness and love. It is no wonder that as soon as we can, we start to look for the ‘right’ person. (74, translation from Finnish by the author)

In all the advice books in the sample, a young girl’s body and mind are seen as separate and their development “unsynchronized” during puberty, the body seen as growing “too quickly” in relation to mental maturity. This is problematic as a girl might get the “erroneous” idea that she is ready to experiment in intriguing “adult” spheres of life, such as sex (see e.g. Thorvall 1966). The books repeatedly remind girls that they are not “mature” simply because their bodies look like women’s bodies. More than anything, “maturity” implies readiness for sex: “the menstrual period is no driving licence for sex” (Aaltonen 1977).

Although the advice books never clearly define “sufficient maturity,” it seems to be linked to having a steady and “secure” heterosexual relationship or even with a readiness to take responsibility for a child (see Aapola 1993). In this discourse, sexual relations in youth are automatically defined as “risky” and “immature.” However, there are some differences in the moral tones of the books. Stoppard’s book (1988) is the most liberal of them all, encouraging girls to get to know their sexual pleasures. But even she reminds girls about legal age-limits concerning sexuality. In Finland, the law forbids sexual relationships between adults and those under sixteen years of age.

The style of the advice books changed markedly from the 1960s to the 1990s:
the authors of the older books speak in moralistic and superior tones about the risks of girlhood, and warn girls against all evils. Their style can even be compared with that of the editors of the early twentieth-century women’s magazines discussed above (see Vehkalahti 2000a). By contrast, the more recent advice books of the 1980s and 1990s take a different approach: they side more with the girls and offer their support to girls who are trying to gain more control over their lives. Feminist undertones are present, although gender issues are only tacitly addressed. The emphasis is more on letting the reader draw her own conclusions. This is in line with the increasingly individualistic ideologies that were in circulation in the 1990s (McRobbie 2001).

By analyzing the advice books, some changes in the definitions of girlhood from the 1960s to the 1990s can be traced, but many themes prevail through the decades. The developing body that supposedly causes confusion, mood swings, conflicts with parents, awakening sexuality, and problematic relationships with boys are common themes from one decade to the next. Adolescence is invariably described as a turbulent phase of life, linked with biological and hormonal changes and reflected in the moods and social relationships of the young person. Adolescence is consistently seen as problematic, but the perceived seriousness of young people’s problems grows towards the end of the twentieth century.

Social aspects of girlhood are defined rather narrowly in the advice books: girls are positioned mainly in the home, in school, and among friends, but not in wider social contexts. Nevertheless, a clear change is discernible towards the end of the century, vis-à-vis the accounts of girls’ subjectivity. There is a move towards greater autonomy for girls in various spheres of life. This change reflects the influence of not only feminist discourses but also neo-liberal discourses of individualism. Adult women also had changed their tone regarding definitions of girlhood: the writers of the most recent advice books do not take a morally superior position in relation to their audience and do not condemn the girls’ behaviors in the same way as did the early twentieth-century magazine editors and writers of earlier advice books. Girls are seen as able to make their own choices and to take responsibility for their actions.

**Ambivalent Heroines: Women’s Memory-Work Stories**

In the mid-1990s, I collected stories from a small group of women who were born in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. At the same time, autobiographical essays by secondary school students who were born in the early 1980s were also gathered. These private narratives reflect girlhood experiences from the same time-period as the advice books discussed above. These private, personal accounts illustrate some of the most relevant issues for young Finnish women in the latter part of the twentieth century, and provide a study in contrasts with the public ideals of girlhood discussed above.

A rather unorthodox research method—feminist memory-work—was chosen to collect women’s private stories about their adolescence. Our collective
memory-work process was an adaptation of the method developed in German socialist-feminist research collectives (see Haug 1987), which gained increasing popularity among women’s studies scholars in various countries (e.g., Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Gault, and Benton 1992; Simonen 1995). The original aim of memory-work was to analyze how cultural and historical aspects of girlhood play out in women’s personal narratives.

Memory-work aims to make visible the active processes by which young people engage in cultural practices, not just passively submit to them. Memory-work also challenges the socio-scientific premises whereby individual experiences are an invalid basis of knowledge. The analysis strives to show how experiences have been constructed by social structures, practices, and discourses in a particular historical and cultural context. People are seen as subjects who actively reconstruct the structures and practices that have shaped them. The focus is on processes through which people become gendered beings in the society. The final aim of memory-work is liberation and social change: when people become more aware of the ways they subordinate themselves to oppressive structures and discursive and other practices, it becomes more possible to resist them. Scientific memory-work differs from feminist consciousness-raising by striving to create feminist theory instead of aiming at primarily political action or therapeutic goals, although these may also be involved (Haug 1987, 39–46; see also Simonen 1995).

The autobiographical stories created in the memory-work process cannot be regarded as “authentic” documents of the past. Memories are always constructed from the point of view of the present: they are not simply “stored” in the brain, ready to be “recollected” in a fixed form (see Crawford et al. 1992). There are also cultural conventions according to which people formulate autobiographical life stories (Vilkko 1997). Group dynamics also influence what issues are considered “safe” for discussion.

Memory-work stories are cultural texts constructing girlhood at a particular point in time. In my earlier study group (Aapola 1999), all the participants wrote individual accounts of their own past. We used a special method in our group—writing in the third person—in order to distance ourselves from the moment of writing and to make more visible that each of us was a historical agent (see Haug 1987). These stories were then analyzed collectively in fifteen group meetings. We all had multiple roles in the process, as both informants and researchers. The aim of such group analysis is to show how memories have been constructed and what kind of cultural and historical ideologies are played out in them. The group provides a credibility check for the narratives produced by the individual members: highly unlikely stories are challenged. After our collective meetings ended, I continued to analyze the stories, although still in contact with the other group members. My analysis concentrated on the discourses and storylines evoked in the stories: what kinds of
characters and plots were created in the stories, and what kinds of subject positions were brought to light and negotiated for the girls and by them in their texts (see Aapola 1999).

It is impossible to draw generalizations about “the reality” of girlhood and its historical changes on the basis of the memory-work stories. First of all, there were only seven women of different ages in our group, and secondly, our stories should not be treated as direct documents of “real incidents.” There are many intervening factors that define the way we remember our past in a particular context and how we formulate them in writing (Vilkko 1997). Keeping these reservations in mind, it is nevertheless possible to point out some subtle differences in how women of different ages describe their girlhood in the stories. These differences should not be interpreted as clear-cut historical distinctions; rather, they are nuances and accentuations that can be differentiated when comparing stories written by older and younger women in the group. There are also many similarities and continuities between them. The differences are connected to the historical changes surrounding girlhood in Finland during the last decades of the twentieth century, although they cannot be deducted from the stories as such.

The group wrote about four themes related to adolescence: the changing body, experiences of menarche, breaking rules at home, and stories about situations where one had been called either a little girl, a big girl, or a woman. On one occasion, a photograph was used as a starting-point for a story. The memory-work data consist of dozens of narratives describing a wide range of incidents, such as babysitting, meeting boyfriends, and interacting with parents. Here, the emphasis is on topics that have also been discussed in the public debates about girlhood, namely girls’ education, heterosexuality, and family relations.

The group members tend to describe their parents as strict: girls had to obey clear rules concerning housework and curfews, and if they broke them, they were reprimanded. However, there is a more serious tone in the stories written by the older group members, those born in the 1950s: they describe situations where a daughter faces a real threat of physical violence if she disobeys her parents. Here is an example, Sofia’s story about rules and breaking them:

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6 The group members were of various ages (22 to 41 years) and social backgrounds: middle or working class, from different parts of Finland, small and bigger towns and from the countryside; one from a fundamental religious (Christian) background. At the time of the memory-work some of us were single, some divorced, some married, and three had adolescent or under school-age children. At least one of the women lived in a lesbian relationship. All group members were relatively highly educated (post-secondary education), had no problem creating texts, and had an interest in women’s studies. Three were social science students at the University of Helsinki, and another three studied in a healthcare institution. We were all white ethnic Finns, and none of us had disabilities.

7 The names presented here are pseudonyms.
The girl\textsuperscript{8} sits in a big, green armchair and reads. The next day there will be an exam in history. It is the beginning of May, and there is less than a month of school left. There are still at least a couple of exams each week.

It is sometimes difficult to concentrate on reading at home. The apartment where she lives with her family is not very big. Her mother’s sewing machine purrs constantly in the kitchen, as she does her sewing from morning till late at night. The little girls are making a fuss about something. Her older sister, Laura, has shut herself in her own room, which she has inherited from Tiina, the eldest sister who has already moved away from home.

Mother shouts to Sofia from the kitchen, asking her to come and wash the dishes. Sofia knows very well that it is her turn to wash up. She has decided, however, that she won’t go because she has to study for the exam. She thinks Laura could do the dishes for once. Laura often evades her turn, and mother does not seem to care. The girl thinks she is the only one in the family who regularly and obediently takes care of her own turns of doing the dishes and cooking. She does not reply to her mother’s requests.

Suddenly mother rushes from the kitchen with a belt in her hand, and she starts to strike the girl’s legs with it. The girl screams and argues that she has to study for an exam tomorrow, and why could Laura not do the dishes this time. Mother screams back: “You don’t have any exams, you are just lying, and you are lazy!”

The girl lets water into the dishbasin and tries to swallow her anger. She does not understand why she cannot study in all peace and quiet. She hates her mother, who is never satisfied with anything. (Translation from Finnish by the author)

In this powerful story, Sofia positions herself first and foremost as a student trying to get good grades at school. A familiar scene surrounds her, with the mother at home, although working, and younger sisters playing. However, underlying tensions are suggested: the older sister has withdrawn to be alone, and the family’s economic situation is precarious, dependent on the (lone) mother working round the clock. The scene is suddenly disrupted, as the mother demands that Sofia help in the kitchen. The girl is unwilling to quit her reading and tries to resist by not responding: she sees her domestic responsibilities as interfering with her individual project of being a good student. She positions herself as the family’s most dutiful daughter, which is why someone else should do what the mother wants now. Her rebellion is quiet and

\textsuperscript{8} As mentioned above, we used a special method in our memory-work stories: writing in the third person. That is why Sofia writes about “the girl” instead of “me.”
The daughter has, with her passive disobedience, questioned the mother’s position of authority, which she reasserts with corporal punishment. Sofia submits, and finally she has to fulfill her duty, albeit steaming with anger, as even her honesty has been questioned. She sees no alternative, as long as she lives at home. She directs her anger towards her mother, whom she considers overly demanding. However, resisting her openly is unthinkable.

This story reflects similar themes with the early twentieth-century debates about a woman’s proper place in the society: a girl has to fulfill her domestic duties before anything else, and it is the mother’s responsibility to oversee this. Education comes second, no matter how important it might be for the individual girl. The home is represented not as a safe haven, but rather as a place for a girl to escape from if she wishes to pursue her individual interests. Housework is never-ending and arduous; the girl is forced to set aside everything she deems important and pleasurable for herself. In this story, household chores are not presented as a way to prepare for a girl’s domestic future; instead, they are clearly a way to help her overburdened single mother.

There are some other memory-work narratives that describe the parents as authoritative figures who refuse to negotiate with their children. Another study concerning narratives written by men and women born in the late 1940s in Eastern Finland (Korhonen 1999) verifies these stories. The majority of the participants describe their parents as strict, although there are some references to more diplomatic and permissive parenting styles. Since the 1960s, traditional authoritarian ideas of raising children have been questioned, and a less restrictive parental style has become more typical. Authoritarian parenting ideals were still largely prevalent in Finland in the first half of the twentieth century (Hoikkala 1996; Korhonen 1999, 139–42). Corporal punishment of children was permitted, until it was legally restricted in the mid-1970s. Such incidents do not appear in the stories of the younger women, even if legislation has failed to do away with domestic violence against children.

In the stories of the younger women, the rules set for girls by parents seem more negotiable. Also, the stories do not discuss responsibilities at home, such as housework. The parents are described as trying to exercise some form of control, but they appear less strict, and their authority is less self-evident. Parents do not simply forbid their daughter to go out; rather, they try to appeal to the girl’s conscience and question her actions. In the narratives, the girls do not seem afraid to express their desires—for example, about spending time with boyfriends—even if they know their parents are against it. Often, this leads to open conflicts between the girls and their parents.

In some cases, the parents seem relatively powerless and unable to stop their daughter from doing whatever she wants to do. In one of the stories, the girl has
a long and bitter argument with her parents about attending a party. She finally receives their permission, but in the end attending the party no longer feels so desirable. She feels guilty about having disappointed her parents. These stories portray the ambivalent meanings of an “autonomous” individual: in principle, the girls know what they want, and they are ready to struggle for it, but at the same time they are very conscious about the consequences of their actions. The girls are torn between pleasing their parents and following their own desires. It is not easy for the young women to claim their independence.

However, this pattern is not present in all the stories. A rather unusual narrative was written by a woman, born in the mid-1960s, who claims that she did anything she pleased, without much guilt. She often went out at night, despite her parents’ efforts to stop her. At the age of fifteen she even traveled abroad alone, although her parents did not approve of it. Peer relations were of the highest importance for her, which was probably why she appeared immune to her parents’ dismay. The memory-work stories suggest that girls could also gain a measure of independence from their families if they were in a stable heterosexual relationship. The following is Maria’s story:

As a sixteen-year-old she was going to spend the weekend alone with her boyfriend “Piglet” at his parents’ cabin. This time Piglet’s father could not drive them there, so she had to ask her own father to give them a ride. Already before they started the trip she noticed by the expression on her father’s face that he had something to say, but she tried to act as if she hadn’t noticed anything.

In the yard as they were walking towards the car, her father cleared his throat and said: “It seems as if it was just a short while ago when I pulled you in your sledge all around the neighborhood. And now already I have to take you with your boyfriend to a cabin.” She saw his eyes fill with tears. She felt a lump in her throat and guilt because she had caused such a reaction in her father. She tried to mumble something in reply, but she knew that the memory was one of his best, as she had heard it a thousand times before, when Father got sentimental when he was drunk. But never before had she heard her father mention it when he was sober.

Even as she was looking from the porch of the cabin at the figure of her father leaving, she felt the emotion squeezing her breast. A part of her wanted to run after him, to go back to town and still be Daddy’s little girl. But she swallowed the lump a bit further down and turned to go inside where “Piglet” was already arranging his things, and she decided to enjoy the weekend. (Translation from Finnish by the author)
The story begins with the anticipation of the fulfillment of the traditional heterosexual romantic script: Maria is planning a weekend in a remote cabin, alone with her boyfriend. The romantic storyline is slightly disrupted by the boyfriend’s nickname “Piglet”; will he behave like a pig? The girl is implicitly positioned as sexually active—she has been to the cabin before, but she still depends on her parents’ help. A sixteen-year-old cannot drive a car in Finland, even if she is permitted to have a sexual relationship with a boy of the same age. In the storyline, however, the girl’s relationship with her father is actually more important than her relationship with the boyfriend. Her father does not explicitly object to taking her to the cabin, but he evokes a nostalgic story about her childhood, positioning her as an innocent little child that he could take wherever he wanted. Now it is the girl who has defined the destination. He implies—with his tears—that he feels he has lost his child. He evokes the metaphor of a father giving his daughter away as a bride, although she is only going away for the weekend. Childhood implies asexuality, and by defining herself as sexual, the girl has refused to define herself as a child. Maria feels guilty about her father’s sadness, and also slightly irritated. Yet she empathizes with his nostalgia. She refers to his drinking, which has previously prevented her from taking him seriously. This time he is sober. She hesitates: should she abandon her position in the romantic script? No, in the end she rejects her father’s definition of her as a child, although with some difficulty: being a child, taken care of by the father, is a comfortable position, without responsibility. It would also allow her to define herself as a good daughter. Instead, she chooses the position of an adult woman, as she has done from the beginning of the story. Her father’s comments destabilized this position but only temporarily. During the group discussion the writer admitted that her guilt had prevented her from thoroughly enjoying the weekends with her boyfriend. The girl did not simply become a sexually active woman by her own choice; she was allowed to do so by her parents, who also positioned her in the heterosexual romantic storyline. It was as if the parents gave the responsibility for their daughter to the boyfriend. The father’s tearful reaction to her daughter’s sexual relationship is in accordance with the discourse of (adolescent) feminine sexuality as vulnerable. A girl “loses” her virginity (and sometimes her reputation) when she enters a premarital sexual relationship (Saarikoski 2000). A boy’s sexual experiences are usually seen in a more positive, even heroic light.

In the memory-work stories, the writers’ approaches to issues about their bodies vary slightly depending on their age, although there are also similarities. All the participants write about girls’ disappointments with their appearance: girls never seem satisfied with their bodies. They always feel they are either too skinny or too fat, or that their “figure” is too flat. Sometimes, compliments are received from boys, and they feel good; negative comments are even more hurtful. There are many stories about girls’ acute feelings of being measured against beauty standards. Girls
constantly compare themselves to other girls and feel inferior. In the stories by the group’s older women, one either looks pretty or plain; a girl can not do much about her appearance. Girls only dream about love, but do not date boys, although the stories mention infatuations. In the stories, the home and family relations are central, even if they are also often depicted as limiting.

By comparison, the younger women again demonstrate more agency in their stories: they are actively trying to meet the ideals of beauty; they shave their armpits and legs and go to the hairdresser’s and pluck their facial hair in order to appear more feminine. They also report having experienced sexual feelings related to boyfriends, and describe intimate scenarios of passionate kissing and caressing. In their stories, friends have a central role as important companions to have fun with and to receive emotional support from. However, sometimes there is ambivalence: for girls who move in larger friendship circles, there are difficult choices about “which group to belong to.” Friends also represent a form of control, particularly in relation to girls’ heterosexual encounters (Hey 1997; Tolonen 2001).

In memory-work stories, girls find it difficult to present themselves as desiring individuals with their own will: often, conflicts between parents and girls emerge. In some stories, there looms the danger of a final conflict: the girl threatens to leave home and never to come back. Neither the parents nor the girls want this. In many stories, there is a constant tension between the girl’s own will and her parents’ wishes. Girls are described as having an internal dialogue with themselves, wondering whether achieving what they want is actually worth all the pain associated with it. It is hard to give up the position of an obedient daughter. It seems the girls could choose between being either nice girls and good daughters or active young women with independent ambitions and sexual desires, but they could not be both at the same time. To resolve the tension, the girls often create alternative alliances: it is easier for them to strive for independence if they are supported by their friends or boyfriends. In the memory-work stories, the protagonists, young girls, look for recognition of their agency and their progress towards womanhood, and momentarily they even appear to get it. It seems that, for young women, achieving the independent status of an individual is never guaranteed, even though their desire to be acknowledged as individuals is strong.

Similar tendencies seem reflected in the memory-work stories as in the advice books. Both in the private and public texts of girlhood, girls’ desires and agency are constantly negotiated, particularly with parents. In both sets of texts, young women’s freedom of action seems to gradually increase towards the end of the century, although not without a price. Being an independent individual means taking full responsibility for one’s actions and facing the possible consequences. Sometimes this means hurting family members. As a result, the girls often come to question their own individualistic goals: are they too ego-centric? Are they “bad” girls?
PASSING AS AN ADULT? ESSAYS BY SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS
In this section, stories of young women growing up in the 1990s will be analyzed. Do these young women describe similar problems in achieving the status of an individual as the members of the women’s memory-work group did? The data consist of autobiographical stories written by Finnish secondary school students, both girls and boys, fifteen to sixteen years of age, about the significance of age in their lives. The themes that are raised particularly often by the female secondary school students concern family relationships and relationships with boyfriends, although they write about many other themes as well. There is much variation in the way the young women position themselves in their stories, but the general tendency is to present oneself as a rational individual and a reliable member of society.

Relationships with boys often appear in the girls’ stories, which confirms the centrality of heterosexual relationships for measuring a girl’s maturity (see also Tolonen 2001). In some stories, relatives ask the girl about boyfriends, linking heterosexual dating with growing up. Girls are often embarrassed by these questions. One of the writers claims that her family starts to define her as a young woman when she enters a steady relationship with a boy, and she gains more freedom as a result. Not all parents, however, approve of their daughter’s heterosexual activity. Parents are often described in the stories as challenging the girls’ autonomy, and trying to control them, particularly in the realm of sexuality (see Aapola 2002).

In one of the stories, however, a mother gives her fourteen-year-old daughter condoms, thus acknowledging her (hetero)sexual agency. This is notable also, as Finnish law actually restricts sexual relationships for those under sixteen years of age. The girl herself is ambivalent about the incident, as she was not yet sexually active, and she is shocked that her mother assumes the contrary. Later, however, she appreciates her mother’s gesture, which she interprets as caring. By contrast, the following story describes how a fifteen-year-old girl’s sexual experimentation is controlled by her father, on their joint trip abroad.

Last summer I was given a trip to Turkey as a confirmation gift. My friend "Kaisa" and my father came along. The sun was shining and life was...
smiling. With Kaisa we got to know the locals. Especially the boys. We went to discos and partied wildly. In the evening or more accurately at night when we returned to the hotel, my father was already asleep. Kaisa and I laughed at all the funny things that had happened and looked slightly amusedly at certain marks on our necks. “I wonder what father will say,” we thought, and went to bed.

In the morning we woke up and my father saw the marks on our necks. Nothing but yelling came out of it. My father said that I was only a child, fifteen years old. We were all yelling and at that moment my father, the adult, was so unfair and unreasonable. That evening we sat in the hotel, offended. We were so annoyed and on top of everything we were ashamed. We were so absurdly ashamed. My father’s words, “the whole trip has been ruined” haunted my mind. Thinking about it afterwards maybe I was quite childish. But, when you think again, I can take care of myself!! I’m already 15 years old!! (Translation from Finnish by the author)

The narrator first confirms the cultural importance of the Christian ritual of confirmation in Finland: she is given a trip to a holiday resort to mark the event. This ritual is often regarded as a significant step towards adulthood in Finnish culture (see Aapola 2002). She is not granted total freedom with her friend, however, as her father comes along. The beginning of the narrative creates expectations about a happy atmosphere: the sun is shining, and the girls have a good time in the discos. It is as if they could do as they pleased, unrestricted by the father, who has let the girls go out by themselves. The girls are successful in the heterosexual sphere, testing their attractiveness with the local boys. They do not just dance: “certain marks” imply passionate kissing, if not more. The discourse of romance is not evoked, however; the girls seem to enjoy the male attention even without a promise of a continued relationship or feelings of affection.

The morning after is a turning point: the father finds out what the girls have done and (re)positions himself as a controlling figure. He assumes the authority to judge and punish them because of the visible marks on the girls’ bodies; otherwise, the father would not have known about their activities. He heavily criticizes the girls for what they did with the boys. The girls’ age is brought up as an important issue: interestingly, the father positions them as children. The discourse of childhood emphasizes innocence and asexuality, but the girls have seriously questioned this discourse by their sexually charged actions. The father positions the girls as having done something morally wrong and inappropriate (for children).

The narrator first assumes the position of a “sinner,” although not without some verbal resistance, and has to suffer the consequences: she feels “absurdly ashamed” despite the fact that she does not explain why. Is she ashamed for her actions in
general, or for being “caught,” or for being blamed for causing the trip to “fail”? But, according to whom does the trip actually seem like a “failure”? The trip was, after all, organized in celebration of the girls’ coming of age. Their behavior can be seen as testing their freedom and maturity. However, the father’s interpretation of the girls’ maturity is different, and he blames them for having violated “the rules,” and repositions them as children (see also Harris, Aapola, and Gonick 2000). It is difficult to imagine the father being as furious with boys of the same age for having engaged in heterosexual activities. There is still a double standard concerning women’s sexuality (Saarikoski 2000). In any case, in the story all the fun is over for the girls, and they are deprived their agency in the sexual realm: as a punishment, they sit confined in the hotel room. The narrator, however, has the last word. In her evaluation of the event, she partly agrees with her father’s definition of herself as childish, and submits herself to his authority. She manages, however, to reposition herself as a competent individual “who can take care of herself.” She questions her father’s assessment of her and reinstates her agency. For her, the trip was—at least for a while—a success, proving her maturity. It is a powerful position for a young woman to be evaluated as attractive and desirable by men within the heterosexual discourse, but it is also a position potentially linked with dangers, as the advice books for girls make very explicit (Aapola 1993). In some essays, girls report that they have been warned not to go out alone at night, both by family members and even by unknown men. Although the reason for these warnings is not made explicit, they hint at potential sexual danger (from men).

In the high school students’ essays, relationships to parents are depicted as more egalitarian than in the memory-stories. The parents are sometimes referred to as friends, although conflicts are also mentioned. Parents are usually not described as strict authoritarian figures in the girls’ lives. Parents express their opinion about the girls’ choices, but the girls want to reserve the final decisions for themselves, as they see themselves as rational individuals capable of making their own choices. There is a strong tendency in the essays for girls to present themselves as sensible “half-adults” who can bear responsibility for their actions, and who deserve to be trusted. In these stories, parents are described as allowing girls many liberties which are never even discussed in the memory-work stories. It seems that in the 1990s, particularly in the Helsinki area, certain things were taken for granted as a part of young women’s lives, such as drinking alcohol and heterosexual dating, if not sexual activity itself.

In the narratives, parents try to negotiate with their daughters about these issues. For example, in some stories girls proudly announce that their parents would buy alcohol for them if they requested it. (Excessive) consumption of alcohol is an important cultural marker traditionally linked with adulthood in Finland (Apo 2001). Previously, it was more typical for boys to drink, but girls have approached the male pattern. In the narratives, parents do not necessarily forbid (hetero)sexual
relationships altogether; rather, parents are portrayed as trying to make sure that their daughters will be protected against disease and unwanted pregnancy (see Aapola 2002; Schalet 2000). There are also stories about parents trying to convince their daughters to avoid too much intimacy with boys. However, the girls make their own choices, as they believe they are capable of deciding for themselves. There are obviously big differences between different sets of parents and the way they bring up their daughters, and some of these differences may be related to social background. There may even be differences related to the geographical context within Finland: families living in the countryside and smaller towns may be more restrictive towards their children in trying to meet social norms.

In their stories, girls construct their maturity particularly in relationship to responsibility within the home and also at school. References to their rights and freedoms in the public sphere are less frequent, but they do appear as well. The girls move in various contexts in the social world, more or less successfully, and do not question their right to be there. As an example, several girls write about their alcohol use, and their successes or failures in trying to “pass” as adults in bars. According to the Finnish law on alcohol-use, those under eighteen years of age cannot purchase alcohol from stores or bars. Nevertheless, many minors try their luck. The following is an example. The essay is titled “When someone thought I was grown-up”:

Our “gang” was at our friend’s place, and we were drinking some beer and punch. We just spent the evening together, when all of a sudden Tomi got it into his head that we should go to a bar. Well, we were supposed to go to a restaurant in Lakeside, but it was just closing. So, we went to a nearby town. We ended up in a place called The Anchor. I went in, cool as a cucumber, and the doorman did not utter a word, he just nodded to me. When we got in I went to buy a gin-longdrink, and the bartender asked no questions, he just poured the drink into my glass. It was the first time I ever tried to get into a bar, and I got lucky right away!!

Well I am a 16-year-old girl from the countryside. I don’t have many hobbies, sometimes I read and ride horses. I am not good at school or at anything else really. I have two little brothers and a third one is on its way. I drink and smoke. My folks do not approve of my smoking; always when I get caught they yell at me. They let me drink, as long as I don’t go downtown to get drunk. At home I can drink, but I cannot smoke at home under any circumstances.

I think it is really unfair to prescribe some shitty laws that an under-18-year-old should not do this or that, and should not go here or there. Of course they can have some kind of laws, but the age-limit stinks, it should be 15 or 16 and then everything would be alright!” (Translation from Finnish by the author)
The writer of this story positions herself in an established group of friends, “our gang,” who do things together. So, even though some of the group members are under age, they decide to go to a bar. For the narrator this is an exciting moment: it will be her first time. The illegality of her actions does not seem to worry her; she sees it as an individual test. She will learn if she can “pass” as an adult, and she can only lose by not getting in. As soon as she walks through the bar door, it appears she is no longer a member of the “gang,” but an independent individual. The girl considers herself “lucky,” as the doorman and bartender both consider her old enough, and she gets a drink. Nothing else seems to matter for her; she does not even mention her friends anymore. The incident seems very important for the girl, although she claims she can even drink at home, if she likes to. Her parents allow that, although they are against her smoking. Yet their disapproval does not stop her from smoking.

The narrator talks about herself in a rather self-deprecating way, informing the reader that she is “not good at anything really.” Nevertheless, she manages to position herself as a knowledgeable and able person, who does not need society to “protect” her with official age limits, such as the one limiting her access to alcohol. In her mind, age limits “stink,” which suggests their disturbing nature. She suggests that the age limit to buy alcohol should be lowered to her own age or even below that. In many other essays the students eagerly discuss the arbitrariness of such age limits and suggest that they be abolished.

In the essays written by the secondary school students, the issue of gender is not addressed very openly. For these young women, youth is a time to enjoy, and to do so in a rather similar way as boys: by drinking, having fun with friends, going to bars, and having sexual relationships. However, the girls are not immune to gender definitions: they have strong investments in being good and obedient daughters, in helping at home, in succeeding at school, and in establishing stable heterosexual relationships. As a new feature, some stories portray a girl obviously enjoying a brief encounter with a boy without wanting a joint future. Friends are an important factor in the young women’s lives; together with friends, girls can rebel against their parents, when necessary, and have fun.

Young women in the 1990s seemed to have achieved more definitely the status of an individual than their predecessors in the memory-work stories, at least in some areas. In their narratives, the girls construct themselves as knowledgeable actors facing a great deal of unnecessary control. In the girls’ stories, young people’s agency is regulated by adults in authoritative positions. However, these young women seem to express less anxiety about reaching their desired goals as compared to the protagonists in the memory-work stories.

**Discussion**

Throughout the twentieth century, certain aspects of Finnish girlhood remained the same. For girls, the growing-up process has consistently been defined in a gendered
way: it has often been linked with care and responsibility for other people, physical changes, and heterosexual romance. Girlhood has continued to be seen as time of vulnerability, and mainly in the same way. However, early twentieth-century debates about young women’s educational (dis)abilities have been set aside. Instead, there came a wide concern for boys’ performance in this same sphere. Sexuality, on the other hand, remains a consistent and always problematic theme regarding girlhood. At the end of the century, a new concern became “tough girls,” who supposedly engaged in various kinds of behavior previously reserved for men; their femininity was seen as threatened. Yet the basic questions around girlhood have remained basically the same over the years: are girls defined as individuals and independent citizens with an agency of their own? Or are they seen first and foremost in a family role, as daughters of their parents, partners of male citizens, and mothers of future citizens, as has traditionally been the case?

In the early twentieth-century public debates, girls were defined as vulnerable and in need of control. They were not considered as individuals capable of acting in the public sphere on their own, and they were always positioned in the home sphere. Towards the end of the century, this version of girlhood seemed to be seriously questioned, although it had not been altogether abandoned. Girls were granted more autonomy and independence in the public views surrounding girlhood. As Lesley Johnson (1993) has demonstrated in her analysis of Australian girlhood, since the 1950s, increasing attention has been directed to girls for establishing an independent identity. Also, the control of girls has shifted from the parents more to the girls themselves: they are supposed to control themselves and act as responsible and rational agents. Nevertheless, it is not easy for girls to position themselves as “big girls” or adults; the change in their status is dependent on the approval of adults, particularly that of parents.

One strategy employed by girls to gain freedom from their families has been to position themselves within the heterosexual romantic script, as girlfriends to boys of the same or older age. This is problematic, as it can result in being subjugated in another way, being defined in relation to men. However, it appears that towards the end of the twentieth century, girls could sometimes also enjoy brief romantic or erotic encounters with boys, although not without some fear of the social consequences. It also seems that they did not necessarily need an established relationship with a man in order to gain autonomy, as suggested in the memory-work stories.

Both in the public debates on Finnish girlhood and in the private stories of girls’ adolescence, a gradual change towards emphasizing greater autonomy and individuality for girls can be detected (cf. Johnson 1993). For example, in the more recent advice books for girls, the emphasis has shifted to depicting girls as autonomous agents who can make legitimate decisions about their lives. The same shift is reflected in the private stories, particularly in the way girls’ relationships with their
parents are described: young women represent themselves as good daughters and rational individuals who can be relied upon. They do not usually see themselves as requiring protection by parents or other authorities. There are nevertheless some references to nostalgic, yet ambivalent, feelings about the time when they were “little” and free of responsibilities.

In the older women’s memory-work stories, parents emerge as the ultimate authority figures with whom negotiation is impossible. In the narratives of younger women, however, parents seem to have lost their authoritative position, or at least it has been seriously questioned. According to the stories, parents are no longer able to dictate what their daughters should or should not do, even if they continue to be an important influence in the girls’ lives. Instead of trying to stop the girls from doing things parents consider risky, the parents are described as trying to have some control on how, where, and when their daughters engage in such activities. This means, for example, that instead of trying to forbid a daughter from drinking alcohol, the parents might even buy her some wine in order to control what and how much she drinks. Or, instead of telling a daughter not to have a boyfriend, parents might actually give her condoms to protect her against sexually transmitted diseases or an unwanted pregnancy in a sexual relationship. However, there are differences between parents from various social backgrounds and localities (see Aapola 2002).

There are many stories in the data where girls express their wish to be recognized as rational individuals and responsible citizens who can make justifiable decisions about their actions and lives. However, a young woman’s freedom is often jeopardized by others who question her choices and desires. It seems that younger women in the data take it for granted that they can act as individuals in the world, and have an independent life, making their wishes come true. They are critical of efforts to undermine their autonomy (cf. Johnson 1993). This is in line with the individualistic, neo-liberal ideology of the late twentieth century, but also with the feminist and equality rhetorics that have been in circulation in Finland since the late 1960s. Young women have started to expect that they be treated as individuals in their own right, even if their possibilities and resources vary widely depending on their social background. Despite these historically situated shifts in young women’s agency and individuality, throughout the twentieth century young women had to strike a difficult balance between their individual aspirations and gender-appropriate behavior within a particular historical time period.


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FRANCES WILLARD’S PEEP AT FINLAND

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ABSTRACT
This article examines Frances Willard’s first transatlantic tour of 1868–70, which played a key role in the development of her career. Her concern for improving the situation of women matured during her travels to European capitals and as far north as Helsinki, Finland. “A Peep at Finland” is one of the few travel articles that Willard published of the tour. In that article, she recorded her impressions of Finland’s cities and their inhabitants. Her writing employs common travel-writing strategies, while her descriptions reflect dominant nineteenth-century American beliefs. After her tour, Willard became a prominent figure, working locally, nationally, and internationally within various reform organizations dedicated to women’s causes. Her efforts to improve the situation of women are still recognized in countries like Finland.

INTRODUCTION
“I wonder if we shall ever know anything, see anybody, or go anywhere,” Frances Willard said in her youth, unaware of the extent and importance of her future travels as an advocate for the women’s rights movement ([1889] 1970, 245). Her determination to dedicate her life to women’s emancipation was maturing during her first visit to Europe between 1868 and 1870. Indeed, the first of her many transatlantic journeys—an itinerary that included, among other places, Finland—was to be the turning point of Willard’s life and career. It provided a clear direction and purpose to her life. Even though her travel articles written about the tour, such as “A Peep at Finland,” hardly at all promote her future social agenda, they reflect her first attempts to formulate in writing her ideas, impressions, and budding concerns. Her early articles and journals show Willard’s immaturity and her incapacity to grasp the socio-political realities of the foreign countries that she visited; nonetheless, they provide information about the travel destinations from an American viewpoint and repeatedly reveal the writer’s own socio-cultural background, the latter of which was quite common among travel writers of the time. As critic Mary Suzanne Schriber asserts, travel writing, especially by women, is “as much about American exceptionalism and the romance of America as about home and abroad” (1997, 9).
“A Peep at Finland,” which is a rather superficial article of less than three pages published in *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* in August 1869, is a rare testimony of nineteenth-century American views of Finland. In the article, Willard employs common contemporary travel-writing strategies, while her descriptions reflect dominant nineteenth-century American ideals and ideologies. It also testifies to how racial hierarchies based on the arbitrary categorization of people were established and generally accepted in American society around the time Willard’s article appeared. As a consequence of being able to publish her travel pieces and to independently tour Europe, Willard started to create a new identity for herself that foregrounded her autonomy, transgressing expectations regarding the boundaries of gender.

Frances Willard was born in September 1839 in Churchville, New York. She was a bright, ambitious, and intellectually curious girl. She was a tomboy who liked to play with her brother in the woods in Wisconsin, where she lived from 1846 to 1858 (Bordin 1986, 14, 19–25). In 1858, her family bought a house near Lake Michigan, in an area that subsequently witnessed an increasing presence of Scandinavian and Finnish communities (see, for example, Spiegel). But it must have been Willard’s curiosity and love of the unusual that enticed her to include such an uncommon destination as Finland in the itinerary of her first visit to Europe. The first overseas tour started in May 1868 when Willard sailed from New York to Ireland together with her friend Kate Jackson (Bordin 1986, 48).

In the 1860s, as Schriber explains, American women, who previously had traveled to foreign countries only infrequently, began to journey abroad “in significant numbers, for their own reasons and independent of men” (1997, 2). Steamships and railroads made travel more comfortable, and Thomas Cook’s package tours accommodated women in their travels (4, 24). Travel writing became an instrument for women to have their voices heard, and, as Schriber affirms, “women’s accounts of travel were routinely published in periodicals such as *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*” (1-2). Indeed, as travel of white, middle-class women steadily increased, it paralleled the growing popularity of women’s travel writing (Steadman 2007, 3). Consequently, as critics have pointed out, female travelers and their travel texts were “impacting cultural ideas of women, travel, national identity, and citizenship” (60).

Women’s travel articles often promoted white, Protestant, middle-class values and allowed women to define themselves as Americans and women, while creating images of foreign people and nations as the “other.” Indeed, as scholar Mary Louise Pratt confirms, travel writing often “produced ‘the rest of the world’” to readers (1995, 5, italics original). The reinvention of one’s travel destination in travel narratives was based on selection and invention, often involving the construction of the civilization/barbarism dichotomy that was employed to define the observer and the contrasting “other” (175, 192). Like many other travelers, Willard used many prominent travel-writing strategies, including selecting and reinventing what she
saw and deemed worthy of her pen, as well as creating dichotomies not only of Self and Other but also of city and country.

Before departing for the trip, Willard had become interested in the “Woman Question,” which provided another motive for her European tour: to study the situation of women abroad (Willard 1995, 202). Jennifer Bernhardt Steadman argues that “Woman’s Rights rhetoric with its call for women’s increased physical and social mobility invites a connection between early feminism and women travelers” (2007, 141). For Willard, the tour provided confidence in her autonomy and allowed her to develop her views concerning the situation of women. The tour, which is documented in the diary she kept and in the few travel articles she wrote, was financed by Kate Jackson’s father, who had made a fortune as the founder and owner of the New Jersey Locomotive Works (Willard [1889] 1970, 248). In addition to having her expenses covered by Mr. James Jackson, Willard secured a small income for her additional expenses from publishing travel articles in such newspapers and journals as the New York Independent, the Christian Union, the Methodist, and the Chicago Republican (Bordin 1986, 50; Earhart 1944, 95–96). Through publishing her travel commentaries, she took the first steps towards becoming a public figure.

At the time of departure, Willard was already approaching her thirties. Visiting Europe had been one of her “cherished dreams” (Willard [1889] 1970, 249). The tour took the two women—Kate Jackson and Frances Willard—to Europe and the Middle East: to Scotland, England, France, Switzerland, Scandinavia and Russia, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Egypt, and Palestine (for a more detailed itinerary, see Gordon 1898, 68 and Bordin 1986, 48). As Willard wrote: “While abroad, we visited almost every European capital, large city, and specially interesting haunt of history, learning and art, besides going north as far as Helsingfors, Finland” ([1889] 1970, 250). Finland, which at the time was an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire, was not a common destination of nineteenth-century travelers in Europe. Although such famous Americans as John Quincy Adams had already visited this out-of-the-way place in 1782, through the first part of the nineteenth century, the only Americans who ventured to Finland were diplomats stationed in St. Petersburg (Moyne 1953, 67–71). It is not until the second half of the nineteenth century that Finland began to attract American tourists. Even then, it remained primarily a transitory destination for a small number of travelers crossing from Sweden to Russia proper. Indeed, it was unusual for American tourists to tour the northern regions of Europe as the main destinations of the American Grand Tours continued to be central and southern Europe, in particular Italy. Hence, Willard was one of the very few nineteenth-century Americans to visit and write about the northern regions.

Consequently, although some English-language travel articles and guidebooks that discussed the Grand Duchy appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century, they remained few in number and provided scarce information about the place.
The exotic locale may be the reason why Willard’s narrative of Finland was accepted for publication, while, according to biographer Mary Earhart, many of her other articles of Europe were rejected (1944, 96). Indeed, as scholar Kristi Siegel confirms: “To get an audience, a woman needed to provide material that was reasonably exciting” (2004, 2).

The English had published some guidebooks of the North that reached an American readership. The most famous and popular was John Murray’s handbook series that covered most of Europe. During her travels, Willard absorbed information from her observations of people and their habits, while she relied on guidebooks for facts and instructions. Indeed, when comparing her text on Finland to the period’s guidebooks, it is rather evident that she used Murray’s *Handbook for Travellers in Russia, Poland, and Finland* and the American Pembroke Fetridge’s *Harper’s Handbook for Travelers in Europe and the East* as her information sources. These guidebooks were available to her prior to the visit to Finland in August 1868: the first edition of Murray’s guidebook came out in 1865, followed by a second edition in 1868, whereas *Harper’s Hand-book* was published in 1864. The new editions of Murray’s guide and the increased number of pages dedicated to Finland testify to the growing interest British travelers had towards the region, whereas the number of American tourists in the area remained low throughout the nineteenth century. The second edition of Murray’s *Handbook for Travellers in Russia, Poland, and Finland* dedicates over twenty pages, and the third edition published in 1875 as many as forty-seven pages to Finland, while *Harper’s Hand-book* confers merely one page to discussing Finland’s history and most significant sites. The first half of the page provides instructions for changing currency when leaving St. Petersburg and includes information about the sites one sees before reaching Helsingfors, for instance, Isaac Church, and then Revel, the capital of Estonia. Fetridge’s *Hand-book* continues with a few words about the population and history of Helsinki, its university, and the number of books at the university library. The guide recommends only one hotel (Societats Haus), which happens to be the same one recommended by Murray. The page moves on to a brief mention of Turku and Åland, all in less than a page or, more precisely, about a column and a half. The guidebook’s aim seems to be to provide factual, rather than descriptive, information in a very compact form. It seems to testify that in Fetridge’s estimation the travel destination was not an important or fashionable place.

It was common in the nineteenth century for middle-class white men who wrote about their travels to provide information about the history and political situation of a given destination and to give statistical and factual information, whereas corresponding women travel writers usually concentrated on descriptions of the local people, their physical appearance, behavior, and manners. The fact-oriented reporting, according to Steadman, was not “merely male-produced, but claiming a kind of masculine rationality and objectivity,” but it was inclined to be “interspersed
with personal reflection” (2007, 16). Women travelers tended to pay attention to topics they were familiar with, such as domestic matters and people’s way of dressing. Hence, they presented portraits of people rather than discussed politics or the history of a given country.

Statistical and factual information reappeared from one travel text to another nearly without alteration as it usually was directly “borrowed” from previously published texts. At times, the travel writers made intertextual references and mentioned the source of the citations, whereas at other times there was no indication of the source. Indeed, intertextuality and plagiarism were common strategies in nineteenth-century travel writing. As scholar Chu-Chueh Cheng writes: “Travel writing repeats, revises, paraphrases, and rewrites the preceding models” (2004, 159). When looking for reliable information on Finland, as historian Keijo Virtanen confirms, travelers turned to their Murray guides to “borrow” information to be included in the travelers’ own letters that were subsequently published in newspapers and magazines back home (1988, 157). Willard’s “A Peep at Finland” provides examples of such a writing practice. Willard paraphrased and directly extracted information from the official English and American guidebooks. For example, of landing in Åbo (Turku) to spend the night there, Willard writes that “[t]he approach was fine; the old Cathedral—first of Christian temples in these frigid lands—rising in ghastly fashion above this ancient capital of Finland” (1869, 395). Åbo, “the ancient capital of Finland” and the church, also referred to as “the first Christian temple in this northern land,” appears in Harper’s Hand-book for Travelers (Fetridge 1864, 506). The church, which was the first significant Finnish site she wrote about, surely caught her interest because Willard was a Protestant, and her Christian faith was as important to her as women’s emancipation. In addition, it obviously was one of the main sites of Turku. By contrast, she pays no attention to the observatory or the castle, which would have been equally visible and dominant in the city’s skyline.

When Willard continued her journey from Åbo to Helsingfors (Helsinki), she turned to Murray’s volume for factual information about her destination. Exactly like John Murray, she draws the reader’s attention to the main square of the capital, where the Senate House and the university were located.

Helsingfors, the present capital of Finland […] made a very fine appearance as we approached, and upon closer inspection holds its own bravely. It has a handsome granite quay, with a fine statue of some local hero in the centre of the square that extends from it. A costly church, Corinthian in architecture and shaped like a Greek cross, is flanked on one side by the fine University building, and on the other by the Senate House. This University was removed from Åbo in 1827. It is the oldest in Russia, and has five different faculties and thirty-one professors. (1869, 397)
Once again, she describes the church in the same way as Murray. Indeed, the exact same architectural and statistical information can be found in Murray’s guide, including the date of the removal of the university from Åbo to Helsingfors and the number of faculties and professors (Murray 1868, 387–88). Instead, the “fine” statue in the middle of the square does not appear in either of the guidebooks mentioned. Consequently, in Willard’s travel piece, the local hero remains unidentified. Thus, it is evident that the factual information Willard provides was directly taken from the period’s English and American guidebooks. In addition to facts borrowed from guidebooks, her article repeats conversations between passengers and narrated events from Willard’s daily routine, which consisted of reading and writing letters. The unoriginal treatment of her topic may be taken as an indication that her travel article aimed to entertain rather than to inform the readers.

Other common nineteenth-century travel-writing strategies that Willard uses in her article include portraits of local people and descriptions of their appearance. As scholars point out, travel writers frequently create a sense of the “Other” by describing their clothing and bodies. For instance, scholar Susan Van Zyl asserts that it was typical of British colonial discourse to focus on the physical appearance of foreign people (1998, 92). Often in these descriptions, as Pratt indicates, the “Other’s” actions are listed in a reductive way, while the object is observed without any authentic contact (2001, 133). These travel-writing strategies are also present in Willard’s article. For instance, the strategy of focusing on the physical form of locals can be seen in Willard’s portrait of Captain Lars Krogius of Helsingfors and the steamer Wiborg:

He seemed to us the very picture of a Scandinavian hero of the romantic days, toned and tamed by nineteenth century civilization. Straight as his native pines, with eyes blue as a mountain lake, and abundant flaxen hair, he is a figure to be noticed anywhere, and to be trusted and admired at the same glance. Our Captain is a Finn, and at the same time a perfect gentleman; a sailor from his boyhood, and at the same time Professor of the science of Navigation in Helsingfors [. . .]. He is as kind to the humblest steerage passenger as to the wealthiest loungers in the cabin [. . . ]. In his pleasant Finnish tones and idioms, but with well-spoken English words, he tells us much about his country, wrested from Sweden in Czar Peter’s time, and urges us to devote a week to its scenery and its people; saying that in recent years it is quite common for travelers to tarry there a little before making the more “fashionable” Russian tour. (1869, 395)

In the passage, as in many other nineteenth-century travel texts, the landscape is separated from the descriptive portraits of people. Yet, the image of the captain
is strongly linked with nature. In Willard’s view, the captain stands erect like “his native pines,” and his eyes are as blue as “a mountain lake.” The author’s decision to compare the eyes to a mountain lake distances the image from the flat scenery typical of Finland, while, instead, it evokes the mountain regions of central Europe. Yet the lakes and pines link the captain to Finnish scenery. In Willard’s portrait, the captain is simultaneously an embodiment of the wild and the civilized, a representative of the country and city.

His natural simplicity and upright posture, according to Willard, make Captain Krogius trustworthy and admirable. In this way, following the dominant nineteenth-century way of thinking, Willard draws conclusions about local people’s character based on their physical appearance. Indeed, as historian Matthew Frye Jacobson argues, in the nineteenth century physical features were frequently considered as indicators of character traits. According to Jacobson, in the general view “outer physical characteristics were but markers of inner intellectual, moral, or temperamental qualities” (2002, 32). In addition to being a man “to be trusted,” Captain Krogius is “a perfect gentleman.”

Furthermore, Willard’s Finn is an image of a natural northerner and, more importantly, of ideal whiteness. He is referred to as a “Scandinavian hero,” which can be seen to connect him to the cult of the Viking that was generated in Victorian England starting from the 1830s. These Viking myths circulated in England through the 1890s and were diffused through fictional works, poems, travel books, and Victorian parlor songs. As a result of the popular legends created around Vikings, Victorians started to consider northern Europe as an exciting destination (Wawn 2002, 3–5). The desire to identify with Vikings can be explained through the association of “Scandinavian heroes” with an image of powerful conquerors. According to historian Andrew Wawn, in the 1860s the legendary northerners were linked to the same racial origins as Anglo-Saxons, which made Scandinavians the ancestors of the British and even the Americans (2002, 283). But, as scholar Valerie Babb points out, although race was considered a biological fact, it was simultaneously an arbitrary invention rather than scientific categorization (1998, 9). Indeed, racial classifications were not merely related to differences in the color of complexion, eyes, or hair, but they were more complex theories that blended ideology, history, and assumptions (Babb 1998, 41–44). These theories commonly consolidated, and were intertwined with, stereotypical ideas and prejudices.

Following this line of thinking, the author’s remarks, to a certain extent, can be interpreted to be colored by nineteenth-century American racial beliefs. The captain in Willard’s text can be seen as an idealized northerner when presented as a hard worker from his childhood, a well-educated man knowledgeable in languages and in the science of navigation. His blond hair and blue eyes are indicators of his racial collocation. His good manners, equal and unbiased treatment of people from different
social classes, his presumed intelligence and education can all be seen to be part of
the myth of the intelligent and admirable northerner. As Jacobson argues in his study,
Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race, as a conse-
quence of the many problems associated with immigrants, the racial differentiation
in nineteenth-century American society was no longer based on white and nonwhite
but between distinct white races that were categorized and hierarchically organized
(2002, 41). These white races were differentiated by degrees, and, starting from
the 1860s, America acknowledged what Jacobson has defined as a “regime of varie-
gated whiteness” (46, 52). The distinguishing factor was defined on the basis of what
constituted “good material for citizenship.” Consequently, different peoples were
ranked. In this classification, the Nordics were considered desirable, and their arrival
in the United States continued to be favored (69). When immigration restrictions
found form in new legislation based on a quota system between 1910 and 1924,
northern and western Europeans were considered the best material for American
citizenship because they were deemed to be of higher intelligence. Some advocates,
according to Jacobson, “did not want anybody else in this country except Nordics”
(2002, 86). But, as has been pointed out, the “Nordic race” was merely a political
invention used to demonstrate the inferiority of some other white “races” (83, 86).
In this way, the idealization of Nordic people started around the mid-nineteenth
century, and it continued through the first decades of the twentieth century.

The problem with racial definitions became accentuated in the second half of
the nineteenth century when America was facing problems with the large numbers
of Irish and Italian immigrants, while, at the same time, requiring a larger work force
in certain areas. During the 1860s and 1870s, according to historian Reino Kero,
Finns were regarded as a desirable work force. American recruiters traveled around
Finland, trying to convince local people to emigrate. American companies sent
Finnish immigrants back to Finland with the task of spreading information about the
availability of work and farmland in America (Kero 1996, 39). Finns, Kero writes,
were especially wanted in Minnesota and Michigan to work in the mines and on the
railroads and to farm land that was still wilderness or prairie (39). As mentioned
earlier, when Willard was in her twenties, she lived near Lake Michigan, an area
where Scandinavians formed some of their first settlements and where many Finns
moved in search of employment and more favorable living conditions. These decades
when Finns were recruited and considered representatives of a desirable white “race”
and ideal material for American citizenship coincide with the years of the publica-
tion of many of the (few) guidebooks to northern Europe and Willard’s own visit
to Finland. Consequently, it is unsurprising to find a description in Willard’s article
of an idealized Finn that corresponds to dominant racial beliefs of 1860s America.

In addition to his blue eyes, flaxen hair, and education, Willard further describes
Captain Krogius as a “hero worthy to have been made famous by Cooper’s pen”
(1869, 395), which associates him with the ideas of taming the American wilderness. With the reference to James Fenimore Cooper’s writings, Willard evokes an image of ideal masculinity, of a man whose characteristics are strength, physical force, and courage. Moreover, Willard draws attention to the captain’s masculinity by explicitly mentioning “his manly figure” and “graceful gesture” (395). In this way, she defines the captain through attributes that were highly appreciated in nineteenth-century American society. His masculinity and graceful manners further enhance the idealized picture of the Finnish figure.

The presumed intelligence of the Finns and their high level of education are again highlighted through the titles and authors of books that Willard found in a local bookstore. Her list includes works by such authors as Dickens, Thackeray, and Julia Kavanagh, placed beside those by Plato, Plutarch, and Cicero (Willard 1869, 397). In this way, Finns are depicted as knowledgeable in classic English-language literature as well as informed in Greek and Roman philosophy. Thus, Willard continues to underscore the image of the intellectual northern urban citizen.

If urban Finns in the article are presented as educated, well-mannered, and intellectual, rural Finns outside Åbo (Turku) are depicted as taciturn and unsophisticated. The American traveling party got an opportunity to observe them at a local ball held in a “long, bare room” where the newcomers seated themselves on the benches set along the walls of the dance hall (396). The old and young “wall-flowers” sitting next to them kept time to the dancers “by rocking back and forth in an imbecile way” (396). From their seats, the American visitors watched the dance scene as detached spectators. The static spectators stand at a distance from the moving scene, thus erasing their own presence from the passage. Their complete passivity is contrasted with the swiftly moving dancers and the idea of their own mobility as travelers. One persistent dancer in particular is carefully examined and analyzed.

What particularly strikes us is the forcibility of the performance as a whole. For instance, take this well-favored Finn. Perspiration is streaming from his face; his fair, abundant locks are tossing up and down in a manner melancholy to behold; his face is in a blaze of color; but persistent still, he brings partner after partner upon the floor. (396)

Once again, the physical forms of the people attract Willard’s gaze. She notices the fair hair and the face that is turning into “a blaze of color” from the intensity of the dancer’s movements. The man in question “whirled” his partners around the room in “a tempest of haste” while perspiration is said to stream down his face. In Willard’s presentation, the “bare room,” “imbecile way,” and “melancholy” manner all contribute to the impression of plainness, simplicity, and, consequently, inferiority. The sweating rural dancers form a contrast to the more sophisticated urban people.
In this way, Willard forms a dichotomy between city and country. This polarity appears repeatedly in the period’s travel narratives. Usually it reveals Americans’ nostalgia for the pastoral past that is contrasted with urban change, urbanization, and modernization, whereas in Willard’s article it serves to form a contrast between representatives of civilized and educated urban higher classes and what are portrayed as representing the opposing simple rural lower classes.

From observing the physical appearance of the dancers, Willard’s focus shifts to the dress and manners of local people. In particular, she seems interested in the way women are regarded. Her interest in Finnish women can be seen as a sign of her budding and growing interest in the situation of women. According to Willard, the Finnish “whirlers” treat their women in “inconsiderate style” when accompanying the partners to the bench, leaving them there with abruptness and without any exchange of polite words or even a nod (396). She then underscores the rural dancers’ lack of manners and absence of educated civility. But, in Willard’s view, the dancers—who seem “kind and simple-hearted,” which reflected the stereotypical image created of rural people—are “in dress and general appearance, when at rest, more like other people than we should have thought to find these Finns” (396). The statement expresses the American traveler’s biased expectations that change into a positive surprise in finding the foreigners comparable to “other people,” i.e., civilized urban citizens/Americans. Indeed, as Willard observed after visiting Helsinki, “Finns look very much like New Yorkers and Chicagoans, and vice versa” (397). Thus, in conclusion, the exotic foreign “Other” is quite similar to the observing “Self.” However, she recognizes the similarities, in particular, between refined city people.

Another American traveler, Isabel Hapgood, offers a description of lower-class rural Finns that bears similarities to Willard’s impression of the rural dancers outside Turku. Although it was uncommon for Americans—and especially for nineteenth-century women—to travel as far north as Finland and Russia, there are two other independent American women, who should be mentioned as examples of Americans who traveled and published articles of their visits in the north. Hapgood and Edna Dean Proctor both visited Russia proper in the second half of the nineteenth century. In their published travel letters, they focus on describing Russia, but they also briefly mention Finland or Finnish people. All three women—Willard, Hapgood, and Proctor—were educated, middle-class white women, who had respectable occupations as teachers and scholars, poets and travel writers. Hence, they belonged to the select group of women who were able to travel and publish their travels (Siegel 2004, 2). They all employ similar travel-writing strategies and tend to focus their travel texts on describing people, which was a common topic for women travel writers of the time. Their own respectability is underlined through their gaze that rapidly shifts from women’s bodies to their clothes. In their comments about lower classes and masculinity they repeat generalizations shared by their American readers.
Through comparisons between the foreign and the familiar, they re-formulate their own identity.

Hapgood, who was a scholar of foreign languages from Boston and interested in Russian literature, visited Russia several times, for the first time in 1887. Her article “A Russian Summer Resort,” which mentions Finns, appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1893. Hapgood’s travel text was about a popular Russian summer resort, Tsarskoie Selo, located outside St. Petersburg, and domestic matters are the focus of the article. She talks about preparing food and visiting butcher’s shops; she comments on servants and clothing, and describes a visit to a local market, where she studies some Finnish vendors. In the article, the group of Finns at the Russian market is separated from the main frame of the market scene, and the passage creates a verbal group portrait of the vendors who, according to Hapgood, are not to be mistaken for Russians because their features, expressions, clothing, and language are different, “unmistakably Finnish at any distance” (1893, 349). The author claims that the Finnish peasants, whose specialty is selling lilies of the valley, have “wooden” features and their expression is “far less intelligent than that of the Russians” (348). But their aprons have “wonderful patterns,” their stockings are “footless,” and their shoes “donning” (349). Hapgood claims to have caught the peasants at times “buying articles which seemed extravagant luxuries, all things considered, such as raisins” (349). In her view, then, the poor rural workers should have remained anchored in their low social position, and should accept their poverty, be thrifty, and stay away from delicacies that they probably are unable to afford. Her idea about the strict division of social classes was highly biased and stereotypical.

As for Proctor, she was a teacher and poet from New Hampshire, who visited nearly all of the most important European cities as well as Egypt and Palestine during her overseas tour. Her description of Russia came out in the *Scribner’s Monthly* in November 1872. In the article, “Northern Russia and St. Petersburg,” Proctor claims that she could distinguish the Finns from the Russians because of the “subtle differences of race” (4). According to her, a Russian is “taller, slenderer, fairer” as compared to “the heavy-limbed Finn” (4). Similarly to Willard and Hapgood, also Proctor, then, comments on the outer appearance of local people; her impressions are endorsements of stereotypes. She praises the Finns for being industrious and thrifty, and informs her readers that Finnish soldiers and sailors are “held in high esteem” (4). The mention of soldiers and sailors, who evoke a picture of masculinity, of physically strong and muscular men, recalls the positive impression of manly Finns represented by the Finnish captain that appears in Willard’s article. Such commentaries, then, could be seen to testify to American women’s recognition and appreciation of values and ideals that were dominant in their own nation.

Proctor’s portrait of Finnish peasants is quite unflattering. According to her, although the people of the Grand Duchy of Finland have lost “many of their distinctive
characteristics by intermarriage with Swedes and Russians; yet the square forms, flat faces, and sallow complexions of the peasants in and around St. Petersburg show that Finnish blood still runs strong in their veins” (4). She claims that “high cheekbones, depressed noses, and low awkward figures” are unmistakable signs of their “Finnish or Kalmuck ancestors” (4). As can be seen from these examples, a common feature in these travel articles written by these three women is that they focus on the description of people and their physical features.

Proctor also reports of the recent developments in Finland regarding the increasing use of the Finnish language and the progress of national literature. She mentions Professor Henrik Gabriel Porthan from Åbo as one of the scholars to have called attention to the richness of his native tongue. Proctor’s comments provide a unique reference found in American travel writing to Finnish national romanticism, a movement that gathered force in Finland towards the end of the nineteenth century. A brief mention of the nascent idea of Finland’s own, national identity, consisting of Finnish as a widely spoken and semi-official language, and the development of Finland’s national culture appeared a few years later, in 1875, in Murray’s guidebook, in its third edition (501). However, Proctor dedicates no more than a few words to this important phase in Finland’s history. Instead, to a great extent, both Hapgood’s and Proctor’s travel articles focus on local people and present the writers’ opinions and evaluations with a high degree of conviction. Both authors tend to assume a position of authority when introducing their views on the foreign. A common nineteenth-century travel-writing strategy was, indeed, to assume the role of an expert and provide authoritative knowledge of the travel destinations to readers at home.

Willard also voices her opinions and assumes expertise on the customs and behavior of Finns in comparison to those at home. She continues her travel article with a description of a soirée musicale, where “[s]elections from favorite operas were skillfully rendered by a fine orchestra. Gentlemen and ladies listened as attentively as the most critical Boston audience [. . .]. The creature comforts of eating, drinking, and smoking were discarded—seemingly forgotten” (397). As is evident from the passage, a frequently used way of interpreting the new environment was to compare the foreign with the familiar. Siegel argues that for travelers “a sense of identity and place can be achieved only by finding connections between their new surroundings and their memory of home” (2004, 8). Doubtless, these connections played an important role also for Willard in translating the place into text that would be familiar to her audience. In this case, the Finnish audience is said to be similar to that of Boston. Her knowledge of sophisticated Bostonians seems to imply her own pertinence among the cultured Americans. She, then, uses travel writing to reaffirm her own social position and to reformulate a sense of her own identity. Thus, while defining Finland and Finnish people, Willard is simultaneously defining herself and
describing America. Yet, the similarities between the familiar and the foreign are noticeable only when associated with such positive qualities as sophistication. Indeed, as already mentioned, she obtained her agreeable impressions mainly from the city environment and the urban Finns, who appeared more fashionable and elegant than the rural dancers.

As a conclusion, Willard states that the overall impression of Finland—in particular of its capital—and its people is positive: “We were much pleased with Helsingfors—and we thoroughly admired this garden full of Finns! Our views concerning Finland are completely changed” (397). Unsurprisingly, she soon after admits that prior to their visit to Finland, they “had no ideas whatever on the subject” (397). She admits her ignorance and confirms her lack of information about the region, its population, and its socio-political situation.

Like her few other travel articles published at this time, Willard’s “A Peep at Finland” is a short and rather shallow narrative. Although she claims to have been hungry for knowledge and to have enjoyed learning, Willard often demonstrates superficial and stereotypical views about Europe. For instance, in her notion about the “Old World” and the “New World,” she describes the monarchies of Catholic France and Italy as decadent and inferior in comparison to the democratic and Protestant America (Willard 1995, 274). These stereotypical impressions are noticeable in her journal entries as well as her travel writing. According to Earhart, “These articles showed immaturity; instead of discussing the life and customs of the people she visited and something of their social, political, and economic conditions, she wrote on such sterile themes as ‘The English Lakes.’ [. . .] Her style, moreover, was sentimental, verbose, and stilted” (1944, 95–96). Indeed, Willard’s article on Finland lacks information about the history and political position of the country under Russian rule. Instead, her text creates an idea of Finland detached from Russia. This manner of thinking, according to historian Jaakko Paavolainen, was common with foreign travelers visiting Finland even before its independence from Russia in 1917 (1973, 309). The lack of comments on the political situation may well be explained by her ignorance and disinterest concerning the topic.

In Willard’s text, the only indirect reference to Russian dominion over Finland is presented through the mention of the university as being the oldest in Russia. In addition, she includes a more direct, but extremely brief, description of a crowd of Russian officers—in their full, waist-girding uniforms—at the ball. One officer, who is the focus of the short passage, is described as “of medium height” but shorter than his dance partner; his head is said to be bald and dun, and his vanity is revealed through a mustache that is “tended with much care.” Willard (1869) creates an unflattering picture of a short, bald, and vain Russian officer with heavy dance movements (396). This contrasts with the images of the admirable captain, the refined Finnish city people, and even the swift rural dancers with their abundant locks.
Other than the fleeting mention of the Russian officers, there is no allusion to the socio-political situation of the country. The woman who subsequently would dedicate her career to improving the situation of the oppressed fails to notice the socio-political oppression inflicted on Finns. She also fails to notice how the earlier Swedish reign was still felt in Finland with the continuation of privileges that were granted only to a select few. Indeed, until 1809, before becoming a Russian domain, Finland had been under Swedish rule and, consequently, still maintained some Swedish legal structures. For example, it had a property-based voting rights system that placed the power in the hands of wealthy Swedish-speakers. This meant that the class-based political rights left three quarters of the population without any form of political representation (Sulkunen 1997, 12). The nationalist movement in the second half of the nineteenth century was dedicated to promoting the acceptance of Finnish as an official language, but also to the obtainment of political rights for all citizens, including women. Towards the end of the century, the Finnish temperance movement and labor movements, which developed within the nationalist movement, were non-gender-specific, and their goal was to obtain universal and equal voting rights for both men and women. But Willard’s narrative does not pay any particular attention to political or gender issues. Yet, on her way there, she had been eager to visit the grave of Fredrika Bremer (1801–1865), a Swedish novelist born in Finland. Bremer, whose fictional works explore gender issues and the situation of women, was one of the pioneers for women’s emancipation in the Nordic countries. Thus, it is quite significant that Willard was thinking of Bremer during her tour in Scandinavia. It demonstrates her budding interest and concern for women’s rights.

It is not until she reached Paris that Willard began to dedicate more of her time to the observation of women and the discussion of politics, alcohol use, and prostitution (Willard 1995, 272–74)—all topics that would become significant in her career. She met Anna Blackwell (1816–1900), who was working in Paris as a correspondent for American newspapers and was an active supporter of women’s emancipation. She organized a meeting between Willard and a French women’s rights leader, Julie Victoire Daubié (1824–74). Daubié is the author of such books as La femme pauvre au XIX siècle (The Poor Woman in the Nineteenth Century, 1866) and L’Emancipation de la femme (Woman’s Emancipation, 1871). The discussions with Blackwell and Daubié made Willard even more determined to work for women’s causes (Willard 1995, 273, 277, nn. 10–11). Subsequently, she incorporated arguments for women’s rights into her diaries. For example, on September 28, 1869, she wrote in her journal during her stay in Genoa: “I was never braver for the future nor half so well prepared in resolution and in intellect to do some service to my fellow-women” (Willard 1995, 318). The more than twenty volumes of her minute notes dealing with Europe served for the articles she wrote for newspapers and magazines and as the basis of the lectures and speeches she planned to give.
upon her return to the United States. She was determined to become involved in the “Woman Question” upon her return home. As she explained, her intention was “to talk in public of the matter. [. . .] Always, I have dimly felt it to be my vocation” (Willard [1889] 1970, 269; italics original). Willard accepted what she felt was her calling soon after she returned to America in September 1870.

During her European tour, Willard’s social concerns matured and her ideas about the “Woman Question” started to take form. She can be included among those women Siegel discusses, whose travels brought about change. Her sense of self was “sharpened by the journey” (Siegel 2004, 7). When visiting Europe, she hardly could have predicted the influence of her future career on women even in such remote northern countries as Finland. After her return to the United States, Willard became a public figure committed to the cause of prohibition while simultaneously working to institute reforms and to enlarge the scope of the Temperance Union to include women’s suffrage and labor reforms. She became distinguished as an educator, lecturer, writer, temperance leader, social reformer, promoter of women’s rights, and a founding president of Northwestern Ladies College. As president of the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), she traveled extensively in the United States and visited Europe repeatedly. In particular after her mother’s death in 1892, she spent much of her time in England, where she became actively involved in the British Women’s Temperance Association. Consequently, her contribution to women’s suffrage and dedication to reform work influenced women worldwide.

Her concern for the “Woman Question” in America and abroad was expressed for the first time in public in 1871 in her speech “The New Chivalry,” delivered at Charles Fowler’s Centenary Church. The speech was dedicated to European women and was based on her journal entries (see, for example, Gordon 1898, 71). Hence, she used her travel notes to form her political agenda concerning gender oppression, while she strove to get her voice heard. The tour had given Willard confidence and courage to reject the normative delineation of womanhood. She transgressed the confining definitions of women’s social position. Yet, unlike other women whose “trespass into the public realm of politics, speaking, and writing violated many critics’ ideas of appropriate femininity” (Steadman 2007, 8–9), Willard succeeded in reconciling her public role with her femininity, which enabled her acceptance by larger audiences, by both women and men.

Other public appearances followed “The New Chivalry” speech, and her career as lecturer and temperance leader was set in full motion in 1874 when she joined the newly founded Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. In her “Home Protection” speech, Willard urges women to take action and to protect their families; she encourages them to be strong, yet to simultaneously persevere with feminine sweetness. By introducing the petition for women’s vote not as a right but as a duty and a Christian virtue (see Bordin 1986, Marilley 1993, and Dow 1991),
women’s suffrage within the temperance movement was not perceived as a threat to the stabilized social order, traditional values, and the “true woman” myth.

At the annual national Temperance Union convention, she launched the “Do Everything” policy. At first, the slogan suggested the use of every possible method—lobbying, moral suasion, political and legal means—to reach set goals, whereas subsequently it was used to express the Temperance Union’s dedication to multiple reform causes (Bordin 1986, 130). Afterwards, Willard fought for several causes and wished to see different associations and unions join forces. Her emphasis was on the interconnectedness of the temperance, women’s rights, and labor movements.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, all reform movements (temperance, antiprostitution, abolitionism, and peace organizations) became progressively more international in scope. Willard worked within various organizations to improve the situation of women; she networked with others locally, nationally, and internationally. For instance, the first International Women’s Convention met in Washington, D.C., in March 1888. During the meeting, the participants agreed to establish a permanent International Council of Women. Seven out of the approximately sixty women present in the event were from Europe, two of them from Finland: the women’s rights advocates Alexandra Gripenberg and Alli Trygg-Helenius (Gripenberg [1889] 1954, 12–14). At the convention, Willard inspired the audience with her speech on temperance. Her recommendation that women unite was, to quote Gripenberg, “majestically effective,” and the “beloved” and “idolized” Willard succeeded in arousing “excited enthusiasm” among the audience (13, 17, 19). In this way, in the few decades following her visit abroad, she had become a powerful woman whose influence was felt not only in the United States but all over the world. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Frances Willard had become a national celebrity, and the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union had become the largest organization of women in the world.

The first regional White Ribbon association in Finland was founded in Turku in 1896, and the Finnish White Ribbon Union was founded approximately a decade later, in 1905 (McFadden 1999, 171–81). In her speech at the one hundred-year anniversary of the Finnish White Ribbon Union, which was celebrated on October 22, 2005, the president of the organization, Marja-Liisa Holopainen, summarized the history of the movement, while simultaneously paying tribute to Frances Willard:

White Ribbon work has been done in this country for a hundred years. It has been typical for this work that the ones engaged in it have seen the distress of people, noticed the longing for morning on their faces. These workers have often met people face to face. In 1905 the purpose of the Union was defined as the following: “Based on the word of God to work for women’s welfare in mental, spiritual and material respects,
to promote temperance and morality and work for a general sense of morality.” Despite some rephrasing that has been done over the years, the aim and purpose of the Union is still the same. [. . .] We have worked following the instructions of an American White Ribbon member, Frances Willard: “Do everything you can, open every door.” Therefore the White Ribbon work has included, for example, child and youth work and morality work. (2008)

In this way, the Finnish White Ribbon Union continues the dedicated work of assisting women and children in distress. In her speech, Holopainen underlines the importance of Willard’s role in giving the guidelines for White Ribbon organizations in countries outside the United States and setting the example to follow. Particular emphasis is given to her “Do Everything” policy.

Willard hardly could have predicted the extent of her contribution to social reform or that her name would be remembered for over one hundred years among Finnish women following in her footsteps and working for the same causes. As a consequence of the influence of Frances Willard’s work, the contribution of many men and women dedicated to the cause of universal suffrage, and the efforts of the many mass organizations active in Finland at the turn of the twentieth century, in 1906 Finland became the first European country to grant women not only the right to vote but also the full right for women to stand for elective (parliamentary) office. In addition, women all over the world continue to recognize Willard for her involvement in and contribution to numerous reform causes and her unwavering commitment to obtaining the right for women to vote.

Although the welfare of women was not among her main concerns at the time of her tour, Willard took her first steps towards becoming a public figure when publishing her travel articles. As scholars have pointed out, other women in the nineteenth century “began their careers with travel writing and sought the expanded audience and greater voice in public debates” (Steadman 2007, 166). Furthermore, the tour was significant for Willard’s identity formation. As Cheng argues: “More than just an act of physical movement, travel also implies transience, transgression, and deviance” (2004, 125). In the short and rather shallow narrative on Finland, Willard already demonstrates her interest in people, their behavior, manners, and educational background. Although still ignorant of the socio-political concerns of the countries she visited, her travel articles remain important documentaries not only of the travel destinations but also of the period’s America, its society, ideals, prejudices, and racial beliefs. The comparisons between America and Europe that appear in her travel texts formed the basis for her future endeavors that grew from local to national to international concerns. It can be argued that first her travel writing, then her speeches offered her readers and listeners a model of female mobility, autonomy,
and courage; her career provided a model of female activism. The influential and international career of Frances Willard was, then, dedicated to leading all women towards empowerment, towards inclusion in full and active citizenship.

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ABSTRACT
This article examines the notion of Karelia as a mythical place, an idea that has been crafted in the memories of the war-time migrants of Karelia, and, through the narratives told by the migrants, in the minds of their descendants, friends, and acquaintances. Further, this mythical idea of Karelia has been manifested in a kind of Finnish nationalism.

Karelia, an area between Finland and Russia, has often been described in the writing of Finnish history in the following terms: borderland, battlefield, between the East and the West, and focal point. These labels date back to the end of the fifteenth century, when the East and West—in other words, Novgorod and Sweden—struggled for commercial and political power among the tribes living in the geographical area of Karelia. This area was also a field for two distinct religious traditions, the Eastern Orthodox and the Western Roman Catholic, which coexisted until the Second World War (Korpela 2004, 316–17; Lähteenmäki 2009, 9–28; Sihvo 1994, 47). Even in Finnish daily conversation, Karelian identity is almost always distinguished from Swedish, Finnish, or Russian. Further, for historical reasons, Karelia should be considered an entity that is culturally connected to both Finland and Russia. This fact is also shown in the names of Finnish Karelia and Russian Karelia. Both Karelias are divided into several smaller parts depending how Karelia is defined (Heikkinen 1989, 16; Hämynen 1994, 17–19; Kangaspuro 2000, 38; Saarikivi 2004; Sallinen-Gimpl 1994, 16–17).

Karelia holds a special place in Finnish memory, Finnish nationalist thinking, and the Finnish imagination. The term Karelianism is used of the national romantic interest in Karelia—particularly in the Dvina and Olonets regions of Eastern Karelia—in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It reflected the national romantic sentiment prevailing at that time in the Autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland within the Russian Empire. Karelianism flourished, in particular, during the so-called years of oppression at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of
the twentieth. This movement connected the Finnish intelligentsia in a broad way, since artists, folklorists and collectors of folklore, natural scientists, and linguists all headed for Karelia, inspired by the nationalist spirit. The Kalevala, the Finnish national epic compiled by Elias Lönnrot, was the main source of inspiration for this cultural Karelianism, and the living roots of ancient Finnishness were imagined to be located in Karelia. In other words, Karelianism provided a means by which to create a mythical past for the Grand Duchy (see Jussila 1999, 56–60, 87–91; Sihvo 2003).

In its extreme form, the idea of Karelianism developed into an irredentist movement aspiring to create a larger Finland with Karelia as a part of it. ¹ Political aspirations became intertwined with cultural interests. Early political Karelianism strove to promote the interests of the Autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland. Later, the objectives of political Karelianism became more radical with the birth of the idea of an independent Finland, separate from Russia as a nation and a state. This nationalist radicalization was accompanied by the idea of creating Greater Finland, including Eastern Karelia (Jussila 1999, 56–60, 87–91; Fingerroos 2011, 486).

Even though the phenomenon of Karelianism goes back to the nineteenth century, the word itself was first used in 1939 by Professor Yrjö Hirn. He referred to the Finnish artists of the early twentieth century as “the Karelianists” and Kalevala romantics. Among these figures were, for example, painters Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Pekka Halonen, and Eero Järnefelt, authors Eino Leino and Juhani Aho, and composer Jean Sibelius. Today they are all canonized figures of Finnish culture (Hirn 1939, 207–8; Fingerroos 2011, 486–87).

The starting point for this article is the notion that the collectors of cultural heritage—artists and folklore collectors—have not always regarded the Karelian Isthmus, which is considered culturally Finnish, as valuable as the model areas of Dvina Karelia (Viena) and the exotic Olonets Karelia (Aunus). These “distant Karelias” are located farther to the east and north, i.e., in the periphery, far from Finland and the Finnish. For example, the older Karelian folklore, recorded in the Finnish heritage archives, mainly focuses on the regionally peripheral Karelias, and, therefore, homogenous images have been created of Karelia in later decades. This image of Karelia was broken only in the 1990s, when scholars collected the travel experiences of migrant Karelians in and around Karelia as well as the memories of migrant widows (Fingerroos 2004, 156–58).

The underlying theme of this article is motion: on a journey in Karelia or a journey to Karelian identity. I discuss the later stage of Karelianism in Finnish

¹ August Vilhelm Ervasti, a Finnish journalist and explorer, can be defined as one of the first Karelianists. In the summer of 1897, he made an expedition to the villages of Dvina Karelia and recorded his observations for latter publication (see Ervasti 2005). Ervasti is an important figure because in his travel account he constructed something that can be defined as a prototype of the Karelian issue. Ervasti’s ideas provided an ideological basis for many future Karelianists (Laaksonen 2005, 14–15).
memory, and I show how the focus on Karelia has changed since the Grand Duchy. My hypothesis is that Karelianism flourishes in present-day Finland. It is intertwined with the personal memories of a lost place, even with nostalgia. Phenomena related to Karelianism can be detected both at the national level, in discussions of issues regarding the past, and in the stories and memories shared at the grassroots level. This new Karelia is located in the areas ceded to Russia in the Second World War and now behind the Russian border.

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The outcome of the Continuation War (1941–44) was a defeat for Finland. According to the terms of the armistice, signed in Moscow on September 19, 1944, Finland lost about 12 percent of its territory. In particular, the loss of the relatively densely populated Karelian Isthmus and the city of Vyborg to the Soviet Union was a crushing blow. In addition to the material losses, the resettlement of the Karelian evacuees presented a demanding challenge. The resettlement of over four-hundred thousand people was not only economically burdensome, but psychologically difficult (Kivimäki 2011, 1–2, 44–45).

Especially in the immediate postwar period, the yearning of the Karelian evacuees to return home was strong, and it was also considered an open and realistic option. Before the final peace terms were confirmed in 1947, the evacuees and many other Finns cherished a hope that the border question would be reconsidered to their benefit. Politicians representing the Karelian evacuees initiated discussions about restitution as early as the summer of 1945, and the Finnish Karelian League (“Karjalan Liitto”), a non-governmental organization established after the Winter War in 1940 to further the cause of the Karelian evacuees, actively propagated the issue. The Finnish government, prime ministers, and President Urho Kekkonen also repeatedly took issue with the restitution of the Karelian Isthmus in postwar Finland. Until the 1970s, the issue of restitution of the ceded areas was discussed in the Finnish public sphere. However, no positive results regarding Karelia could be reached. From the 1970s onwards until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the issue of restitution disappeared from public discussion (Nevalainen 2009, 495–96; Fingerroos 2011, 491–93).

In the 1990s, after the Soviet Union collapsed, the Karelia issue entered a new phase. The independence regained by the nearby Baltic States redrew national borders. In light of the radical political turn in Russia and the Baltic countries, a small group of Finnish organizations and private citizens began to again discuss the possibility of restitution. This wave of attention to the Karelia issue gave birth to public proclamations and calculations in support of restitution. Proponents received support from a couple of academic historians, who conducted politically motivated research on the issue. All in all, the restitution of Karelia as a political program has
been limited to the activities of small, but vocal groups, striking a chord with a few politicians coming from an evacuee background (Nevalainen 2009, 519; Fingerroos 2011, 493–94).

The Karelias that lie across the border have played a central role in Finnish nationalism, and these Karelias have been politically charged places for various interests and aspirations. I argue further that even today Karelianism occupies an important place in Finnish minds and the national memory when the Finns define their contemporary national identity. Karelia is in many ways remote and is therefore reminiscent of a fantasy. In fact, the Karelia across the border is an imagined place: an abstract utopia, with which Finland has obsessed from the late nineteenth century onwards.

**Oral History and Place**

In Finland, my research represents a novel approach to Karelia. A new generation of Karelia researchers within the field of humanities considers Karelia a cradle for Karelian myths and, thus, an interesting area for reconsideration. In this article, I discuss the new images of Karelia that have been constructed by the stories and reminiscences of the migrant Karelians evacuated from the Finnish Karelia ceded to the Soviet Union after the Second World War; the Finns who were the audience of these stories; and also the Russians living in Karelia at present. In addition, I examine non-Karelians’ experiences of how Karelia and knowledge of it connect Finns of various backgrounds.

My central concepts are oral history and place, and I use these concepts as analytical tools to study Karelianism. In analyzing these concepts, I apply my hypothesis of the bloom of Karelianism in present-day Finland. I use the concept of *oral history* as a general term for all the information related to the recollection of an event, and I always attach it to the narrator’s own or shared experiences. In accordance with Finnish practice, I use the term *oral history* to refer to all interpretations of the past, i.e., to interpretations that are produced by laypersons and to histories based on remembered information or to research conducted by academics. The recollection process takes place in a specific time, and it focuses on re-producing the past (Fingerroos and Haanpää 2006; Portelli 1997, 3–23; Portelli 2002, 63–73).

Oral history researchers are always interested in the polyphony of the past: they do not necessarily seek facts from remembered data or attempt to construct the truth about the past. Oral historians examine both the past and their own times simultaneously. They are also interested in why these narratives are still recounted. Alessandro Portelli links remembered information to time spans, and particularly to the subjectivity of the narrator and the listener. Portelli asks whether we should at all trust the source value of memory. Portelli’s answer is a positive one in that he considers remembered information a reliable source material, which must however
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be approached in an appropriate manner. Remembered information tells us what the narrators wanted to do at the time of the event, what they believed at the time of the event, or what they, at the time of narration (when recalling the past events), believed that they were doing at the time of the event. Portelli himself suggests that subjectivity is actually more relevant to the past than clear facts. What people believe in their reminiscences contains more information than what actually happened (Portelli 2002, 67–70). The researcher is thus obliged to take account of the subjectivity of the narrator in producing scientific truth from remembered data.

Place, on the other hand, is defined from the perspective of human geography, and it is regarded as a space with a variety of meanings attached to it (Tilley 1994). Place becomes significant through individual experience. Place is a socially constructed expression that is an integrated part of people’s everyday life. Therefore, the interpretation of place includes both subjective and social dimensions, and place cannot be understood without them. In other words, the nature of place depends on the person who experiences it and the way he or she experiences it: a place does not exist without relations, and, essentially, place is restricted by the human vision and consciousness.

Typically, a place anchored in memory can become a place of memory, which always has connections with the experiences and signification processes of both individuals and communities. I have constructed an analytical tool from the concept place of memory (see Fingerroos 2008). First, in my interpretation, a place of memory is a construction, i.e., a place (re)produced in reminiscences. Writing, speaking, and constructing are also means of producing places of memory. In addition, I use the concept of place of memory as an expression that includes both subjective and social dimensions, depending on whose perspective the place is produced from in the reminiscences.

Many Generations of Travelers
The Karelia beyond the border lives most strongly in the memories of migrant Karelians and in the reminiscences passed to the next generation. Therefore, it is possible to claim that the migrant Karelians make up a generation who experienced Karelia and lived the Second World War, and as a result they share a common experience. In Mannheim’s classic terms, a generation with experience is born when

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2 Pierre Nora, a French historian, has used the concept lieux de mémoire (sites of memory) in his monumental work of seven volumes about the loci memoriae of France, entitled Les lieux de mémoire (1984–92). Sites of memory include: places such as archives, museums, palaces, cemeteries, and memorials; concepts and practices such as commemorations, generations, mottos, and all rituals; objects such as inherited property, commemorative monuments, manuals, emblems, basic texts, and symbols (see Nora 1996; 1998). Ulla-Maija Peltonen, a Finnish folklorist and oral historian, has developed Nora’s idea in her book titled Muistin paikat (Places of memory; see Peltonen 2003). I use the concept place of memory (not sites of memory) as an expression, which includes subjective interpretations of the place.
people of the same age share a key experience. In other words, the same age by itself is not adequate for the creation of a bond; a key experience, lived and experienced together, is also needed (Mannheim 1952; Virtanen 2001, 22–23, 30). This might be, for example, a rupture in society that creates a feeling of belonging together among people of the same age. Migrant Karelians are connected by the key experiences related to their role as refugees: the past lived in the lost areas of Karelia, war, loss of home, and their settlement in Finland. They share a generation experience that is very strong and that can be cherished, for instance, by making home district travels to Karelia. Experiences of the past are passed on, in particular, to children and grandchildren but also to the neighbors in the new homes. The Karelia beyond the border is an important place and, in particular, an important image to many people.

In 1992, the Finnish Literature Society organized a collection of stories of home district journeys to Karelia. The theme of the collection was travels to Karelia. The first trips were made in the 1950s, but mass tourism to the Karelian Isthmus started in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Society received 432 answers to its request, and these answers comprise 5,961 pages of text in 27 bindings (Lehto and Timonen 1993). The researchers of the folklore archives, Liisa Lehto and Senni Timonen, have gone through this material, and they have presented their views in an article in Finnish “Kertomus matkasta kotiin: Karjalaiset vieraina omilla maillaan” (A journey home: Karelians as visitors in their own land) (1993). The authors detected an internal logic in the experiences of different generations in this wide collection. The generation that grew up in Karelia carries with them the memories of the time lived in Karelia. In home district journeys to Karelia, their memory searches for the home grounds and the shapes of other familiar landmarks, such as the familiar church, shop, or school. The middle generation was also born in Karelia or on the evacuation journey, but their memories are anchored in childhood and early adolescence. Therefore, their descriptions are journeys to childhood. The youngest generation was not born in Karelia, and, therefore, the lost place is the Karelia of narratives. Karelian identity is familiarity and consciousness of the language, habits, the village, and the people who lived there (Lehto and Timonen 1993, 92–93).

It is also possible to categorize the experiences of the Karelia travelers in another way in regard to the generations. There are three generations with experiences, at best even four: migrant Karelians who were born before the Second World War, their children, their grandchildren, and their great-grandchildren. In addition, it is possible to consider the experiences of the different generations, for instance, how the siblings see and present their common home, the familiar places, the landscape, and, of course, their Karelia. On the other hand, it is possible to impugn the whole process of classifying the memories into particular groups because each individual’s experience of Karelia is unique. The experiences and the narrations of experiences create subjective reality and meanings, on the basis of which it is impossible to
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construct a coherent Karelia of memories and experiences (Fingerroos 2003, 2006).

**Expansion of Karelian Identity**

The Johannes Society is one of the municipality societies founded by migrant Karelians in Finland after the Second World War. The constitution of the society states that its purpose is to act as (a) a uniting forum for people with their roots in Johannes and for the friends of Karelia and Karelian identity; (b) to collect and store home district heritage, history, and cultural values related to Johannes; and (c) to strengthen and preserve the cultural identity anchored in the region of Johannes even among future generations (Fingerroos 2006; Johannes Society/regulations: 2 §). The membership consists of several hundred of people who have their roots in Johannes as well as their descendants around Finland. The activities of the society follow the calendar year. The autumn and winter season includes dances, pre-Christmas travel, a variety of meetings for members, shopping excursions to Vyborg, and cultural trips, for instance, to Tallinn and St. Petersburg. The spring season commences with a cruise to Sweden, and it ends in an ice-fishing trip to the islands of Johannes. The climax of the calendar year is the annual summer party of Johannes. In addition, there are home district journeys to Karelia and visits by the veterans to the battlefields of the Second World War.

On the other hand, the number of members has steadily declined over the past years, as it does in many district societies when the migrants get older. Because the migrant Karelians are worried about such a decline, there has been a lot of discussion about Karelian identity and the importance of its preservation. The action plan of the Johannes Society states that in the future a major challenge for the society will be the recruitment of new members and the development of the work so as to get the younger members involved in the activities (Fingerroos 2006; Johannes Society / annual report 2003). Further, the board of the society frequently discusses the marketing of events to outsiders. The latest activities in the society involve cooperation with the relocation municipalities—municipalities in which the Karelian migrants settled after their evacuation. For example, the society arranges a journey to Russian Karelia every other summer, a trip primarily intended for non-Karelians in the relocation municipalities. These trips are made to the homes of migrant Karelians and to the ruins of churches. The participants also become acquainted with the conditions of the present-day inhabitants of Johannes (renamed Sovietski by the new occupants) and the local government.

I participated in a municipality trip in the summer of 2003. A colleague of mine, who is an ethnologist, also participated in the excursion, and we wrote a short description of the journey together. In this report we stated that we were preoccupied by myths, in particular their reverse side. We wanted to shake them up, because Karelia to us appeared to be a Karelia of contradictions. On the one hand, Karelia manifests itself as the object of the narratives by our Karelian grandparents where
our personal feelings are deeply anchored. On the other hand, myths and utopias appear as challenges, an opportunity to test the limits of our understanding and endurance. “Although we talk about our Karelia as the Isthmus, we do not reject the shadier sides of the myth. For example, Vyborg has been called the city of light and shadows in architecture. It is equally possible to perceive light and shadows as part of time, place, and mythical speech, more specifically as part of the whole history of the Isthmus or even the whole of Finland” (Fingerroos and Torkki 2003, 11).

A completely different type of description was written by a non-Karelian woman who participated in the journey. Her writing appeared in a local paper of migrant Karelians at the same time as our report was published in the publication series of the University of Turku. The woman assumed in her text that the motive for non-Karelians to make this “home district journey” was based on a desire to become acquainted with the home district of migrant Karelians: “[. . .] to touch the land where the ancestors of so many fellow travelers rest” (Karjalainen-Manninen 2003, 5). She combines the perspectives of the inhabitants of the relocation communities, migrant Karelians, and the present inhabitants of Sovietski in an interesting way. Also, she shows that Karelia cannot be understood in a simple way. Personally, she wanted to experience being part of a place that has been lost and that still lives in the memories of migrant Karelians and is mediated to their neighbors in relocation communities through narratives. This place used to belong to us, in particular, to the Karelians, and I could make this journey again whenever an opportunity arises. In conclusion, Karelia is magnetic, and it has something that intrigues people. This non-Karelian woman shows in her text that these travels to Karelia constitute a new bloom of Karelianism and Karelian identity in a different form: "It is possible to experience Karelia for a brief and vivid moment" (Karjalainen-Manninen 2003, 5). Basically, any Finn can become part of this “Karelia experience” notwithstanding their roots.

A JOURNEY TO THE PAST OF THE HOME VILLAGE
The home village beyond the border in Karelia constitutes a concrete form of a place of memory anchored in the past. This is one of the explanations given for the interest in the past of the home village (Hämynen 1999, 7–8; Makkonen, Pekkinen, and Raninen-Siiskonen, 1999, 10–13; Fingerroos 2004). The central and probably the most visible sign of this interest is the village books of Karelia. In effect, there are only a few villages in the Karelia beyond the border that do not have their own written history. The writers have been Karelians themselves or professional historians carefully selected by Karelians either from their own extended family or from the circle of acquaintances. Many reasons have been given for the popularity of these village histories. One explanation is derived from the changing society: people want to escape such modern social phenomena as unemployment, pollution, and the
overwhelming power of technology. In this way of thinking, history is regarded as a valuable source or channel for a dignified and meaningful future (Hämynen 1999, 7; Katajala 1990, 90).

In my view, the village histories of Karelia deserve the status of a genre in the literature concerning the past. These histories were written voluntarily, and they emphasize the uniqueness of the home village and its people with a distinct and personal view of the past. These books offer an opportunity for a kind of time travel to the past, and, at the same time, they bring the past to the present.

What then is the relationship of academic research to these local histories and village books written by Karelians? One answer is provided by Pirkko Kanervo, a historian with her roots in Johannes, in a local paper Johannekselainen. She outlines a history book about Johannes and the identity of people from Johannes in the independent Finland:

The task of local history is usually to serve both the science of history and the home district interests of the inhabitants, whereas this new book on Johannes would cherish the memory of Johannes. The former inhabitants would mediate the information of their home district to the new generations: the narrative of Johannes with decades-long ache and longing. (Kanervo 2002, 1)

Kanervo’s text claims that in their writings migrant Karelians cherish the memory of the home district, mediate information about the home district to future generations, and express the longing and utopian dreams anchored in the places of memory. Memories, longing, and experiences force and partly even obligate Karelians to write a history of their past. In addition, the past is mediated to outsiders—in effect, to any Finn.

A few years ago, I was involved in writing a village book on the home village of my migrant Karelian grandmother. The publication of the book was a great event in my present home village; half of the villagers were migrant Karelians, and their past was now bound into a book. The edition was small, it was sold out immediately, and therefore, most of the non-Karelians in the village were left without a copy. So, for example, my next-door neighbor, who is already an old man, acquired a library card so that he would be able to read the book. Discussion about the Karelia beyond the border was lively as well in non-Karelian homes. Many of the non-Karelian residents later visited the places in Karelia that are described in the book.

Another important aspect in Kanervo’s writing is the notion that the interest in local history also serves “the science of history” (2002, 1). Finnish historians and cultural researchers constantly debate who in Finland has the right to make legitimate interpretations of the past and what kind of attitude scholars should take
towards Karelians’ own interpretations of the past, which appear in village books, newspapers, and memoirs. In the twenty-first century, the intelligentsia do not place Karelians or poetry-writing lower-class citizens as they used to in the golden days of Karelianism over a century ago. Instead, folk history lives side-by-side with academic research, and both laypersons and professional historians have their own significance in producing fruitful and meaningful interpretations of the past. As a result, the experience of loss and its descriptions contribute to a more diverse interpretation of the past and Karelia (Fingerroos 2006).

The utopias produced in popular descriptions are of a different type than the descriptions Karelianists provided a hundred years ago. Karelianists engulfed individual experience and everyday life in the sublime idealism of tribes, colonial aspirations, and Karelianism. In the twenty-first century, humanistic Karelia research also allows descriptions of unique experiences and concreteness, that is, the experiences of everyday life.

**Black Monument Tourism**

In Karelia, new monuments are being erected in the graveyards, on the ruins of former churches, and on the battlefields of the Second World War. Journeys to Karelia are primarily made to the places of memory with monuments and markers. Jarkko Pihlaja wrote in *Helsingin Sanomat* in May 2004 how the graveyards of the ceded Karelia are at risk of destruction: “About four hundred graveyards remained in Karelia,” and, for example, the graves by the church of Kivennapa were left under a road and under a cultural palace, which is now already decayed. There is a water tower at the site of the church, and the tower block partly covers the graveyard (Pihlaja 2004).

In tourism studies, the term *black destinations* is used when the destinations for tourism are related to death—for example, graveyards or places where a lot of people were killed. Tourism related to war and death has also been called *black tourism* (Raivo 2002). In July 2004 *Suomen Kuvalehti* published an extensive story on a festival arranged in Ihantala to commemorate the battle of June 29, 1944 (Lindstedt 2004, 44–51). The story focused on Timo Närhinsalo, a middle-aged Finnish man, who journeyed to his father’s last battlefield. The mortally-wounded man was taken to a war hospital only two days before his son, Närhinsalo, was born. The journalist (Lindstedt) interprets the content of the commemoration in an interesting way, and when one reads his text, the underlying tone of severity is almost palpable. He writes:

> To describe the occasion as impressive is inadequate, as festive is too common. The hardest part is the silent knowledge [. . .]. There will be no 10-year-commemorations any more. How and where will the memories be preserved so that the meanings will survive?
A lot of similar writings related to the memory of the ceded Karelia have been published in local papers as well as in papers with a more extensive readership.

The ritualism related to black tourism is brought to the homes of both Finns and the Russian inhabitants of the ceded area. War, cession of areas, and the lost Karelia are visible in the media, and this forces the Finns to stop and think about their history. Brave comments are made on the issue of Karelia, and utopias are turned into politics. For example, a well-known, centrist politician Alpo Rusi wrote in the first issue of *Karelia Klubi Sanomat* in 2004: “A kind of Karelia Watch Forum should be established in Finland to examine, report and forward the discussion of the issue of Karelia” (Rusi 2004, 4). The editor of the paper, Veikko Saksi, made a distinct declaration: “We feel that this moment is historical since this is the first paper whose major purpose is to create a new culture around the aim of restoring the ceded areas” (Saksi 2004, 2). There is no way of escaping Karelia, since the media bring it to our living rooms in the same manner as the death of Diana or the tsunami in Asia. In conclusion, can there exist more distinct evidence of the vitality of the utopia of Karelia in Finland?

**“The Karelian Isthmus is Ours, the Karelian Isthmus is Yours”**

The natural title for the last section of my article is a fragment of a poem by the Finnish national poet, Eino Leino. The title came naturally and it slightly confused me, because it raised a question in my mind: “What interpretations does this poem challenge us to make?” The discussions above show that the Karelia that lies across the border has played a central role in Finnish political history ever since the years of oppression at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. In the first phase of Karelianism, the cultural imagination and the corresponding political activities centered in Eastern Karelia. The Finnish cultural elite searched a mythical past for the Finnish nation in Karelia. After the Second World War, Karelia became a place of memory for the Karelian evacuees—a place preserved in their memories and narratives. These memories are fundamentally different from the abstract national and political utopias of the earlier Karelianists, for they are connected with the people’s concrete experience of losing a home. These memories are always personal, and often intertwined with dreams of returning home.

Today, Karelia lives vividly in the experiences of migrant Karelians and in the minds of scholars on Karelia, the descendants of migrant Karelians, the inhabitants of relocation areas, and Finns in general. Karelia is considered from several perspectives, and it is not axiomatic that the myth can be deconstructed. Therefore, Finns are living the bloom of Karelianism after the wars of 1939–45. I argue that even today Karelia occupies an important place of memory in Finnish minds, when the Finns define their identity.
In particular, the Isthmus and other lost areas take their form through the narratives of migrant Karelians but also through the concrete journeys made there. The journey beyond the border is a momentary transfer to the past of the migrant Karelian who lives next door. It is possible to experience Karelia. Around place, memory, history, and myth, any Finn can become a Karelian, a Karelia buff, or a member of a neotribe. Therefore, I claim that the mental bond of postmodern Finns with the mythical Karelia has been transferred from the *Kalevala*'s mythical lands in the north hundreds of kilometers to the south. The newest Karelia includes not only the abstract myth of the loss experienced by the whole nation but also a momentary opportunity for shared feelings concerning the loss of migrant Karelians and all Finland.

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TRADITIONAL DREAM
NARRATION AND INTERPRETATION

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ABSTRACT
This article focuses on popular dream narration and interpretation, drawing from material gathered in Finland. The Finnish Folklore Archives and university students provided some of the examples, and others are from responses to questionnaires in newspapers and women’s magazines.

Attitudes toward dream traditions are most often learned at home. Many people look upon their dreams as messages containing the key to the future, but “true” and recurring dreams are also fairly widespread. People typically used to think that “dream symbols” were their own, even though most symbols are common to various cultures. I examine some dream symbols, old and new, with the interpretations assigned to them, and show by means of examples how everyday reality is reflected in the dream narratives told by Finns.

Opinions vary on what dreams are, on their origins, and on the nature of dream and waking reality. Researchers have defined dream as “series of thoughts, images or emotions occurring during sleep accompanied by rapid eye movement (REM-sleep)” (Webb 2007). J. Allan Hobson gives “the most broad, general, and indisputable definition of dreaming: mental activity occurring in sleep” (2002, 7). Though dreaming is familiar to all, people, when telling of their dreams, do not give precise explanations for them in their own words. Yet all have some idea of the significance of dreams.

Examining dreams from a folkloristic perspective, I see them as part of the cultural heritage surrounding human intercourse and transmitted during direct interaction and through dream books.1 By the phrase dream book I mean an alphabetical index in which the main topic of the dream is reduced to a single headword (such as Almanac/Diary) equipped with an interpretation (reading it incurs effort and

1 Dreams are also described in myths, folktales, epics, canonic books, hagiographies, and pure and psychological literature, all of which are beyond the scope of the present study.
Popular dream narration and interpretation bear many of the characteristics of folklore: dreams are part of the personal experience narrative tradition and contain both idiosyncratic symbols and symbols that are culture-bound, anonymous in origin, highly stereotyped, and passed on from one person to another. By symbol I mean here a detail picked out by the narrator because he or she feels it forebodes something in the future. The models available for dreams demanding an interpretation are, furthermore, both individual and part of the collective tradition. There are some cultural differences to which I shall return later.

In a historical perspective, the classification of dream experiences has occupied researchers from many fields. The results are all more or less arbitrary and culturally biased. I shall use four categories, with the focus on the first three: (1) prophetic dreams; (2) precognitive dreams; (3) recurring dreams; and (4) nightmares and stress dreams. It could, generally speaking, be said that prophetic and precognitive dreams were “true” dreams as opposed to false ones. Prophetic dreams tell about the future, often through symbols. Precognitive dreams often show in a realistic way what is going to happen. Recurring dreams refer to a more introspective aspect of dream understanding. “Bad dreams” range from stressful experiences to dreams that are confused and provoke terror. All the categories may overlap from case to case.

(1) Prophetic dreams. Many people look upon a nocturnal dream as a message containing the key to the future. These prophetic dreams, as they are called, contain symbolism, i.e., some elements that lead the dreamer to believe or expect that “something” will happen soon. The following example illustrates this:

In 1944 I was in a hospital. My father had been to visit me a month before. One morning I dreamt that my left front tooth fell out. I wept because I was no longer beautiful, because I had had exceptionally beautiful teeth. My crying woke me up and I recalled an old belief: losing a front tooth in a dream means your father or mother is going to die. I woke at 6 in the hospital. My father and mother lived in different parts of the country. At 7 my mother phoned the hospital from Kemijärvi to say that my father’s landlady had phoned from Nokia to say that Father had died as the result of a bad fall the previous day.

My basic material includes two questionnaires: (1) a questionnaire placed in an evening paper (Iltasanomat) and a women’s magazine (Anna) in 1987; (2) the replies to the same questionnaire by students of folkloristics at various universities. In the questionnaire I asked the following: (a) What do the dreams mean to you? (b) Are you familiar with any dream books? (c) Did you know anyone who could interpret dreams? (d) Have you ever had a dream come true? (e) Have you had any recurring dreams? In addition, I asked for examples of dreams. I have also made use of the folk belief collections in the Folklore Archive of the Finnish Literature Society, which includes information on old popular symbols and dream interpretation traditions.

The dream examples are taken from material in the writer’s possession.
The elements of this example, typical of a prophetic dream, are the narrator’s regret at the loss of a tooth and her recollection the moment she wakes up of the traditional interpretation of this symbol. And soon it turns out to be true. In most cases in traditional material, “loss of a tooth” dreams such as this are taken as a symbol of death. Bad omens are mentioned often, good ones seldomly. But if the omen does not come true, the dream may be forgotten, because there is nothing then to tell about.

(2) Precognitive dreams. People relate dreams in which some detail directly pointed to some forthcoming event. These precognitive dreams are commonly known as realistic dreams. The realism of dreams is sometimes so astonishing that a precognitive dream may stick in the memory for decades in just the same way as a prophetic dream. The following narrator sent in four precognitive dreams dated 1930, 1935, 1943, and 1968. The oldest of these narratives goes as follows:

I cracked my number five tooth on a nut. There was a certain Dr. Forsten in Turku at the time, and we girls all thought he was wonderful. So of course I went to him. He said he would have to do a gold crown, but that it would cost 750 marks. At that time I was getting paid 200 marks as an apprentice. Being shy, I did not have the courage to say I couldn’t afford it. I managed to borrow the money and my tooth was crowned. The previous night I had a dream in which Dr. Forsten said it cost 450 marks and I bought some golden shoes with the rest of the money. Dr. Forsten’s bill really was for 450 marks, and so I bought the golden dancing shoes costing 300 marks.

The dream itself is here reduced to the summary, “Dr. Forsten said it cost 450 marks, and I bought some golden shoes with the rest of the money,” and most of the narrative describes the background and the events after the dream came true. The seamless merging of the dream and waking reality give the narrative its point. In other words, this, as in the other precognitive dreams, is what makes it worth telling.

The motifs of precognitive dreams seem to cover every walk of life. The majority of these dreams are again precursors of accidents, sickness, and death. Precognition may be characterized by some concrete detail, such as the color or cut of a blouse, finding lost keys, or a black clay cockerel on a client’s desk.

(3) Recurring dreams. The third type that appeals to the human mind is recurring dreams. The following is an example:

A big building, like a mansion, with several floors below ground. Vast rooms, high doors one after the other, as I wander along through the house.
The dream, written down by a student, completely lacks an interpretation and any comments to the reader. All the elements of oral communication are also missing, and the dream report is generalizing in tone, denoting the recurring nature of the dream. People who do not consider dreams important and who never have prophetic dreams may recall some dream that has repeated itself from time to time. One always dreams of a child with black hair as an omen of illness, another always has a particular dream while running a fever, and in many cases, stress repeatedly triggers various dreams tinged with the feeling of failure and anxiety. A recurring dream experience may also be colored by a momentary event, such as the pleasure of driving a car or a frightening journey in an elevator that moves of its own accord. Some people have recurring dreams about flying. One is the Finnish writer Aulikki Oksanen, who said in an interview in the weekly supplement to Finland’s leading daily, *Helsingin Sanomat:*

I was flying in a different way from before. It called for control of my muscles. I tried to explain to the people watching that this is flying, too. Usually I push off with the balls of my feet. I don’t know what the dream meant. (*Nyt*)

Oksanen’s short narrative communicates that she has recurring dreams about flying. As an artist, she has an audience, of course, and has to explain to them why this style is unusual.

When people tell of their dreams, they do not categorize, but they do debate the nature of the dream in their comments and interpretations. The narratives of different dream experiences are so numerous that they cannot all be classified. Nightmares are yet another category, but the borders between all these types are far from fixed. However, there is also a group of dreams worth telling about: those that, because of their unusual contents, awaken people’s astonished interest. One thing they all have in common is that they arouse joy, fear, or wonder in the dreamer, whether they coincide with some event, are experiences of achieving success or of being late, include messages from beyond the grave, or are nightmares. Popular classifications such as these prove how important dreams are believed to be; examples also exist among the ancient Greeks, Assyrians, and Egyptians (Kilborne 1987, 173–74).

**Dreams and Culture**

The majority of dream symbols are international and have been recorded in different eras and parts of the world. A dream is shaped by the dreamer’s life situation, and the settings and nuances, colors and moods vary. A narrated dream cannot be understood by someone unfamiliar with the dreamer’s social and cultural background: the dream
of a Zuñi Indian cannot be automatically equated with the experience of a Finnish dreamer. Attitudes towards dreams and the significance attached to them vary considerably from one culture to another. We may roughly speak of three main categories according to the value placed on dream and waking reality. The first category consists of cultures in which dreams are given a greater reality value than the waking state. An example is the Mojave, an Indian culture of the American Colorado River Basin. Culture as a meaningful way of life is validated only in dreams. Through their interpretation, dreams also control the waking life of Mojave Indians. The second category corresponds to cultures in which dreams occupy a status equal to that of the waking state. This is the case with the Philippine Negritos, among whom there is continuity between the waking state and dreaming, and these realities may influence one another. Sickness or some other misfortune may, for example, be transferred from the waking reality to the dream in the hope that a solution will be found in sleep to the needs of the waking hours. A waking ritual or sacrifice may, in turn, placate the spirits and giants who dwell in dreams. The third category covers cultures such as that of Finland in which the significance of dreams is considered to be less than that of the waking state. Insofar as we attach any significance at all to dreams, we usually regard them as a pale or distorted reflection of our waking lives. And our waking lives as a rule carry more weight than our dreams (O’Nell 1976, 23–24).

There are considerable cultural differences even between neighbouring nations, as regards, for example, the origin and value of dreams. Finns proved in a Nordic comparison to be far more favorably disposed towards dreams than their neighboring Swedes, and the Icelandic cultural tradition surrounding dreams is richer than that of the Finns, even though we do, in many respects, regard the Nordic countries as being a rather homogenous cultural region (Kaivola-Bregenhøj 1991, 18–23). But various attitudes toward dream experiences and their reporting can be found even within the same culture. Dreams, and discussion of what they mean, are not a subject for everyday conversation in Finland either, but they are, for many Finns, nevertheless an important element of waking reality. It has been argued that an ambivalent attitude, “I don’t believe, but still believe,” reflects the duality of attitudes toward dreams (Virtanen 1989, 146). Or as one student wrote: “I don’t really believe in dreams, but I do hope that the nice ones will come true.” We cannot speak in general terms of Finnish attitudes toward dreams because attitudes are influenced by such things as age, educational background, social status, living environment, and personal experiences. People who have one unique prophetic dream are, however, remarkable, because a dream interpreted as prophetic will give even rational people quite a jolt and force them to think about its message. The emotional state of waking may serve as a warning that the dream was in fact an omen (Kaivola-Bregenhøj 1993a, 220–23). Anyone interested in dreams will always find someone eager to discuss those dreams, despite the prevailing opinion that it is a waste of time and
traditional Dream Narration and Interpretation

“One indication of Finns’ positive attitude toward dreams is the “Finnish Dreams” column in the weekly supplement to *Helsingin Sanomat, Nyt*, which each week publishes a dream submitted by a reader.

**Dream Narration**

Attitudes toward dream-telling and interpretation, and even to specific dream themes, can be associated with the situations in which dreams are reported. In telling of a dream, the narrator confides in his listeners and bares his soul. A narrative evolves from the experience even as the dream is being recalled. In telling the dream, if not before, the dreamer channels the experience into the forms that regulate all narrative. Some people may not be interested in listening, but others will find dream narratives fascinating. This may be because the other’s experience does not affect the listener, but also because dream narratives do not always submit to the “requirements on cooperation,” such as clarity, matter-of-factness, and reasonable information content, which otherwise regulate our discourse (Grice 1975, 64–74). The dream narrators may proceed in a different way from what the listener expects and forsake their communicative responsibility, even though the dream narrative does not in the formal sense greatly differ from the linguistic conventions of discourse (Shanon and Eiferman 1984).

In transforming their experience into a narrative, dreamers have recourse to narrative schemes. By these I mean conventions for connecting a sequence of utterances into a coherent text (Winograd 1977, 81). The listener is aided by the same cultural schemes, for a scheme is a group of expectations which both the listener and the narrator have of the narrative. When listeners are confronted with a narrative, they immediately recognize it as such (Kaivola-Bregenhøj 1993b, 151–56). They also expect the narrative—in this case the dream narrative—to have a main character and the events related to be interesting (Kintsch 1978, 82). The listener is nevertheless taken by surprise, because dream telling is often illogical and fragmentary. On the other hand, the listener is assisted precisely by his knowledge of the normal cultural schemes of narrative in anticipating the progress of the narrative and filling in any gaps.

Benny Shanon and Rivka Eiferman (1984) have examined the nature of dream-reporting discourse and noted that it does not deviate from the behavioral norms of standard language in either vocabulary or syntax. It does, however, display deviations in the linguistic structures (e.g., the use of the present tense in speaking of the past, the use of direct speech instead of indirect, and the odd use of the definite article), pragmatic patterns (e.g., the narrator does not clearly indicate whether his claims refer to the dream world, the real world, or both), and text structure (e.g., the contentual pointedness of the text, ill-defined terms, poor connectedness and coherence). Shanon and Eiferman go on to say, “Dream reporting, then, is special not by
virtue of its constituting a special language, but rather by virtue of the manner in which the text of its narration is organized, and the way in which this text is communicated” (1984, 377).

The difficulty of narrating dreams is illustrated by the following reply from a male student born in 1964:

You can’t express dreams in words, because visions, thoughts, and moods can quickly change. In simplifying the narrative, a lot of important impressions would get left out.

My own research material consists of written dream reports. There are great differences between oral and written narratives; dream writing organizes and concentrates the narrative in a different way from oral communication. The following is a brief extract from a dream reported in an interview in which the narrator’s gravely ill aunt asks for someone to buy her some black socks before she is buried. The dream part is shown here in italics:

For me it was so that my mother’s elder sister, she was very ill, she was ill for a long time, and before she died she said to her younger sister, told her sister that when you bury me, look, buy me some black socks and put them on me. And my mother couldn’t find any black socks anywhere, there was no time, and then, when she [my aunt] was buried, was buried, she was wearing different socks. And then, when she’d been buried and it was the second night, my aunt dreamt of her [its] younger sister, the sister that had died. And she said to her, “Hilta,” she said, “everything was fine,” she [it] said, “but tell me why you didn’t dress me in black socks, because I did so want them.” Then Hilta went to the shop, and I don’t remember where she found them now. Well, she found the socks and took them there ‘cause her mother, my granny, said, “Go to the grave and [take] the socks to the cemetery.”

This fragment has many of the characteristics of oral narration, such as repeated words and the recurring use of “she said,” the pronouns “she” and “it” in speaking of a person, and the narrator’s native dialect (visible in the Finnish text). The repetitions are annoying when you read the text, but the impression of repetition and fumbling vanishes when you hear it because the listener is aided by the narrative scheme and can, being in face-to-face contact, follow the narrator’s expressions and gestures.

**Dream Interpretation**

The art of analyzing dreams, of looking out for and interpreting omens, is in most cases learned socially. Dream interpretation is part of the oral tradition in the same
way as, say, narratives and songs, and people can often remember who first explained a particular dream. In my lectures to students on the folk tradition surrounding the interpretation of dreams, one of my examples is the dream about losing a tooth. One student reported that soon after hearing my lecture she had a dream in which several of her teeth fell out. That same week her aunt died in an accident. When she told the people at home about her dream, her older female relatives were convinced it had been an omen. They put forward an explanation with which they were familiar. The girl herself had never had a dream about losing a tooth before and thought she had “learned” the dream at my lectures.

Many families will still discuss their dreams over breakfast the next morning, although they have to compete in this with the morning paper and television. But dreams that contain something special may well be reported and listened to, if the narrator has the art of giving a visual experience an interesting verbalization (Kaivola-Bregenhøj 1993a, 216–20). In my dream material, older female relatives are mentioned as interpreters of dreams. The following is typical:

When she was alive, my mother was a real dream book for me. I used to tell her my dreams and she explained them. I have also analyzed others’ dreams according to the traditions I received from my mother, and they have proved to be right.

This report demonstrates in all its simplicity how a model interpretation for a dream may spread outside the family. Most people admittedly regard both their dreams and their interpretations as their own personal domain, even though they may have learned at home the habit of mulling over their dreams. The next example reveals both a family tradition and the dreamer’s desire to learn more by studying the literature:

I inherited my interest in dreams. My grandmother was Karelian and her dreams have become something of a myth in the family. [. . .] I myself dream a lot. The fact that I had to listen to dreams and their explanations when I was a child has in turn influenced the way I examine my own nocturnal fantasies. Some of the symbolism is old prophetic tradition I have learned but to take some of the mysticism out of my experiences I have read widely about dreams and the theories about them. [. . .] I’m happy to talk about my dreams and I sometimes use a dream book to find out more about a symbol.

This informant is exceptional because very few respondents say that they have consulted a dream book in seeking an interpretation because their own interpretations
and the explanations they have learned prove to be more correct (Kaivola-Bregenhøj 1989, 95–96).

My respondents fall into two clear groups according to whether or not they experience dreams as omens. Of those who replied to the newspaper questionnaire, about two-thirds had had omen dreams that came true, and many attached to their letters a number of dream symbols that had become established as omens of certain, usually common events. The large number of omen dreamers is partly explained by the fact that the newspaper articles and related inquiry appealed to precisely those people for whom dreams are important and who had experiences of omens that came true. By contrast, only a fifth of the students had ever experienced an omen dream, and they, too, considered their experience coincidental. Very few students reported more than one—usually completely idiosyncratic—omen dream, whereas the newspaper respondents might give a long list of omen dream symbols that had come true. Although many of the respondents stressed that the interpretations are their own, some of them turned out to be common, both in my reply material and in the folk belief collections of the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society. A dream omen thought to be private can often be found in the collective tradition.

A familiar symbol or emotional state is a sign to the dreamer that the dream is an omen:

I have a feeling of anxiety the moment I wake up in the morning, I sigh and wait to see what will happen. It’s as if everything’s getting on top of me. I’m listless, my head aches, and I have a strange feeling that goes on until whatever it is happens. In the same way, if I have a nice dream, I’m cheerful and in a good mood when I wake up.

The majority of dream omens are negative. It has in fact been observed that more negative feelings are experienced in dreams than in the waking state. In a content analysis of a large sample of dreams from essentially normal people, American psychologist Calvin S. Hall categorized the emotional spectrum to the effect that 40 percent of dreams express apprehension, 18 percent anger, 6 percent sadness, 18 percent feelings of excitement and surprise, and only 18 percent happiness (Hall 1951, 62, recalculated by D’Andrade 1973, 199). The Finnish material is, in my opinion, in line with this, even though no corresponding study has been made as such. People may unconsciously try to prepare themselves for misfortune, whereas there is not such a great need to know beforehand of happiness. An exception may be found in the old belief material of girls who actively try to see their future husbands in their dreams. Most often, around certain dates, such as midsummer, they perform rituals, seeking some hint of their future partners and fortunes in marriage. People less often report their happy dreams. As narratives, these dreams are not as
interesting as the dramatic omens of misfortune on which the listener, too, can offer comments.

**The Traditional and New Symbolism of Dreams**

The popular interpretation of dreams is a mixture of personal and culturally shared and even coincidental ways of interpreting. How closely is the symbolism of dreams bound to the context and culture? Could we speak about “Finnish dreams”? Psychological dream research that stresses individuality emphasizes that the contents, themes, and styles of dreams are determined not only individually but culturally, too (Giora, Esformes, and Barak 1972). Intercultural comparisons have proven the link between dreams and culture.

I now wish to concentrate on analyzing a few of the prophetic dreams in my Finnish material. Besides the aforementioned loss of a tooth as a symbol of death, there are other traditional death symbols occurring in Finnish dream narratives: black clothes as well as the color black in general; a snake; a dead person coming back to “fetch” someone; a new building; and flowers. The sender of the following dream narrative reported that a “black dress” had followed her in her dreams for over thirty years:

I first dreamed about it when my eldest son was seven years old. I was having a fitting for a black dress and felt it strange that I did not know the seamstress. Then my son came in and said, “Mummy, take that dress off.” I trampled on the dress. About a week afterwards my son fell seriously ill. When I took him to the hospital, the nurse on the children’s ward was the person who had fitted my dress. My son was ill for nearly a year, and I took him to the hospital three times, and each time I had a dream beforehand in which I was about to put a black dress on but took it off. My son recovered.

There is nothing anyone can do about a fatal omen in a dream. Yet I am always surprised that not one of my respondents ever said they had tried to combat the dream force of the omen. But a dream regarded as prophetic will overpower the dreamer, and a realistic interpretation will not seem right. The dream itself here takes some of the threat out of the message, because each time she takes the black dress off and even tramples on it. The narrative does indeed end with the liberating news that the boy recovered. The precognitive feature of the dream foreboding the waking reality is the fact that the dreamer sees the nurse on the children’s ward as the seamstress of her dream. The waking reality thus mingles with the dream and the black garment—a symbol known internationally as foreboding in nature—draws local overtones from the dreamer’s empirical sphere. As an example, the narrative is
complete, because it clearly contains all the elements of an experience such as this: an omen, its interpretation, the target of the omen, and the precise time when the omen will begin to come true. The target person and the time could be regarded as being in the nature of criteria by which the narrator proves that the omen came true. This dream sequence and its symbolism may assume a different significance if heard as an oral report the morning after the dream. The anxiety triggered by the symbolism and attempts to interpret it would be more to the fore than they are in this polished written narrative.

The old archival materials contain a number of prophetic dreams connected with the Second World War. The threat of war, air raids, or the conclusion of peace do not in themselves make a dream “Finnish,” but such elements as familiar characters, the Finnish flag, or some other touch of local color connect the international war or threat theme to the dreamer’s own reality. The following dream was told by the dreamer’s wife:

My husband told me that when he was on the Kollaa front at the beginning of the Winter War, he dreamed that his mother, who had died a couple of years earlier, had made up a bed for two, and he asked: “Can I lie beside you?” His mother replied: “No, you can’t, it’s for your younger brother Matti.” Matti was wounded the following day. He was taken to the hospital in Pori and died a couple of weeks later. My husband was wounded the next day and had to spend nine months in the hospital. The army no longer deemed him fit for service.

Here, the internationally familiar theme, “Dead person appears in a dream” (Jauhiainen 1998, 80), is attached to a dream in which the narrator survives the war, though wounded. In the dream, his dead mother chooses the son who does not then come home from the front to lie beside her. The Kollaa front and the Winter War make the dream Finnish, and the narrator’s relatives in turn connect the dream with their own waking reality. At the same time, dreams like this are deeply personal to the narrators.

Some dream narratives tend to feature topical themes that are not to be found in the old archival sources. On reading students’ replies to my inquiry, my attention was caught by the themes of failure that I have begun to call the “academic stress dream”:

When I was studying theology, I dreamed that I suddenly had to go to Kälviä Church to hold a service—but I had lost all my papers and handbooks and it was a complete catastrophe.
Sometimes a theme such as this will incorporate tardiness for an event imperative for the dreamer to attend. A popular TV news reader reported in a women’s magazine that he repeatedly has a dream in which he gets lost in the studio corridors, loses his papers, and is late for the evening news broadcast. Among my own stress dreams, I sometimes dreamed that I was acting as the opponent in a public doctoral debate and I could not think of any questions to ask. This dream acquired local color from the fact that the professor presiding over the debate, who then reprimanded me, was Sauli Niinistö, who, at the time of the dreams, was Speaker of the Finnish Parliament. Freud called this type of dream the entrance-exam dream, and he explains that the only people to dream of failure such as this are those who have in reality passed the exam. The exam dream acquires a new look to suit a new situation but appears more often to occur among the students and the respondents with more experience of school and study. What sort of dream would the farmer battling through the EU subsidy jungle have, I wonder? The common denominator of these different dreams is anxiety and a sense of failure.

How is violence in real life reflected in our dreams? A month or so after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City, the student newspaper at the University of Turku asked a few students to say whether and how the atrocities had affected their dreams. Here is the longest reply, told by a male student, aged thirty-two:

A friend and I were eating on the top floor of a skyscraper. The skyscraper was so high you couldn’t see the ground. All of a sudden we heard an explosion. I realized we were in for it: there was no means of escape, the building was heeling over. We weren’t worried, however, we just sat there calmly, waiting and thinking, “This is it.” We came down with speed. The next thing I remember was rushing down between big buildings on roller skates. We had to get away. There was fucking smoke and people everywhere. Buildings were collapsing here and there around us, but we were having fun. (Turun Ylioppilaslehti)

The article does not report whether the dreams were taped or written. The example narrative is partly spoken language, vulgar expression included. It has a clear narrative structure and uses the past tense, which is characteristic of narrative. In all respects it is a highly typical, well-formulated dream story but unusual in the sense that my contemporary material does not feature many dreams connected with war, accidents, or catastrophes. The attack on the World Trade Center is an example of a catastrophe that moved people the world over. Even though at the time there was no fear of a similar attack in Finland, the event was so shocking that it was reflected in people’s dreams. Micro-narratives and text messages about Osama bin Laden also began to circulate at the same time.
The dreams important to us today differ to some extent from those a few decades ago. As people’s experiential backgrounds diverge in keeping with the changes in society, so the themes of dreams take a different turn. Some symbols are vanishing, but the central themes of dreams are still taken from the everyday life of the dreamer. The narration and interpretation of dreams have, in Finland, been a natural part of popular belief traditions. In the 1980s, in a Nordic comparison made by a group of folklorists, Finns proved to be far more favorably disposed towards dreams than the neighboring Swedes (Kaivola-Bregenhøj 1993a, 212). And although dreams and discussion of what they mean are not a subject for everyday conversation in Finland either, the idea that dreams may be prophetic is indeed latent in everyday thinking. Even if we do not believe in dreams, we may, as my research material reveals, be alarmed by an unsettling nocturnal experience or hope that a good dream omen will come true.

Narrators may consider their dreams to be not only prophetic but also entertaining, or as channels for more profound self-awareness. Sometimes people are only too willing to tell about their dreams. The presidential elections held in Finland in early 2012 proved this. Together with the Finnish Literature Society, I organized a questionnaire, asking people to say whether they dreamed about the presidential candidates. As our channel, we chose social media, and the questionnaire was on Facebook in January and February from the start of the campaign right up to the climax. One-hundred fourteen dream narratives were submitted, and unlike prophetic and precognitive dreams, they were both serious and amusing, but not uneasy. They demonstrated that people may tell dreams they consider topical to a wider circle, even if the dreams would in other respects belong to the more private tradition of the small family circle. Interest in dreams does, therefore, continue to this day, even though dream narration and interpretation are not widely appreciated.

WORKS CITED


ENCOUNTERS WITH THE UNKNOWN:  
FINNISH SUPERNATURAL NARRATIVES IN THE  
EARLY TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY  

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ABSTRACT  
Despite the trappings of a modern, secular society, people in Finland still report encounters with the supernatural—angels, ghosts, dead relatives, and the like—and those who report these encounters span a wide range of ages, educational levels, and experiences. This article examines the responses to a questionnaire concerning encounters with the supernatural.

INTRODUCTION  
Finland is often introduced as a technologically innovative nation, with secular, hardworking, and well-educated folk—a model example of Western modernity, that is. Modernity does not promote personal supernatural experiences, but nevertheless, we hear personal testimony of Finns encountering supernatural beings such as angels, extraterrestrials, guardian spirits, and ghosts. What do people who no longer are supposed to believe in the supernatural or to have supernatural experiences tell about their abnormal experiences, and how do they describe and evaluate these encounters? In Hänninen (2009), I pursued these questions, and this article builds upon this earlier research. In this article, I will examine the following three questions: (1) Who are the Finns who report encounters with the supernatural? (2) In the early twenty-first century, what types of supernatural encounters do Finns report, and how do these reports compare to those in the most significant prior Finnish folkloristic study (Virtanen 1974, 1977) on the topic, done in the 1970s? (3) How do research participants interpret their experiences, and what are the emotions expressed in the stories?

1 This article is based on my folklore studies dissertation, The Construction of Self in Finnish First-Person Supernatural Encounter Narratives (The Ohio State University 2009). The article summarizes and builds upon the chapters “Finnish Folklore Scholarship and Study of the Supernatural” and “Quantitative Description of the Supernatural Encounter Narratives.”
METHOD
In the tradition of Finnish folklore research, it is common to collect research material by theme writing. This means distributing inquiries and asking people to write about certain themes and to answer a set of theme-related questions. The responses are then collected, used for the current research purposes, and archived for later use. It is essential that people are asked to produce new texts; it is not about collecting pre-existing written narratives. A characteristic of theme writing is the narrator’s ability to choose the place and time for writing, to store, review, and correct the text before sending it, or even to destroy it. Furthermore, narrators feel encouraged to reflect on their thoughts when reading them on the screen or on paper (Pöysä 2006, 229–30; Apo 1995, 173–76). Thus, theme writing is a practical method when collecting information about sensitive issues, such as supernatural experiences.

Following this practice, I sent a research inquiry to seventy-nine Finnish newspapers and magazines in late 2003 and early 2004. I also asked the Finnish Literature Society to send the inquiry to its respondent network. In my inquiry I defined the supernatural experience as an experience that the person considers as out of the ordinary world, and I gave a set of questions and asked people to tell me about their experiences with encountering supernatural beings, for example, what happened, how it felt, what the meaning of the encounter was, and whether or not the respondents told others about the experience. Altogether, my research material consists of 440 written narratives that I received as responses to the research inquiry. I have then turned qualitative material (texts) into variables, given these variables values, and applied descriptive statistics.

FOLKLORE STUDIES AND THE SUPERNATURAL
The classic pieces of Finnish folklore studies that discuss the folk beliefs often explain the supernatural experience as a hallucination taking place inside a religious frame of reference. Seeing guardian spirits was explained as a hallucination caused by, for example, intoxication, exhaustion, hunger, lactation, or sickness (Haavio 1942; Honko 1962). Even though the starting point in this approach accepts that the experience is real to the subject, it is assumed that a rational explanation will eventually be found. The experience can be explained when the researcher understands the principles of perceptual psychology; the social values, norms, and roles that form the subject’s social frame of reference, and the models that tradition, especially memorates, offers for experiencing and interpreting the unexpected events. The main point is that tradition steers both the process of the experience and the process of interpretation (Honko 1972, 99–105; 1980, 79–88, 90–97, 100–104).

2 The responses sent to me refer to forty newspapers, so at least that many of the seventy-nine newspapers published the inquiry.
3 My research inquiry follows as an appendix.
4 The genre of personal supernatural experience stories.
David Hufford calls this kind of an approach the Cultural Source Hypothesis (1982, 14). This hypothesis means that experiences are considered either fictitious products of tradition or imaginary subjective experiences shaped, or occasionally even caused, by tradition. It refers to “that collection of social, cultural and psychological theories that are used to account for the empirical claims of believers” (2001, 20). Opposite to this hypothesis, he suggests the Experiential Theory (first called the Experiential Source Hypothesis). The Experiential Theory states that (1) many widespread supernatural beliefs are supported by experiences that refer intuitively to spirits without inference or retrospective interpretation and that occur independently of a person’s prior beliefs, knowledge, or intention; (2) These experiences form distinct classes, core supernatural experiences, with stable perceptual patterns; furthermore, (3) these experiences are normal, which means that they are not products of obvious psychopathology; and, finally, (4) such experiences provide a central empirical foundation from which some supernatural beliefs develop rationally, that is, utilizing ordinary rules of inference (1982, 14; 2001, 19; 2005, 33).

I do not argue for or against the existence of supernatural experiences outside the narratives. Nevertheless, the Experiential Theory’s reliance on physical evidence raises the question of relativist vs. positivist evaluation of an experience. Many of the narrators are asking for confirmation, and they present the questions “Is it okay that I have this experience?” and “Can you explain to me what happened?” To a relativist, any experience and interpretation matters, whereas a positivist would rely only on the physical evidence. Some narrators address a reader they think of as relativist, whereas other narrators construct their narratives to address a positivist reader. As sociologist Pertti Alasuutari reminds us: “Individuals do not have their readily narrated life-stories in their back pockets or at the back of their minds, waiting for a researcher to collect them. Any account of one’s personal past (also when told to a researcher in a life-story interview) makes a point and serves a function. A particular case of life-story narration must be related to its local setting in order to see what it is needed or used for” (1997, 6). Alasuutari discusses interviews, but his point applies to writing as well.

Thus, it is important to ask why the respondents chose to write to me. The answer to this question was explicit only in seventy responses. Of those respondents, 45.7 percent expressed a wish to take part in academic research, 38.6 percent wanted to share the experience, and 15.7 percent of the narrators asked for an explanation of the experience. For men, it was relatively more important to ask for an explanation and to take part in academic research, whereas women expressed the wish to share the experience more than men:

[. . .] I have a feeling it is my duty to tell this story. It is like I have been given a gift that I need to pass on even in this form, as a story of my own
Encounters with the Unknown

experience. Perhaps this way, someone could believe in life after death and thus find meaning in his/her existence. This is why I’m replying to your inquiry. It’s good that you are doing your dissertation research on this topic. Maybe someday people will have more courage to talk about these things. [ . . . ] (A woman, born in the 1930s)\textsuperscript{5}

Folklorist Leela Virtanen’s studies (1974, 1977, English translation 1990) on the supernatural experiences of common Finnish people are close to my research tradition. The difference between my approach and Virtanen’s on the supernatural is that Virtanen studied experiences, drawing theoretical sources also from parapsychology, whereas I study written narratives. Virtanen’s research material was collected mainly by means of written questionnaires published in newspapers, and partly by interviews. Over half of the material was collected in 1973, exactly thirty years before I collected my research material. Altogether, Virtanen’s material consists of 1,442 reports. The main body of her research material consists of 865 reports. In her work, Virtanen focused on simultaneous experiences. A simultaneous experience usually conveys information about an accident or fear or the death of another person, but it may also convey a feeling of closeness to someone. The information is received through means other than the normal sensory channels. It may be obtained in a dream; as a hallucination, an impression, or an intuition; or in a form of some change in the surroundings (Virtanen 1990, 1–24). I, on the other hand, have interpreted simultaneous experience as a possible meaning given to the experience by the experiencer. In my data, there are twenty-five such cases.

Who Report Encounters With the Supernatural?

Gender, Age, Location

When answering the question “What are the people like who report personal supernatural experiences?” it is worth remembering that in this case, they are people who subscribe to, or at least read, newspapers, feel comfortable expressing themselves in writing to an unfamiliar researcher, and are motivated to take part in research without a face-to-face dialogue. In short, I wish to point out that the methodology chosen constructs the material.

Most of my research respondents were women: there are 319 women and 112 men, which means nearly three female respondents per male. Nine respondents did not disclose their gender. Most of the informants in Virtanen’s research in the 1970s were also women: women accounted for 81 percent of the experiences and men for 19 percent. Virtanen notes that this is in contrast to the older records in the Folklore

\textsuperscript{5} Narrative excerpts in this article are my translations from the original Finnish responses. The citations from “a woman born in the 1930s” all refer to three different women born in the same decade.
Archives from the Finnish Literature Society. Why the difference? she asks, and then suggests that strange experiences do not conform to the modern male role under the more rigid social attitudes. Many of her informants pointed out that supernatural experiences seem more socially acceptable for a woman and potentially damaging to the image of a man. While in traditional Finnish agricultural society, men generally held the prestige position of a seer or a wiseman (tietäjä), having supernatural experiences in the modern world makes a man seem “like an old woman” (akkamainen) (Virtanen 1990, 106–109). Unlike Virtanen, I did not find narrators stating that supernatural experiences are more suitable for women than for men. Why the difference then? It can be that supernatural experiences do not conform to the modern male role, like Virtanen suggests. On the other hand, perhaps men are not as willing to respond to a research inquiry or to write about their experiences.

The clearest gender-related distinction in Virtanen’s material is that experiences related to people outside the family circle, such as neighbors and coworkers, are more common to men than to women, whose experiences are linked to the home environment (Virtanen 1990, 106–109). This conforms to my material as well: 284 women and 97 men reported the place where their encounter occurred. In the women’s stories, it is more common to encounter the supernatural being at home (63 percent) than outside the home (37 percent), whereas in men’s responses, it is more common to encounter the being outside the home (61.9 percent) than at home (38.1 percent).

Three hundred and thirty-one of the 440 respondents mentioned their age. The largest age group was 61–70 years. In general, 51–80-year-old people were the most active writers. When comparing the gender and age of respondents, the gender difference in response activity decreases in the age groups 41–50, 51–60, and 61–70. The difference is largest in the youngest age group, 20–30 (Table 1), where only two of the respondents (6 percent) are males. Virtanen does not present differences between age groups, but she notes that children have more visions than adults. Childhood experiences have been recounted as the narrator’s own memories or recounted by a parent (Virtanen 1990, 109).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Female % (N)</th>
<th>Male % (N)</th>
<th>Total % (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20–30</td>
<td>94 (32)</td>
<td>6 (2)</td>
<td>100 (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31–40</td>
<td>80 (24)</td>
<td>20 (6)</td>
<td>100 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41–50</td>
<td>65 (22)</td>
<td>35 (12)</td>
<td>100 (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51–60</td>
<td>68 (42)</td>
<td>32 (20)</td>
<td>100 (62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61–70</td>
<td>68 (53)</td>
<td>32 (25)</td>
<td>100 (78)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finland consists of six administrative regions, and I used the division into these regions to examine the geographical distribution of the inquiry replies. Altogether, 390 respondents disclosed where they live. Most of the respondents live either in Western Finland (41.5 percent) or Southern Finland (33 percent). Yet, when the number of replies is compared to the population of the province, we see that Lapland has the most active writers per capita. Lapland is the most rural province of the Finnish provinces, so this finding could suggest that people in the rural areas are more active in answering research inquiries about their experiences or that narration of supernatural experiences is more common there than farther south. It is also worth remembering that Lapland has been a popular field for ethnographers and it is possible that that has paved way for active participation in research projects.

**Education, Socio-Economic Status, Religion**

I was interested in learning if there is any relation between supernatural experiences and people’s level of education, their vocation, and/or attitude toward religion. Questions about these were included in the inquiry.

Of the respondents, 162 reported their educational level. Most of them had a high school (10th—12th grades) or vocational education, followed by an associate’s, a bachelor’s, or a master’s degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Primary Education</th>
<th>Lower Secondary Education</th>
<th>High School or Vocational Education</th>
<th>Associate’s, Bachelor’s, or Master’s Degree</th>
<th>Doctoral Degree</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20–30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31–40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41–50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51–60</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61–70</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71–80</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81–90</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Age group and education level.
When I compared the education level of the age group with the largest number of respondents (61–70-year-olds) to the education level of its peer age group (60–69-year-olds) in Finland, I noticed that the respondents of this age group are better educated than the general age group [Official Statistics of Finland (OSF): Statistical databases, 2011]. When I took a look at the education level of the Finnish population aged fifteen or over, I saw that the respondents’ high school or vocational education level (37 percent) is approximately the same as that of the general age group’s level (39 percent), but higher when it comes to college and university-level education: 27 percent of the general population has a college or university education, whereas 32 percent of the respondents have a college or university education [Official Statistics of Finland (OFS), 2009]. This brief look at the statistics suggests that the people who chose to respond to a research inquiry, published in a newspaper, on supernatural experiences, are better educated than the average person in Finland. These results are suggestive, and a more detailed examination discussing all the age groups would be worth carrying out.

I was also interested in examining the socio-economic status of the respondents. Division into socio-economic groups takes into consideration the person’s phase of life, occupation, and nature of work, and there are eleven such groups. Half of the respondents (221) gave information that I needed for analyzing the socio-economic groups. The three largest socio-economic groups were retired upper-level employees (12.7 percent), upper-level employees (12.2 percent), and lower-level employees (15.4 percent). This is in accordance with the previous discussion of well-educated people talking about supernatural experiences.

Finally, I have examined if the narrator explicitly states that she or he is religious. Only 40 people of the 440 explicitly stated that they are religious. The distribution of the supernatural beings that the religious people talk about encountering did not differ from those talked about by the rest of the respondents.

**Encounters with the Other Realm**

**Supernatural Beings**

In my inquiry, I gave examples of supernatural beings and included angels, ghosts, guardian spirits, demons, and extraterrestrials. In addition to these beings that I already had named, people wrote about meeting God, Jesus, animals, identified or unidentified human-shaped beings, UFOs with no reference to their travelers, and poltergeist phenomena. The category of “other beings” includes beings mentioned once—for example, doppelgänger, Big Foot, troll, and harbinger, and objects, such

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6 The data relate to year 2009.

7 *Poltergeist* refers to an invisible spirit that makes noise, moves objects, and even attacks people.

8 *Doppelgänger* means a double, a look-alike.
as light balls, pillars, and toys that the narrator describes as beings or things linked to supernatural beings. Many replies discussed supernatural experiences without supernatural beings involved. These stories include telepathy, clairvoyance, and omens that come true. For example, some narrators wrote of a dream about a big shipwreck on the night in 1994 when the MS Estonia shipwrecked in the Baltic Sea. Others mention sensing or knowing beforehand the murders of President John F. Kennedy and the Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme. This category also involves stories about mysterious events, such as writings appearing on the floor and people being able to move objects by their mind.

About half of the respondents (244) wrote about more than one supernatural experience. Thus, I categorized the encounter stories as primary, secondary, and tertiary, based on what story received the most attention and focus from the narrator.

Then, the important question: what are the most common supernatural beings that the respondents reported encountering? In the primary stories (431), these were angels (20.4 percent), followed by unidentified human-shaped beings (19.3 percent), other beings (16.9 percent), and ghosts of family members or relatives (10 percent). In the secondary stories (232), most of the stories did not involve supernatural beings (19.4 percent). The most often encountered supernatural beings were other beings (18.5 percent), followed by ghosts of family members or relatives (15.1 percent). In the tertiary stories (155), the biggest category consists of stories that do not involve supernatural beings (21.3 percent), followed by other supernatural beings (18.7 percent) and ghosts of family members or relatives (12.9 percent). It can be thus suggested that stories of angels and unidentified human-shaped beings are important to the narrators and receive a lot of weight, yet stories of other beings and ghosts come up a lot but not in a detailed manner. First, it was surprising to see how common the stories without supernatural beings were, given that I asked for encounter stories, but I concluded that once narrators are given a ticket, a permission, to write about the supernatural, they will use the opportunity and extend the topic focus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supernatural Beings Present in Primary Stories</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angel</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghost of a family member, relative</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other identified ghost</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified ghost</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraterrestrial</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardian spirit</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Angels may appear in different forms, as, for example, beautiful, shiny beings with wings and long dresses, small enough to fly about the house or large enough to cover the sky; angels may resemble ordinary people, or they may resemble a human being but with a divine appearance.

[.. .] I opened my eyes, looked up, and saw the most beautiful male being standing next to my bed. He had long, amber hair, and he wore only a waistcloth. His skin was beautiful and brown, and he had a clean-cut beard. When I realized what I was looking at, my pulse rose, and I got a little scared. Still, I wanted to look at and listen to this vision, and I had courage to keep my eyes open. He was transparent, and I could see the light switch behind him. He looked at me with the most loving eyes that have ever looked at me. He smiled at me in a restful way, as if he tried to tell me that everything will be okay, and I don’t have to worry about anything. After this, I looked at him for another moment and felt like smiling. I waved at him as if I were asking him to leave. As I watched him, I saw him slowly vanish. My heart hammerd awhile; then, I turned over, smiled, and fell asleep. I have never been as spirited and happy as I was the following morning. I think he was my guardian angel. My grandmother had died a couple of years earlier, and there were times I had wished so much that she were here to support me. That night, my grandmother wanted to comfort me, and thus she sent me my angel. My grandmother
believed in angels, and her last words were: “Stay always as an angel.” This memory confirms my experience of her presence. […] (A woman, born in the 1970s)

The weight of the angel experiences is visible in Finland in general. According to the *Churchmonitor 2001* survey,¹ one in four Finns has experienced God or an angel saving her or him from an accident. The same survey shows that 6 percent of Finns say that they have seen an angel, 5 percent a UFO, and 4 percent a ghost. One in ten Finns claims to have been in contact with a dead person (Kääriäinen, Niemelä, and Ketola 2005, 68–69). Angels are also a common topic in Finnish popular publications of collected stories.¹⁰ Angel stories seem to be culturally accepted in Finland, and that is visible in my data as well: when people wrote about their experiences to others, stories about angels received nearly 60 percent more positive responses than negative responses, whereas for stories about unidentified human-shaped beings and other supernatural beings, it was around 50 percent more likely for the narrator to receive a negative, rather than a positive, response.

It was surprising that there were no more than twelve extraterrestrial accounts (2.8 percent) and eleven UFO accounts (2.6 percent) in the primary stories.¹¹ In addition to UFOs, poltergeist phenomena were very rare in my material as there were only six poltergeist cases. There is a significant difference when compared to the research from the 1970s. Virtanen notes the abundance of reports of physical phenomena, especially poltergeists, in her collection (Virtanen 1990, 69–76).¹²

**Setting**

Most of the narratives (422) mention how the experience was sensed. Sight was clearly the most common sense, whereas tactile experiences were the least common (Table 4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sight</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ N=2,475.
² There are at least seven published compilations of Finns’ angel experience stories in 1995–2005.
¹¹ I wrote my folklore studies MA thesis (University of Turku, 2002) on people who tell about having contact with UFOs, and it had been relatively easy to find people to interview and meetings to attend. Therefore, I thought I would receive many UFO stories for my dissertation research as well. Now I think that the reason for receiving fewer stories than I expected is that the UFO contact people already have peer groups available and channels to talk about their experiences and thus no “need” to write to me.
¹² Unfortunately there is no comparative data regarding angels in Virtanen’s research.
Four hundred and ten (410) responses discuss the state of consciousness during the experience. Over half (64.9 percent) of the encounters happened when the narrators were awake; 27.6 percent when they were between awake and sleep; only 6.8 percent when the narrator was asleep; and even fewer in other altered states of consciousness (0.7 percent). There is a contrast to Virtanen’s research where it was more common that the narrators were asleep: 49 percent of the reported simultaneous experiences took place when the experiencer was awake; 29 percent when asleep; and 23 percent in the state between sleep and wakefulness.

**Interaction**

Interaction tells the level of communication, or whether there is any sort of communication. The supernatural being can communicate to the human; the human can communicate to the supernatural being; and/or there can be dialogue between them. The interaction can be also physical.

[. . .] My mother died in 1974 in [place deleted]. I argued bitterly with my eldest brother and his family on the day of the funeral. I arrived home, still wearing the dress I wore for the funeral, and I was thinking that it had been such a sad thing to happen. Suddenly, there was something like a whirlwind around me, and something very cold went inside me. I feel that something is trying to contact me, but I am afraid and have no courage. I don’t want to see or experience these supernatural things. [. . .]  
(A woman, born in the 1930s)

One hundred and fifty-one (151) narrators reveal that there was communication between the experiencer and the supernatural being. In most of the cases (54.3 percent), the supernatural being communicated to the human. In one case, an angel told a name to a young woman who was pregnant. Later the woman regretted that she did not give that name to the baby. In another story, a woman’s father appeared and called her name the moment when he died in a hospital. In 6.6 percent of the cases, the human being communicated to the supernatural being. For example, an elderly woman wrote about how she was very afraid of a poltergeist spirit that caused
mayhem in her home, and how she ordered the thing to leave. It did leave, banging the doors. In 21.2 percent of the cases, there was dialogue involved. One narrator writes that he met another man in a forest when picking berries. They chatted a long while about berry-picking, and it was not until after the encounter that the man realized he had met a forest guardian spirit. In another case, a young woman suffered from depression when her child was a toddler. They were walking on a street when they suddenly met an older, friendly woman who encouraged the young mother and talked nicely about the child—and then suddenly disappeared. The narrator interpreted the woman as an angel who had come to support her when she was having a rough time.

In 16.6 percent of the stories, the communication was physical and in 1.3 percent it was sexual. One elderly woman writes about how an angel appeared to her, touched her, and healed her aching back. Another woman writes that she is having a sexual affair with a supernatural being, and how happy that makes her. On the other hand, an elderly man writes that he often feels that somebody or something is touching him, and that makes him very confused.

Meaning
Meaning refers to the significance or interpretation that the narrator gives to the encounter. It answers the questions “Why did this happen?” and “What was the point of the experience?” In some narratives, this is easier to trace than in others. Some narrators state it directly, writing, for example, that an angel came to save her from a car accident, or that Jesus healed her and made her faith stronger. Thus, this category also tells us about the different roles filled by the supernatural beings in the narratives. Some narratives, on the other hand, require more interpretation from the researcher, and some narrators do not provide any answers to the “why” questions.

The encounter can function as a warning about something—for example, not trusting someone. It can be an omen about an event that will happen, such as hearing a name of a person who later dies. The experience can provide support and comfort after the loss of a loved one, guidance in a difficult life situation or in decision-making, or evidence of another world, most commonly, life after death.

[. . .] The event [seeing the ghost of her mother] had a revolutionary effect on me. I felt much more emotionally close to my mother, whereas our relationship before her death had been distant. I became convinced that there is life after death, and all my fears of death disappeared. I am joyfully waiting for the moment when I get to see all my beloved ones who have passed away. [. . .] (A woman, born in the 1930s)

When the supernatural being appears to correct something gone wrong, the meaning can be about making things right. The supernatural being can also save the
narrator from danger, such as a car accident. The encounter can work as a sign of simultaneity, that something important to the narrator is happening elsewhere right at that time. If the narrators state that the experience made them find religion or made their faith stronger, I have called the meaning “religious.” This may collide with, or follow from, the roles and tasks of the beings, but I think this category is important to note separately. In addition, I have categorized the narratives that discuss the faith of the narrator.

I was able to interpret the meaning of the experience in 202 narratives. Support and omen, and religious/spiritual meaning were the most common meanings; guidance, correction, and warning the least common.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warning</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omen</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correction</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saving</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious/Spiritual</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simultaneous experience</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No expressed meaning</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.** Meaning given to the experience.

Virtanen was also interested in knowing the interpretations of the experiences. In the sample of sixty reports, telepathy/thought transference was the most common given explanation (43 percent), followed by God’s guidance (23 percent), unexplained (18 percent), deceased person or spirit (10 percent), and other (6 percent) (Virtanen 1990, 120–25).

**Evaluation**

I categorized evaluation as positive, negative, or mixed. Positive evaluation is related to positive emotions such as joy, happiness, relief, peace, and positive consequences of the experience. It can also be a direct statement, such as “it was a wonderful experience.” Negative evaluation, on the other hand, relates to direct statements about a horrible/bad/frightening experience, and expressed emotions, such as fear, horror, and anxiety, felt during or after the encounter, or even a long time after. It
was possible to analyze the evaluation in 199 cases. Most of the stories involving evaluation were considered positive (79.9 percent), while 16.6 percent were evaluated as negative, and 3.5 percent had mixed evaluations.

Many narrators discuss the emotions raised by the experience, including confusion, fear, joy, comfort, and sorrow. Emotions were discussed and/or expressed in 200 narratives. The most commonly mentioned emotion was fear (45.5 percent), followed by comfort/peace (24.5 percent) and confusion (10 percent).

[...] One night I woke up when someone came in to my room through the hallway door. I was under the blanket, my face against the wall. I thought my dad had come in, and I turned around towards the door. I was just about to say good morning to my dad, when I noticed the misty figure standing next to my bed. (Even now, after many years, I get cold shivers down my back when writing this mail.) The figure had a clear shaped head and shoulders but no face. I don’t remember seeing arms either, and from the shoulders down, the figure got thinner. It was ice cold in my room, too, even though I had the blanket on. Naturally, I got awfully frightened, and I ran through the wardrobe to my parents’ room and jumped between them. [...] (A man, born in the 1970s)

If a negative emotion is expressed, it does not mean that the whole narrative is negative. The narrative may contain the answer to my question, “How did you feel when it happened and how do you feel now when remembering it?” but the response to this question does not always imply an entirely negative evaluation.

Virtanen stated in her research that the Finnish simultaneous material is very negative. Of all the collected simultaneous experiences, death is the subject of 62 percent of the reports; accident or distress, 20 percent; illness, 12 percent; and other subjects, 5 percent. Even the latter-mentioned “other subjects” consist mainly of negative aspects, such as war-time experiences, funerals, and infidelity (Virtanen 1990, 80–91). Death of a family member, relative, or another familiar person was a common theme in my data as well, among other crises. Yet, the interpretations of the experiences in my data were not only negative. Dead relatives could visit and comfort or save from danger.

**Conclusion**

This article examined the questions of what kinds of supernatural encounter narratives Finns report in the early twenty-first century, and what these narrators are like. Research material consisted of 440 written stories sent to me as responses to my dissertation research inquiry. Most of the respondents were women. Most of the responses were sent by 51–80-year-olds, and the majority of the responses came from Western and Southern Finland. People who wrote to me were better educated.
than the average person in Finland. About half of the respondents had more than one supernatural experience to report. Most of the stories discussed ghosts, “other” supernatural beings, and supernatural experiences without beings. Yet, the biggest weight was given to angels and unidentified human-shaped beings. Most of the experiences were visual, and they happened when people were awake. Fewer than half of the respondents reported that they had communicated with the supernatural beings, and typically it was the being that communicated to the human. Most of the stories that involved evaluation were considered positive—yet, the most common emotion expressed in the stories was fear.

Personal supernatural stories dating back to pre- and early modern Finland focus on seers, the devil, omens, and especially death, the dead, and guardian spirits. The stories were used not only for entertaining but also for guiding and commenting on people’s actions; they included warnings of wrongdoings and descriptions of the consequences of such actions. Supernatural beings were guardians of morals and habits, who started rampaging if the menfolk played cards, the household members worked on Sundays, or a mother killed and buried her newborn.

There was a devil living in a certain house in the village of Koprala in the parish of Muola. It did all sorts of tricks on the house. It smashed hay shocks in the field and dropped timbers and sticks over the womenfolk in the barn. The rocking chair moved by itself in the room. Finally, the daughter of the house confessed. She had given birth to a dead child out of wedlock and buried the child under the house, in the ground. When it was removed and taken to the graveyard, the devil left the house as well. The remnants of the dead child had begun to haunt, and that was called the devil.13

People who wrote to me live in a society that does not rely on supernatural beings punishing wrongdoers, nor is it common to explain anomalous events as actions of supernatural beings. Narratives in my material discuss personal contacts with supernatural beings, and, as noted before, most typical meanings of the experiences given by the narrators were those of support, omen, and religious/spiritual meaning. These, and other given meanings, are the results of interaction between the narrator and the surrounding cultural and social environment. For example, positive angel stories are prevalent in a wider cultural context, and they had the most weight in my material as well, including other people’s positive reactions to them. Cultural, experiential, and parapsychological models of explanations are included in the cultural and social environment, both for the experiencer and the researcher.

However we approach the narratives, one thing remains: people still have personal supernatural stories to share with a folklore researcher and through her with a larger audience in Finland and abroad.

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**Appendix: Research Inquiry**

**Have you encountered a supernatural being?**

Many Finns have experiences about encountering supernatural beings. A supernatural being can be, for example, an angel, a ghost, a guardian spirit, a demon, an extraterrestrial or any other being that is not from this world. I am doing dissertation research in folkloristics, and I am interested in examining what kinds of supernatural beings modern-day Finns encounter. If you have encountered a supernatural being, even an unidentified one, I am asking you to write about your experience. You can attach a drawing, too. I will handle the letters anonymously. Please tell me the following details: your gender, year of birth, place of residence and education/vocation. Please, tell also where you saw the request. If you wish, you can send me your
contact information so that I may contact you if I have further questions. Letters will be archived in the Archives of the Turku University School of Cultural Research, TKU Archives. In your letter, you can discuss, for example, the following questions. The length of the letter is open.

What happened, when and where?
What kind of a being did you encounter, how did it look like and what was its nature?
Did it have a message for you?
Where did the being come from?
What was your state of consciousness?
Why did the encounter happen?
Did the encounter surprise you, or had you somehow tried to make it happen?
Did the encounter affect your life somehow?
Have you told anyone about your experience, and how have people reacted to it?
How did it feel to encounter the being, and how does it feel now when you think about it?
What else would you like to tell me about your experience?

Letters and any questions you have may be sent to the following address.

Kirsi Hänninen
School of Cultural Studies/Department of Folkloristics
20014 University of Turku
email: kirsi.hanninen@utu.fi
First published in 1936, this classic collection of Finnish tales offered to an American audience is once again available in a paperback facsimile edition. Twenty “Tales of Magic” occupy nearly two hundred pages, with five “Droll Stories,” or humorous anecdotes, and eighteen “Fables,” or animal tales, rounding out the collection. Intended primarily for children, but also appealing to grown-ups (my copy of the original was a bedtime favorite when my children were young), each tale is written with elegant simplicity, perhaps not quite true to the oral style of peasant tale-tellers but commendably avoiding the “literary” excesses of some folktale anthologies. Stories are typically accompanied by charming illustrations, including eight in stunning color absent in the original.

Although most of the collection’s stories are well known, internationally circulating folktales with familiar peasants and royalty, heroes and villains, tricksters and simpletons, quests and tests, farms and palaces, forests and villages, and magic and marriages, they are also distinctly Finnish in their settings, names of characters, and use of language. The book’s title, significantly, invokes a *tupa*, the humble dwelling of Finland’s common folk, and will be appreciated by many Finnish Americans for its association with the proverb “*oma tupa, oma lupa*” (one’s own home, one’s own freedom) that became a succinct affirmation of ideals for an immigrant generation seeking relative independence on small farms in the Upper Midwest, Pacific Northwest, and Canada. Likewise, many of the tales conjure the mystical role of Sami in Finnish folklore with the frequent mention of *Pohjola*, that dark and mysterious north country where magic is common, and through the periodic presence of “an old Lapland woman” telling fortunes in her remote dwelling or of “Laplander wizards” traveling through Finland. Jukka, Olga, Timo, Helka, Onni, Marja, Arvo, Vendla, and many another Finnish name are borne by the characters in respective stories. And bilingual renderings of potent phrases abound, as in this magical charm intended to ease the pain of childbirth:
Books Reviews

“Mene kipu kauas täältä
Lenna [sic] mustilla siivilla [sic].”
Go forth, O pain!
Fly on black wings
Over Tuonela’s dark river
To Mountain of Misery, Kipuvuori. (54)

Those wishing to read the stories aloud, as well as to understand the sprinklings of Finnish phrases, will find the five-page pronunciation guide and glossary particularly helpful. Tuonela, for example, is revealed as “the place beyond Tuoni, the River of Death” (273).

Thoroughly delightful as a popularly-intended, English-language collection of Finnish folktales, this publication, in both its original and current state, may nonetheless disappoint contemporary readers wishing to know more about the sources for particular tales, as well as about the compilers and the significance of their 1936 publication within the folkloristic and literary history of Finnish Americans. Not surprisingly James Cloyd Bowman, in keeping with his era’s low standards for crediting precise sources when publishing folktales for children, devoted slightly more than a page at the collection’s close to a very general discussion of “Finnish Folk Lore” fraught with grand poetic pronouncements certain to entertain or enrage, as exemplified by this reductive characterization of all Finnish people: “On the surface they were cold and inexpressive, and seemed as frozen as their lakes in winter. But beneath their fur coats, their hearts were warm . . .” (267). Bowman also tersely and somewhat misleadingly acknowledged a debt “to the standard collections of Finnish folk lore: Suomen kansan satuja ja tarinoita, by Eero Salmelainen, and Suomen kansan satuja, by Iivo Harkonen [sic].” Whereas Salmelainen (1830–1867) was indeed a distinguished field researcher and editor, whose pioneering collection Suomen kansan satuja ja tarinoita (Finnish folktales and legends) was published in five volumes between 1852 and 1866, Iivo Härkönen (1882–1941) was a writer and Karelian advocate, whose Suomen kansan satuja (Finnish folktales), published in 1921, was a collection of re-worked tales intended for children rather than a “standard collection of Finnish folk lore” (268). Continuing on behalf of himself and co-author Margery Bianco, Bowman expressed “gratitude to Mrs. Margaret Luomajoki Hankila, the dear little grandmother, who has told them stories to which she listened breathless when a wide-eyed little girl sitting at her own grandmother’s knee” (268). It is not clear, unfortunately, which tale came from what source, nor do we learn anything more about Mrs. Hankila.

James Cloyd Bowman (1880–1961) was chair of the English Department at Northern State Teachers College (now Northern Michigan University) in Marquette, Michigan, from 1931 to 1939. The author of a string of children’s books devoted
to such American “folk heroes” as Paul Bunyan, Mike Fink, John Henry, and Pecos Bill, Bowman won the prestigious Newberry Award for the best children’s book of 1938 with *Pecos Bill: The Greatest Cowboy of All Time*. His renown in children’s literature circles presumably brought him into collaborative contact with London-born Margery Williams Bianco (1881–1944), who had penned the 1922 children’s classic, *The Velveteen Rabbit*. While brief biographical sketches of Bowman and Bianco are included with the new publication, nothing is mentioned of the translator, Aili Kolehmainen, beyond her name. Yet it is hard to imagine this book ever coming to be without Kolehmainen’s active participation and editorial abilities.

Born in Gwinn, Michigan, in 1920, Aili Kolehmainen was fluent in both Finnish and English when she enrolled in Northern State Teachers College, earning a degree in English under the tutelage of James Cloyd Bowman. She had a lifelong interest in Finnish and Finnish-American folklore, publishing a translation of the *Kalevala* in 1950, writing a handful of fine essays on topics ranging from Finnish-American legends to the Finnish labor songs cherished by Michiganders active in the Industrial Workers of the World, and assisting the distinguished folklorist Richard M. Dorson with the Finnish folktales section of his *Bloodstoppers and Bearwalkers: Folk Traditions of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula* (1952; reprinted in a new edition, 2008). Since neither Bowman nor Bianco could read Finnish, and since it is hard to imagine Kolehmainen translating Salmelainen’s five-volume collection in its entirety just so that co-authors Bowman and Bianco could pick and choose, we can assume that she exercised considerable judgment in tale selection. Thanks to the 1930 federal census and the search engine NewspaperARCHIVE.com, we also know that the storyteller Margaret Luomajoki Hankila was Aili Kolehmainen’s grandmother. Born in Finland in 1859, Margaret Luomajoki immigrated to Lake City, Michigan, in 1888, marrying Henry Hankila that year. The couple had two daughters, including Aili’s mother, who married Theodore Kolehmainen of Gwinn. When Margaret Hankila died at 86 in 1945, “Rev. A. Marin pastor of the Ev. Luth. church of Gwinn delivered a sermon in Finnish and the Rev. V. Puotinen in English. The Ladies Choir sang two songs accompanied by Mrs. Johnson [Aili Kolehmainen’s married surname] at the organ” (*Ironwood Daily Globe*, April 27, 1945). Let us hope that the latest publication of *Tales from a Finnish Tupa* not only makes a classic work accessible once again, but also stimulates further interest in the significant yet largely neglected efforts of the first Finnish-American folklorist, Aili Kolehmainen.

Perhaps this republication will also prompt a compact disk reissue of Oren Tikkanen’s excellent (and still available) audio cassette adaptations, *Finnish Folk Tales, Volumes I and II*, issued respectively in 1984 and 1986 by Thimbleberry House, and consisting of five tales selected from the Bowman, Bianco, and Kolehmainen anthology. Thanks to scholarly inquiries into the reception of Asbjornsen and Moe’s landmark nineteenth-century Norwegian folktale collection in the New World, we know
something about the sustained importance of Old World tales among Norwegian Americans, but we know considerably fewer particulars about the extent to which and how Finnish Americans have responded to tales from their ancestral homeland. Tikkanen’s artful audio productions, which are fundamentally radio plays with sound effects and multiple voices (all of which he cleverly assumes), offer significant testimony to an ongoing fascination and involvement with nineteenth-century peasant stories. Intriguingly aligning with social change and egalitarian, feminist stances largely embraced by Finnish Americans, the Princess in Tikkanen’s performance of “Niilo and the Wizard” defers marriage to the intrepid Niilo so that, as a future ruler, she can go “to the university to study law and history and religion”—a decision her suitor supports, and one that I think Aili Kolehmainen would have understood.

James P. Leary
University of Wisconsin


Who are/were we? That question is a constant feature of immigration literature, as scholars and descendants of immigrants seek to understand how elements of identity traveled, changed, and persisted in a “new” world. Memory, belief (religious and secular), lifestyles, and more are regularly examined in trying to understand the nexus between originating cultures and emergent ethnic cultures. In this interesting work published by the Siirtolaisuusinstituutti, Outi-Kristiina Hännikäinen utilizes many “standard” approaches, but adds value with a “landscape” approach born of historical geography. How, she asks, did Finnish immigrants (and descendants) in New Finland, Saskatchewan, view the landscape; how did that view change over time; and did those views (and resulting actions) make a “Finnish” place? She identifies five historical landscape periods in New Finland. She looks beyond the social to the physical, most especially, two graveyards as important markers of identity, identity loss, and, perhaps most interestingly, re-emergent interest in Finnishness.

Hännikäinen here considers an “outlier” Finnish-Canadian settlement—hardly a land of lakes and forests—although one with an obvious “name” presence. New Finland’s roots lie in the 1880s, when David Kautonen homesteaded what is now SW 1/4 36-17 W2; in less than a decade, the key pioneers of Uusi Suomi arrived. Some traveled directly from Finland, others from eastern North America. Mikhael
(Mikko) Myllymaki, for instance, had sold the first Finnish immigrant farm in the Sudbury area before traveling west. We meet these pioneers well into the book as Hännikäinen starts by setting out theoretical contexts and the limits of her study: she differentiates her work from a local history of New Finland while placing it within a specific landscape approach from historical geography.

When she tightens her focus, what does Hännikäinen make of New Finland? Her offerings, while set within the framework of historical geography, provide much of interest to historians, ethnologists, linguists, and even those interested in New Finland on a casual, local history basis. The author was fortunate to find local citizens with both an interest in and an awareness of the area’s Finnish roots. For someone researching in the past decade, that is far from a sure thing. Many rural areas have “disconnected” from their pasts, with even the second and third generations having either passed away or left. Yet even for such challenging places—Louise township in the Sudbury area comes to mind—Hännikäinen’s methods offer hope. Careful perusal of the physical landscape provides testimony even when the human voices have been silenced. Toponomy, remnant structures, and graveyards offer evidence both of the immigrant presence and its changing character. Saunas persist, but the Finnish tradition of numerous, small farm buildings fades, with larger barns and steel bins coming to the fore. Hännikäinen’s work on this “structural evolution,” found largely in Chapter 5, is the strongest element of the text. Her outlining of detail is impressive—an analysis of the “dovetail corner” techniques in log buildings is an example, as are her assessments of various farmyards changing over time.

While considering these varied physical aspects, Hännikäinen also provides a broader historical discussion. Along with excellent mapping of the settlement, she discusses the social roles of churches, halls, and more. At times, she drifts: is this a tightly focused historical geography or a general history of New Finland? Moreover, in these “social history excursions,” she often accepts “convention” rather than examining what the evidence offers. Thus the famous “divide” between Red and White Finns is unquestioned, even as her evidence suggests that pragmatism was a powerful force: *Uusi Suomi*’s Finns supported useful institutions. Moreover, the divisions that she identifies as indicative of a second historical landscape (1919–39) seem more aligned with competing religious orientations than ideological ones. On a more positive note, Hännikäinen emphasizes “selective memory”—unpleasantries have been largely eradicated from the “common memory,” or identity, of New Finland.

Hännikäinen’s recognition of the limits of public and private memory reflects her properly cautious assessments. That is wise: buildings and cemeteries can be read in many ways. Still, that caution leads to considerable (excessive?) reliance upon the “standard” American works of Matti Kaups and Arnold Alanen. That caution also limits her excursion in the post–World War II years—the historiography here is much thinner, the local materials less compelling—so we read little about New
Finland identity from 1945 to the 1980s, when historical reassessment led to a surge in local interest.

One might also quibble about various elements of the study. Details, inevitably, can be challenged: in listing Finns from graveyard records, Hännikäinen notes that some Finnish surnames were regularly altered. However, her appendix lists “Hill” as a non-Finnish name. Yet “Hill”—derived from a myriad of “Mäki” surnames—is a very common altered form. Similarly, her discussion of the declining use of Finnish on gravestones is informative, but one wonders about the practicality of getting Finnish on stones as they became a more “commercial” product. In addition, her sample size is small; in light of the limited numbers, more use of the 1911 census and the online land records would be welcome. Perhaps these became readily available after Hännikäinen completed the bulk of her research. Concerns notwithstanding, her charts (in text and appended) provide good snapshots of the New Finland setting and provide readily apparent support for her broad arguments.

Smaller points aside, there is much to praise here. Solid research, clear presentation, useful charts and images—all build a good case. Hännikäinen’s five historical landscapes evoke a community at first comfortable in being Finnish, then accommodating the English-speaking setting, and eventually finding its Finnishness at risk, leading to a recently resurgent awareness of identity. Among the interesting points is her findings about education: schools were meant to ensure the use of English, a practical requirement well recognized by immigrants already literate but aware of the extreme limitations of Finnish in North America. But practicality had a price: Hännikäinen’s study of cemetery headstones reveals a fairly early abandoning of Finnish names, sometimes even surnames. Gender differences—men had more outside contact—are an interesting sidelight.

No less interesting are findings about toponomy. For example, local use of Finnish names for “official” sites (e.g., roads) was quite limited, while the very common use of Finnish names for micro-sites (fields and the like) is mainly lost to history. Interestingly, toponomy has, of late, had its influence: relatively recent signage (e.g., at the cemetery and on modern road signs) has brought formal recognition and a sense of permanence to what had been fading “folk culture” terms. Finnish names for local cemeteries and the “New Finland” road say “we were/are here.” Hännikäinen goes further. Not only names but structures were “rediscovered.” Take the new “honoring” of hirsi [log] buildings previously relegated to rotting away. This reawakening of interest goes to a persistence of blended, rather than competing, identity—being of both Canadian and Finnish stock is a theme in the work. As Hännikäinen writes at the end of an excellent conclusion:

_Uusi Suomi on säilynyt tunnistettavana yhteisöönä 2000-luvulle asti. Uusi Suomi myös säilyy maisemassa: hautausmaiden portit ja tienviitta ovat konkretisoineet alueen nimen._ (209)
[New Finland persists as a recognizable community into the twenty-first century. New Finland is also preserved in the landscape: cemetary gates and road markers offer concrete evidence of the area’s name.]

We can add to that the “memory” landscape evoked by recent local interest, recollections aided by Hännikääinen’s well-crafted study. This book is well worth a look for readers of Finnish, and readily available as a PDF edition.

Peter V. Krats
Western University


Often eclipsed by the reputation of his brother Aki, Mika Kaurismäki stands on his own as a formidable voice in Finnish cinema; however, his aims and influence are not confined to the borders of Finland alone, as Pietari Kääpä sets out to prove in his book, The Cinema of Mika Kaurismäki: Transvergent Cinescapes, Emergent Identities. Reflective of his established and continuing research focus, Kääpä has published a number of articles and one previous book adapted from his 2008 PhD thesis, entitled The National and Beyond: The Globalisation of Finnish Cinema in the Films of Aki and Mika Kaurismäki, on the transnational implications of the cinema of the Kaurismäki brothers. In this, his newest book-length publication, Kääpä refines his focus primarily to the scope of Mika’s body of work alone and simultaneously broadens the scale of conventional research beyond both the borders of nation and the traditional theories of cinematic nationalism. Kääpä focuses on concepts such as glocalization—a term first penned by Roland Robertson in 1995 to explain the intricate relationship between the local and the global during the course of globalization, which Kääpä describes in the context of his study as “[t]he local and the global, mythic Finnishness in relation to European mythology, [where] reality and a fantasy world meet in Mika Kaurismäki’s films” (13). Additionally, he explores environmentalism and culture construction and materialism within his discussion of cinema and nation, consequently weaving an interesting dialogue in the space between established theoretical frameworks and casting a well-deserved light on the importance of Mika Kaurismäki’s work within film studies scholarship.

Borrowing the term from architectural theorist Marcos Novak, Kääpä uses “transvergence,” with its inherent ties to instability and fragmented heterogeneity, as a seam running through his discussion of Kaurismäki’s films. Moving beyond definitions of nationalism and culture from established scholars such as Anthony Smith,
Kääpä integrates new theories and moves beyond the idea of an ethnic core to a cinematic identity that incorporates genre, production, audience, and the role of the auteur within a constant state of reconstruction and re-emergence. Just as Mika Kaurismäki moved outside of Finland and created films in the United States and Brazil, so, too, does the scope of his films move outside of the limits of a solely Finnish culture. As Kääpä demonstrates in this study, chosen variations of government and commercial funding, national and political location, audience expectations, and Kaurismäki’s own aims for his films move him past the borders of being a Finnish nationalist filmmaker into the role of a global auteur who interrogates the very hegemonic borders he thus eludes in what Kääpä argues is a postnational framework.

One especially interesting aspect of The Cinema of Mika Kaurismäki is Kääpä’s discussion of Kaurismäki’s environmentalist films and his attempt to move into a “post-human” space by breaking down the connection between the human and the natural world as they exist within a binary structure. As these distinctions subside, so, too, do the constructed borders of identity, Kääpä argues. However, he also rightly points out that this endeavor is slightly problematic in Kaurismäki’s films—specifically Amazon—because Kaurismäki continues to work within a corporate structure and within the traditional framework of the self versus “the other.” While the limits of identity may be tested, Kääpä points out that, in this instance, the limits of the Western idea of civilization are not, and subsequently the borders of nation remain, to an extent, intact. As the Western outsider is presented delving into the natural space of the insider other, a result of the outsider as conqueror or as being assimilated is of no consequence since in neither case does the film move into a post-humanist discussion.

One noticeable gap in this study is the disregard for gender politics in relation to the depiction of the human body, except in how it relates to the environmental and archetypal aspects of Kaurismäki’s films. Kääpä discusses at length the symbolic position of the character Anna, from Paper Star, within a patriarchal malfare state as she is physically and emotionally abused by Uffe, a womanizer, and Ilja, a tabloid journalist, who takes “compromising photos” (54) of her body and beats her until she bleeds. Kääpä also analyzes a moment when Tom removes Maria from a nightclub filled with dancers, “imagined as a harem” (95), in the film Honey Baby, against theories of Western cosmopolitanism and the construction of a masculine narrative. Later, Kääpä connects the disrobing of the human body within nature to his discussion of a post-humanist movement in Amazon and The Clan, and states that this “is a very unusual occurrence in the oeuvre of Kaurismäki, as the human body is seldom revealed in his films” (159). The study of Anna and Maria directly contradicts this statement about Kaurismäki’s use of the body in his cinema—begging the phrase “human body” to be replaced with “male body”—and subsequently uncovers an area
that merits further research.

Pietari Kääpä takes the cinema of Mika Kaurismäki out of the shadow of Aki Kaurismäki and places it within not only the framework of Finnish nationalist cinema, but within a global context that interrogates and repeatedly attempts to re-imagine the boundaries of nation, culture, and identity. As is seen in *The Cinema of Mika Kaurismäki*, Kääpä successfully proves that this place has been rightfully earned and thus makes this book an important addition to any film studies library.

Virginia Houk
Dalhousie University


If I had to describe this book in two words, “wonderful” and “thorough” would be the first to come to mind. In *Finnish American Rag Rugs*, Lockwood presents the results of twenty-five years researching the tradition of rag rug weaving among Finnish Americans, particularly among weavers in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, and she makes a serious effort to give readers a deep understanding of what she has learned. Ten chapters are presented, each of which serves to provide readers with a holistic image of how a rag rug and its weaver fit into a wider world where tradition and change, individual and communal concerns, and art and craft intersect. In chapter 1 “The History of Rag Rug Weaving,” and chapter 2, “Finnish American Presence,” historical contexts of rag rugs and Finnish Americans are presented. In chapter 3, “Weavers,” Lockwood gives biographical sketches of notable weavers who work both individually and in pairs, allowing the stories of these women and men to illustrate how they became weavers, who taught them their skills, and to whom they are passing on these skills. These chapters lay a foundation for the context of weaving as a practice, with the human and cultural aspects of weaving remaining a central focus throughout the book.

The next four chapters go into detail on the practice of weaving itself. Chapter 4, “A Good Rug Requires a Good Loom,” describes the types of looms used by Finnish-American weavers, including several types of handmade looms, such as those built by the immigrant generation once in America, and commercial looms, as well as how looms have been adapted to suit individual needs better. In Chapter 5, “The Weaving Process,” we learn how the weaver selects and prepares rags, dresses the loom, and plans designs for a rug. The design is an important element, and Lockwood describes in detail some of the more popular patterns, including “Hit and Miss,” a seemingly random pattern of rags, and “Log Cabin,” which uses both the warp and
the weft as design elements. Chapter 6, “Aesthetics,” and Chapter 7, “Influences on Tradition,” focus on the appraisal of a rug as good or not based on its structure as well as the roles that tradition and trend play in the design and style of a rug. The latter chapter explores the role that commerce has played on the rag rug, with weavers selling their pieces through local gift shops, at fairs and festivals, church sales, ethnic organizations, and even in their own homes. Despite the fact that these rugs may earn the weaver some money, the different valuation of the rugs among different buying audiences (for instance, locals and tourists), as well as the consideration of rug weaving as a hobby, may obscure the role commerce can—and does—have in rag rug weaving. The color of rugs, too, is affected by the availability of rags, and by extension, the color palettes of the rags themselves. Finally, the role of Finland as a source of inspiration is examined, highlighting the similarities and differences between the traditions as they have diverged in the old country and the new.

Chapter 8, “The Life Cycle of a Rag Rug,” is meant to give the reader “an awareness of the cultural milieu in which rugs exist, exemplifying the values and attitudes of weavers and users” (161). Lockwood takes us along as new rugs are first used ornamentally, then transitioned to utilitarian functions in less prominent and visible locations in the home. Functionally, they might be used first as table runners, chair covers, and (ornamental) wall hangings, then used to reduce drafts, cover the floors, keep mud out of the house or the sauna clean, or even, eventually, to feed the compost pile. The rag rug lives a long life in the Finnish-American home. Lockwood also explores how people care for their rugs to extend their life. The place rag rugs hold in the Finnish-American community in the individual household is apparent, and their life cycle illustrates just how important they really are on group and individual levels.

In the next chapter, “Learning from Masters,” Lockwood discusses how rag rug weaving, despite the general decline of traditional arts in Western cultures, has maintained a base of weavers who learn from masters, thanks to both the continued local interest in rag rugs and to the strong material support for traditional arts apprenticeships provided by the Michigan Traditional Arts Program and groups such as the Detroit-area FinnWeavers Guild. The relationships between master weavers and their apprentices, as well as family sessions of rag strip sewing and other casual exposure to the art, are also important.

In the final chapter, “Concluding Thoughts,” Lockwood offers the reader a method of reflecting on the unity of “design, construction, and context” through which “a rag rug expresses the values and aesthetics of Finnish American life” (181). Key concepts offered throughout the book are reconnected so that we are left with an understanding of the whole world of the Finnish American rag rug as Lockwood has presented it. Weaving as an art, Finnish concepts of thrift and value, and the unique place that tradition and innovation play in defining the ever-changing world
of Finnish American rag rugs are all central to our understanding.

Following this chapter, and certainly something a reader will notice, use, and appreciate far before coming to the official end of the book, are appendices detailing the names and hometowns of weavers, their apprentices, and loom makers, the process of warping weaver Ellen Angman’s loom, Mary Nikkari Bindewald’s essay on her great-grandmother’s loom, and a section illustrating rug designs. Also not to be missed is a glossary following the notes, further making this book accessible to those not particularly versed in weaving.

For its lavish color photos, its respectful portrayal of the weavers, and its intensive, yet accessible look at the art of rag weaving and the people who practice it, this book is a must-read for many. I can only imagine it will enjoy a long and useful life among many people, including folklorists, museologists, ethnic studies researchers (including, of course, those in Finnish studies), material culture specialists, weavers, ethnic Finns, and the interested general reader.

Hilary Joy Virtanen
University of Wisconsin—Madison


Sauna is one of the most venerated features of Finnish-American and Finnish culture. It is widely (and proudly) believed to be exclusively Finnish, to have been the first structure built by Finnish immigrants in the new world because Finns could not live without sauna, and that savusauna (chimneyless, or smoke, sauna) is the “real” sauna. Scholars would argue that while the word “sauna” is Finnish, a similar way of bathing exists in Russia. It is unclear whether the first building was a sauna, or whether the immigrant’s first building was a one-room living quarter used as a sauna when needed. Whereas savusauna is the original sauna, its claim to “realness” disregards change in sauna over time. Sauna’s link to nature is also firm in the minds of Finns, a link perpetuated by classic Finnish literature, such as the *Kalevala* and Aleksis Kivi’s *Seven Brothers*, and reinforced by Sauna Seura (Finnish Sauna Society). Sauna Seura is the official organization that watches over and maintains age-old sauna traditions and whose standards are generally accepted in Finland and Finnish America where the ideal sauna, made of wood and looking as if it had sprung out of its surroundings, is located on the shore of a lake or river, or in the deep woods (Edelsward 1991, 72).

1 Two separate reviews, one by Yvonne R. Lockwood and another by Peter V. Krats, of Nordskog and Hautala’s book were submitted. We publish both in this issue.
Some Finnish Americans have called this book the best ever about Finnish Americans, and it is not surprising that such a glowing remark should be made about it. The book is beautifully designed, the photography is spectacular, and sauna is the very essence and emblem of Finnishness. The book validates “us.” The author, Michael Nordskog, grew up in the north country, and though not a Finn, he presents a vivid, sometimes romantic, picture of sauna from the outsider’s perspective. The photographer, Aaron Hautala, a Finn of the north country, conveys his love of sauna through his beautiful images.

The Opposite of Cold begins with personal statements by David Salmela, about his work as an architect of saunas and what sauna means to him, and by Arnold Alanen, who reflects on sauna in northern Minnesota during the period of immigration and his own attachment to saunas. Subsequent chapters deal with immigrant homestead saunas in the Lake Superior region and the descendants and the preservationists who have cared for them; the Finnish origins and the development of sauna from Aleksis Kivi’s Seven Brothers to saunas at Seurasaari, Sibelius’s Ainola, Sauna Seura, and Alvar Aalto, and in the Moomins; the north country ideal of lakeside saunas; public saunas; a lengthy survey of sauna stove makers; and a look at wood burning saunas, from savusauna to newly designed, contemporary saunas.

The Opposite of Cold contributes to the vast literature on sauna, which has been seriously studied in Finland, Canada, and the United States, resulting in numerous publications and conferences. (See the bibliography of over 330 pages on sauna: www.finlit.fi/kirjasto/julkaisu/saunabibliografia.pdf). Scholars have demonstrated that sauna is more than an example of unique architecture, more than a place to bathe, to socialize, or to get sober. Rather, it constitutes a constellation of these and many other features, behaviors, and attitudes that are a key to understanding sauna and, thus gaining insight into Finnish culture.

Overall, The Opposite of Cold is an enjoyable read. The inclusion of stories and anecdotes from the descendants of immigrant homestead saunas and those stories about the often overlooked sauna stove makers are welcome additions to our knowledge about sauna culture. These stove businesses, often family owned, strive to improve on the heat of wood-burning stoves, and with photos and detailed description the reader follows the changes made in the stove over time. The description of the “bullpen”—men and their conversations in sauna—makes an interesting contrast with Miesten Vuoro (Steam of Life), the recent Finnish documentary about Finnish men in the sauna. In the “bullpen,” the author witnessed general talk that could take place anywhere about bears, guns, wolves, internet connections, anger with one’s union and with the government over the lack of digital television. In Miesten Vuoro, however, men, who seldom talked about what bothered, angered, or grieved them, opened up in the sauna to other men with heartfelt emotions about personal matters. Sauna was a secure, safe place where these discussions could take place.
Unfortunately, the author seldom cites the sources for much of his data. In addition, he makes a misleading statement, writing, “sauna became more established among nonpeasants. . . . Elias Lönnrot’s epic made sauna a place of virtue and legend” (49). This statement implies a cause and effect, when, in fact, the *Kalevala* was not the reason for the rise in the stature of sauna but rather it was the work of the nationalists who consciously and with purpose attached new meaning to sauna. When Finland was transferred from Sweden to Russia in 1809, there was a crisis of identity among the Swedish-speaking upper class and a surge of nationalism among Finnish-speaking intellectuals. The nationalists’ goal was to create a sense of Finnish national identity, and they knew they had to have a symbol for this identity. They took sauna as that symbol (Edelsward 1991, 187). The *Kalevala* provided the mythology. Scholar patriots turned to the *Kalevala* to create a literary language, a national literature, and to reconstruct a historical past (Wilson 1976; 1975, 131). With time sauna did become the symbol of Finnishness, but this was not the case in the nineteenth century. At that time, sauna in urban and even rural settings was in decline (Edelsward 1991, 187). The new meaning attributed to sauna, a complete invention of the nationalists, revitalized sauna. Today, Finnishness is strongly linked to sauna.

*The Opposite of Cold* also validates the Finnish propensity for recycling, an important Finnish value. The author praises the Finnish immigrants for their “clever use of on-site materials and ancient methods” in building saunas. Finns even today are quite adept at, if not specialists in, recycling materials from discarded and dysfunctional objects to repair or build something. They were “green” before this was even a concept. A prime example of recycling is found in rag rug culture. Not only do Finnish weavers recycle old clothing into rugs, they prefer them and relish the thought of transforming useless discards into objects of beauty. We also know of examples of looms made from an old manure spreader and a discarded piano. Parts were taken from old machinery.

*The Opposite of Cold* should be in the libraries of all Finns and of all others who relish sauna even though they do not fully partake in sauna culture.

**Works Cited**


Yvonne R. Lockwood

*Michigan State University*
Sauna, kiuas, löyly—words familiar to many persons of Finnish background, even those with little command of the language. The merits and pleasures of the sauna experience as well as non-pretentious saunas are among the most persistent markers of Finnish immigration. In this handsome volume—evocative images abound on the oversized pages—Michael Nordskog’s writing teams with Aaron Hautala’s photography to celebrate the sauna experience in the “northwoods.”

That raises the first of many questions about this volume—where exactly are the “northwoods”? The book often focuses on the northern reaches of Minnesota, usually with saunas set near water, but occasionally Nordskog wanders to Michigan, parts of Ontario, and even a savusauna in Saskatchewan! It is as if there were doubts that a close study of northern Minnesotan saunas would suffice, so perhaps the authors added bits of other areas to make the work of more general interest, or perhaps more “academic”? Yet the book does not range broadly enough for either continental coverage or the “encyclopedic” quality of a scholarly tome. One might also wonder about the shifting tone—the author rightly castigates an inability to pronounce sauna; why, then, does “loo loo” suffice for löyly (3)?

The book also meanders from an interesting, personal exploration of Minnesota saunas to an apparent attempt to provide more “meaningful” materials. These “insertions” from beyond Minnesota are a bit jarring, limiting the book’s continuity. A full chapter—“Finland’s Sauna Culture”—flirts with excess in a book on North American saunas, but it does provide background context. Less satisfying is the rather over-enthusiastic assessment of the sauna architecture of David Salmela. While Salmela’s sauna designs are interesting—I’d love to own some of the examples—Nordskog seems intent on celebrating Salmela as much as the sauna.

That said, both Salmela’s “Foreword” and Arnold Alanen’s “Introduction” are good additions to the work, emphasizing the physical and psychological pleasures of a hyvä (good) sauna. The hot, dry air; the cleansing of water and vasta or vihta (bath whisk)—these provoke what Alanen calls “a direct link to one’s ‘Finnishness’” (xvi). Why indeed, to again cite Alanen (xv), would one worry about showers and the like when, as this reviewer recalls from his youth, saunas were a far better option than “fancy plumbing”?

2 Löyly refers to the increased heat and humidity caused by throwing a very small quantity of water on the super-heated rocks of the kiusas (sauna stove). The word löyly may also refer to “taking” (enjoying/tolerating) that heat.
In the end, at least for this sauna-loving reviewer who does without, Nordskog and Hautala’s unbridled passion for the sauna overcomes the book’s weaknesses and transgressions. A combination of nostalgia and celebration and recognition of the sauna’s persistence carries the day. Is this an encyclopedic coverage of North American saunas and their history? Absolutely not. Does the book flirt with being a superficial if pretty “coffee table” glance at random saunas that interested Nordskog? Yes. Scholars will dislike many elements: selective coverage, wholly insufficient citations, and a generally “thin” scholarly presence. Readers from outside (northern?) Minnesota will wonder why “their” saunas seemingly matter so little. Clichés abound—how many sauna-goers jumped through holes in the ice?—but in the end this book is a hymn of praise for the sauna.

That this song of praise ultimately “sells” the book is a good thing, because North American saunas deserve attention. The excursion to Finnish saunas (and sauna museums) is a pilgrimage; the savusauna arises from the smoke as a praiseworthy artifact of a gloried past. Emphasizing lakeside saunas—a whole chapter—reflects the celebratory tone: hot to cold in one liberating plunge. Reminiscing about public saunas—one hoped for more on this topic—reminds of this public ritual among urban Finns. Familiar with a sauna or not, it is difficult to read and view The Opposite of Cold while remaining indifferent about saunas. Scholars will wish for more löyly, as it were, but this celebration of the sauna is a welcome addition to the literature on Finnish immigrant lifestyles and their impact on North American society. Moreover, those unfortunate souls uninitiated into the pleasures of löyly will be tempted, while others whose sauna days lie dormant may well rejoin the sauna fraternity.

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Contributors

Sinikka Aapola-Kari is Doctor of Social Sciences and Docent at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki. She has had a long career as a researcher and teacher in youth studies, educational sociology, and gender studies. She received her doctorate in sociology from the University of Helsinki in 1999. From 2005 to 2009, she acted as coordinator for the National University Network for Youth Research in Finland. Her most important publications include *Young Femininity: Girlhood, Power and Social Change* (Palgrave 2005, with Marnina Gonick and Anita Harris) and an edited anthology on the history of Finnish youth, *Nuoruuden vuosisata: Suomalaisen nuoruuden historia* (2003), as well as dozens of articles in various international and Finnish scientific journals. She has also edited several other anthologies. Since 2009, she has worked as Executive Director of the Finnish Association for Child and Family Guidance.

Outi Fingerroos received her PhD in comparative religion from the University of Turku in 2004. In 2008, she received an adjunct professorship in Ethnology at the University of Jyväskylä. She has subsequently carried out post-doctoral research on Neo-Karelianism in her project “Karelia as a Place of Memories and Utopias,” which received funding from the Academy of Finland in 2005. Her research monograph, *Karjala utopiana* [Karelia as a place of utopias], was published in 2010. She is the principal researcher in the project “Strangers from the East—Narratives of Karelian Exiles and Re-immigrants from Russia Regarding Their Integration in Finland,” funded by the Academy of Finland. Furthermore, she is the responsible leader of the project “Meksikolaisia tarinoita Guadalupen neitsyestä” [Stories about the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico]. At the moment, Fingerroos is an Academy Research Fellow in the Department of History and Ethnology of the University of Jyväskylä. Her research is related to Somali migration in Finland.

Kirsi Hänninen is a post-doctoral researcher at the School of History, Culture and Arts Studies, Department of Folkloristics, the University of Turku. She has a PhD in comparative studies with a specialization in folklore studies from The Ohio State University (2010), where she studied as a Fulbright Fellow. She has also worked as a post-doctoral researcher in the Department of History and Ethnology at the University of Jyväskylä, where she focused on questions of labor migration. Her
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Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj, PhD, is Professor of Folkloristics at the University of Turku, emerita. She previously held positions at the University of Helsinki, the Finnish Literary Society, and Copenhagen University. She has been a visiting professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Lakehead University in Canada. Her studies have covered narratives and narrating, enigmatology, popular dream interpreting, and old wedding customs. She has done fieldwork in Finland, among Finns living in Sweden, and among the old Finnish population around St. Petersburg, Russia. She has published both monographs and articles in English and the Nordic languages, e.g., “The nominativus absolutus formula” (diss.) 1978, “Bondebryllup: Optegnelser i Dansk folkemindesamling” 1983, “Drømme gennem tusinde år” 1986, “Kertomus ja kerronta” 1988, and, in English, “Narrative and narrating: Variation in Juho Oksanen’s storytelling” 1996, “Riddles: Perspectives on the use, function and change in a folklore genre” 2001, and “Kerrotut ja tulkitut unet: Kulttuurinen näkökulma uniin” 2010.

Anna Kuismin works as a senior fellow at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies (2010–13) and holds an adjunct professorship of Finnish and comparative literature at the University of Helsinki. She previously worked at the Finnish Literature Society as the director of the Literary Archives (2001–9) and as an associate professor of comparative literature at the University of Helsinki (1992–97). Among other things, she has been a visiting fellow at the Biographical Research Center at the University of Hawai’i (1997–98) and at Columbia University (1998–99), taught at the University of Tampere (1986–91), and edited an English-language literary quarterly, Books from Finland (1980–83). Originally interested in literary theory and modernist and post-modernist Finnish literature, her focus has shifted towards life writing and unpublished texts, as well as cultural and micro history. In 2001, she founded a multidisciplinary research network, “The Processes and Practices of Literacy in 19th-Century Finland,” which has many international contacts. At present, she coordinates a Nordic research project, “Reading and Writing From Below: Toward a New Social History of Literacy in the Nordic Sphere During the Long Nineteenth-Century,” financed by the Joint Committee for Nordic Research Councils for the Humanities and the Social Sciences (2011–14). She is also the principal investigator for “Exploring Social Boundaries From Below: Class, Ideology and Writing Practices in Nineteenth-Century Finland,” a research project financed by the
Academy of Finland (2011–14). Kuismin’s recent publications include a monograph on a diary kept by a young Finnish country seamstress in the 1890s, an anthology of autobiographies of nineteenth-century self-taught ordinary people, and various articles on different types of life writing.

Sirpa Salenius is a native of Finland and has lived in Florence, Italy, since 1993. She teaches British and American literature in American university study abroad programs in Rome and Florence. At the moment, she also teaches at the University of Eastern Finland in Joensuu. Her conference presentations and publications focus on nineteenth-century American artists and writers in Italy, including Harriet Hosmer, James Fenimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, Constance Fenimore Woolson, and Henry James. She has also written about the antebellum South and nineteenth-century American constructions of race. She is the author of Set in Stone: 19th-century American Authors in Florence (2003) and Florence, Italy: Images of the City in Nineteenth-Century American Writing (2007). She is the editor of American Authors Reinventing Italy: The Writings of Exceptional Nineteenth-Century Women (2009) and Sculptors, Painters, and Italy: Italian Influence on Nineteenth-Century American Art (2009). She is presently working on a book on nineteenth-century American impressions of Finland.
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Dr. Richard North,
Professor of Old English Literature, University of London

You are invited to send your 250–300-word abstract to Dr. Darci Hill, Conference Coordinator, on any topic concerning Medieval and/or Renaissance thought. If you would like to propose a special session, you are welcome to do that as well. We welcome papers, posters, and performances on any aspect of this time period. Papers dealing with language and linguistics, literature, philosophy, history, art, music, and theatre are all equally welcome.

Deadline to propose a Special Session: September 30, 2012
Deadline for abstracts: October 15, 2012
Notification of acceptance: December 15, 2012

Please send all inquiries and abstracts electronically to:

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