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This issue of the *Journal of Finnish Studies* brings us again fascinating articles, reviews and book notes. Professor Jyrki Nummi serves up an intriguing discussion of the artist's personality and how it related to and is reflected in Juhani Aho's novel *Yksin 'Alone'.* This study provides a continuation of Professor Nummi's research for his book *Aika Pariisissa. Juhani Ahon ranskalainen kausi 1889-1890* (2000) [The Time in Paris: Juhani Aho's French Period 1889–1890].

Christine Evans, a Cinema Studies graduate student at the University of British Columbia, examines how Scandinavia's two greatest filmmaker auteurs, Ingmar Bergman and Aki Kaurismäki, treat trauma in their films.

Benjamin Gallagher, a graduate student in English literature at the University of Toronto, suggests a new way of looking at Kalevala's Kullervo sequence: he believes the guiding principle is hope, a view that clashes in an interesting way with more traditional interpretations of Kullervo as a sequence that is particularly void of hope.

Beth L. Virtanen advances ideas of the often elusive and slippery identity concept in her identity and diaspora study of poets in the Finnish American and Finnish Canadian diaspora. She examines markers of Finnishness and their variations in four contemporary female poets.

*Börje Vähämäki*
Juhani Aho 1861–1921
Jyrki Nummi:

ARTISTIC PERSONALITY AND JUHANI AHO’S NOVEL YKSN

During his stay in Paris in 1889–1890 Juhani Aho wrote the short first-person novel Yksin (“Alone” 1890), the first modernist narrative in Finnish literature and as such a very lonely one in the Finnish literary scene of the time. Yksin is a story of modern sensibility that the French call ennui. A man going through an early middle age crisis plans to travel to Paris. On his way abroad, during a stay in Helsinki, he falls in love with a young girl, the sister of his old friend. She does not respond to his feelings and finally turns down his proposal. The narrator travels to Paris, where he had planned to concentrate on literary work but muses instead on his frustrated love and wasted life. The story ends with the narrator’s visit to the Moulin Rouge. There he picks up a prostitute with whom he spends the night. When the novel came out in 1890, it caused an immediate scandal in Finland, first in the media and finally in the parliament.

Crisis is an elemental part of the avant-garde; scandal is the necessary goal. The publication of Aho’s novel, the themes of crisis, sexuality and prostitution, the public scandal and an additional story, in which the writer commented upon the reception of his novel, created the first literary avant-garde event in Finnish literature.

This is not, however, the way the novel and the events have been understood in Finland. Avant-garde as well as modernism are usually seen as isolated and sporadic events, schools, movements or periods in Finnish literary tradition from the turn of the century through to the 1960s. This series of separate short periods has been presented as follows: (i) the modernism of the turn of the century, (ii) the modernism of the 1920s (both in Finnish and Swedish), (iii) the modernism of the 1950s.

The problem with this view is that the concept of modernism and the repertoire which accompanies it is taken from centres — Paris, London, Berlin, New York, etc. — and usually applied directly to the periphery. It is to be expected that the smaller markets of the periphery cannot pro-
vide enough works to fill the full repertoire of the centre; the outcome will, therefore, usually turn out to be scarce and fragmentary. As soon as we supplement the Finnish literary life with international, i.e., Scandinavian or European life, random phenomena and works come into play. If the periphery and the centre are seen as partly overlapping, the otherwise invisible international background (the centre) becomes visible in the peripheral repertoire and fills it with works and events that happened elsewhere but which are connected to Finnish phenomena in the over-all framework.

Aho’s novel can be firmly linked to early international modernist and avant-garde trends, if we read it against the agendas that were written in Scandinavia. For example, a hilarious avant-garde etiquette called “The Bohemian Commandments” was published in the Norwegian journal Impressionisten:

1. You shall write your own life.
2. You shall sever your family ties.
3. One cannot treat one’s parents badly enough.
4. You shall never strike your neighbour for less than five kroner.
5. You shall hate and despise all farmers like Björnstierne Björnson.
6. You shall never wear celluloid cuffs.
7. Never neglect to provoke scandals in Kristiania Theater.
8. You shall never regret.
9. You shall take your own life.4

The agenda is light-hearted and more social than artistic. It provides rules for unconventional behavior and reminds us of the rebellious and political origins of the avant-garde. It is also the agenda Aho followed in publishing his provocative novel.5

If the Bohemian Commandments were the political source for Yksin, it is the series of articles on French literature “Den unga Frankrike: litterära silhouetter” [the young France: literary silhouettes] (Framtå, 1886-87) by the Swedish writer Ola Hansson that provided Aho with a fresh artistic agenda. Hansson refers to Karl-Joris Huysmans’s novel A rebours (1884) as a model for contemporary writing and to his concept of art which the author presented in a series of articles on the visual arts in L’art moderne (1879-82).

Huysmans declares that one has to abandon grand art — in the French context this meant “academic art” — and move to the themes of the modern age. The new artistic credo is translated or transmitted to Scandinavia in the following form:
Det gäller för den moderna konstnären att låta alla recept, traditioner och teorier ligga och att hålla sig uteslutande till hvad han ser runt omkring sig samt återgifva detta just såsom han ser det. Han måste först och främst frigöra sin tanke och sin blick från alla infärda synpunkter och sedan finna en ny konstnärlig metod, hvarigenom han kan undestillera essenser och aromen hos sin samtid.\footnote{A modern artist is to leave all recipes, traditions and theories behind and limit himself exclusively to what he sees around him and to convey that as he sees it. He must above all free his thoughts and his eyes of all learned perspectives and then find a new artistic method, through which he can distill the essences and the aroma of his time.}

If all the traditions and theories must be abandoned, what were the “modern essences and aromas” that the modern artist could achieve by observing the reality around him? According to Hansson they are in front of us: “Hela det moderna lifvet är ännu kvar att studera; det är ytterst litet af dessa skiftande yttre som vareblivits och fram-ställts.”\footnote{The entire modern life has yet to be studied; only extremely little of these shifting external phenomena have yet been discerned and represented.}

Aho’s novel seeks its form and subject in modern life and art, and the story crystallizes the modern raison d’être: everything can be started from scratch, again and again; anything may be re-invented or remodelled — including the artistic personality.\footnote{Juhani Aho’s short novel unites many of the modernist and avant-garde trends of the 19th century: the idea of fragmentary form as a composition of both observations of trivial every-day reality and subtle inter-artistic allusions, whilst, on the other hand, such “negative” traits as the negation of the autonomy of art and an implicit criticism of the concept of art (there are a lot of exphrasistic descriptions of the modern buildings in the World Exhibition, i.e. The Eiffel Tower). One of the shocking devices is the way Aho plays with the idea of personality as an artifact, a mixture of reality and fiction, something that can be re-designed without restriction.}

*Yksin* is a story that both covers and uncovers the artist behind his work. The central device here is the use of the mirror. In Aho’s novel the motif is not used as a modish allusion to the Narcissus myth. It is more like a gag favored by later modernist and especially post-modernist prose, a sort of framing paradox or an “interior signature”: the author of the novel (Juhani Aho) breaks the boundaries of art as he steps out of the fictive world of the novel like a mirage or a reflection.

The effect is built gradually in *Yksin*. In the beginning of the novel the narrator compares himself to young students he sees coming from
the red light district of night-time Helsinki. One of the students wears
his student cap like a dandy, and from this the narrator draws an incon-
solable conclusion: "Minulla on hattu kuin vanhalla herralla, minä olen
raskas ja lihava ja kömpelö" ("I wear my hat like an old man, I am
heavy and fat and clumsy"). The narrator unveils details of his physi-
cal appearance.

Another allusion is given when the narrator leaves the hotel restaurant
and descends the stairs to the reception lobby. He looks at a big mirror
on the wall examining the reflection:

[N]äen isossa peilissä mielihyväkseni miehen, jolla ovat silmat
ivallisesti rypyssä ja jonka suupielet osoittavat ylenkatsetta. Nautin itse
tuosta ivastani ja oman mielen uhasta, jonka yhtäkkä olen saanut
itsessäni nousemaan pitkien aikojen päästä. [11]

[T]o my great pleasure I see in the mirror a man who has scornful
wrinkles around his eyes, and whose corner of the mouth express con-
tempt. I enjoy the mockery and the rebellion that I have suddenly mu-
tered after a very long time.]

There are no individual features here but rather an allusion to the
stereotype of a contemporary decadent. However, the narrator returns to
the mirror when he has collected his overcoat:

Otan lakkini ja vetäsen harjalla tukkaani peilin edessä. Näen tåssä
puolihämärässäkin, että hiukseni alkavat jo lähtea. Kohta olen kaljupää.
Kuinka kasvoni ovat keltaiset ja elottomat ja veltot, kuinka syvissä
rypissä jo otsa! [12]

[I take my hat and brush my hair in front of the mirror. I can even in
this twilight see that my hair is getting thin. Soon I will be bald. How
yellow and lifeless and limp my face is. How deep the wrinkles already
in my forehead!]

A very important piece of information is unveiled in the latter mirror-
reflection: the narrator is losing hair. The mirror-effect has two func-
tions in the text. First, the signs of weariness and ageing are a part of
the melancholic atmosphere of the narrator’s musings. Second, the mir-
ror reflections have two distinctive properties one could have observed
(and still can in pictures) in the real, living Juhani Aho: a plump
body and thin hair. Of course, shared traits do not prove they are one
and the same, but if the similarities between the author and the narrator
are disturbingly clear, they remind the reader that a contract is broken
here.

The mirror images subtly break the fundamental presumption of the
untouchable and distinct nature of a work of art. The pictures remind
us that a work of art is not a closed entity after all; rather, all the bounda-
ries of fiction may be crossed, and art may appear as open as life. Only
a few years later Picasso hit nails through the canvas of a cubist collage to demonstrate that material from the external world may violently penetrate the world of art and unite two separate worlds. This was not enough to create the scandal but was certainly a part of it.

Looking is another shocking motif in the novel. There are many episodes and scenes in the narrative that remind the reader of the styles and compositional types of painting of the time. The most important visual motifs are tied to the interplay between the narrator’s and reader's gaze.\textsuperscript{13}

A special case of narrative description and a modish literary prop is the convention used in marking objects and events as “undescribable”: using dashes as a sign of something that is there but not presented. The convention activates the reader’s perspective: it emphasizes that the event or scene is out there but the view has been blocked. The reader has to continue the story line or fill the stage with relevant details in his own imagination. In short, he has to create a description of his own.

When Aho’s narrator and the prostitute he has picked up at the Moulin Rouge enter her apartment, she undresses, wraps a silk gown around herself and sits down in the arms of her guest. After a while she asks him to follow her to bed: “Pian, pian! Joudu nyt!” (“Quick, quick! Hurry up!”). The call is intended for the narrator-hero but equally to the reader:

\begin{quote}
Ja hän antaa olkapäänsä värähdellä levottomuutta petteen alla. \\
\textbf{\textsuperscript{14}}
Hänessä ei ole raakuutta eikä rivoutta. Hän on hellä ja hyvä ja ystävällinen ja tahtoo yhäkin pidättää minua luonaan. [And she lets her elbow tremble restlessly under the blanket. There is nothing coarse or lewd about her. She is tender and good and friendly and she wants to keep me with her.]
\end{quote}

Something happens under the blanket but the reader is not told what. He must figure it out for himself. However, the episode continues — the bed scene occupies several pages — and the narrator finally examines his feelings and wonders why the woman is not repulsed by him.

Then the narrator does something that may have been the real reason for the scandalous reactions the book aroused. He replaces the real woman, the prostitute in his arms, with the woman he really longs for, that is the young sister of his friend, Anna, who had earlier turned down his proposal. First he compares the two women in terms of physical appearance, then he forces himself to imagine Anna in place of the French prostitute while he makes love to her: “\textit{Se kirpeloi, mutta minä nautin sitä}” (“It hurts, but I enjoy it”), the narrator says, and continues:
Noin olin minä kuvailut hänetkin vierelleni, noin tahtonut harhailla sormieni hänen hiuksissaan, noin kohonnut kynäs-päilleni ja katsellut noin likeltä hänen kasvojaan, hänen pienimpä piirteitään, otsaa, kulumakarvoja, nenän vartta, suuta ja kaulaa. Ja noin olisi kai lampun valo kimallellut hänen mustassa kosteassa silmäterässään. [That is how I had imagined her at my side; that is how I wanted my fingers to wander in her hair; that is how I rose and watched her face up close, her minute features, forehead, eyebrows, nose, mouth and neck. And that is how the light of the lamp might have shone in her black, moist eyes.]

Now, this is a lover's language, and at least in the original Finnish there is nothing obscene about it. In the description, which is created physically from proximity but psychologically from a distance, the narrator observes himself in the act of looking or gazing.

What was embarrassing, then, for the 19th century reader was not the eroticism but the strong intimacy of the description. The narrator's tender erotic voice was unconventional in Finnish literature. In public writing there was a place for religious and moral confessions and for outbursts of idealistic love, but there was no place for real feelings of frustrated sexuality, sexual jealousy, depression and revenge. In Aho's novel one could read about them for the first time — and in first-person narrative.

There is still another point to consider. This unconventional intimacy was connected to real people — the narrator who reminded the readers of himself, Juhani Aho, and the young girl, who reminded the readers of Aino Järnefelt, a young lady from a well-known aristocratic family — and it was this that first aroused embarrassment and then led to the scandalous reactions. A thinly disguised writer is making love in his imagination to a real (but thinly disguised) young girl using a prostitute as a substitute.

The episode ends as the narrator once again turns to the woman and seeks consolation in her arms. The passion returns, be it real or pretended, when the episode comes to an end.

Hän on nukuttuaan lämmin ja tulinen ja hän pureutuu puoli-hulluna hellyydestä poskeeni kiinni. Ja minä unohdan taas entisyy-teni, minä en tahdo sitä muistaa, minun täytyy siitä paasta. [She is warm and passionate after having slept, and she presses herself to my cheek madly and tenderly. And I forget my past again. I do not want to remember it, I have to rid myself of it.]
Aho transmits into the narrative the painterly and literary style of the time. The dashes remind the reader that there really is a reader in the text. His rights and his privileges are, however, different from those of the narrator: there is something only the narrator sees, something he does not reveal to the reader. The reader is unable to take part in the events that are indicated but not shown. Consequently, the narrative situation becomes ironical: whereas the reader usually knows more than the narrator or character of fiction, the description here turns this upside down: the narrator sees and knows more than the reader.

How then did the scandal erupt? An anonymous critic crystallized public opinion in a newspaper review. In his closing judgment he declared Aho’s novel “the greasiest stuff that the Finnish reading public has ever been offered”. He also advised publishers by writing “in these days when a lot of new books come out and the title of the books does not tell us what kind of filth the content will offer – to announce on the title page that the contents will be pornographic”.17

When a discussion about state grants for art and literature was opened in the parliament in 1891, the storm broke out. The general feeling was indignation, and, as usual, the most bitter accusations were made by those who had not read the book and who did not intend to.

A Swedish critic, Georg Nordensvan described the situation in Finland to Stockholmian readers in a review in Afionbladet: “Det var en skildring af sådana realiteter qui se font, mais qui ne se dissent point”.18 The statement reveals a spirit of the avant-garde which was present in the beginning of the affair: the novel unveiled certain practices which everyone knew existed but which no one ever mentioned aloud. The refusal to admit the existence of these realities was aggressive, and it shows how publicity was constructed at the time in Finland (as it was elsewhere as well). There is no doubt that the 30 year old Aho, not long past his student years, had wanted to irritate the bourgeois, and that he succeeded beautifully.

The novel does not, however, end here. In the peak of the storm Aho published in Päivälehti, a daily paper in Helsinki, a story entitled “Taitelija joka oli maalannut paljaan naisen” (The Artist Who Had Painted a Naked Woman).19 It is a little story of a young painter who embarks on a two-year trip to Paris with the help of a state grant. Suspecting no evil he paints a picture of a naked young girl based on the story of Aino from the Kalevala. He returns to Finland and presents his painting in an exhibition. The painting is too revealing and creates a
scandal, the reviews are furious, the buying bourgeois is in a rage. The outcome is disastrous for the naïve young man: his engagement is broken off and the Helsinki elite circles turn their back on him. The parallels to Aho’s trip and the reception of the novel were obvious.

Gunnar Castrén, a well-known Aho scholar, commented on the story by saying that it was essentially a bitter satire on Finnish “narrow-mindedness and stupidity”. I do not disagree with him about the satire and I certainly do not disagree with him about the “Finnish narrow-mindedness and stupidity”, but there is something else in this simple and straightforward narrative. On the one hand, the story makes a most important connection to the public knowledge that was available on Juhanı Aho’s trip to Paris, on the “great work” he prepared there, and on the talks and rumors about his (broken) engagement with Aino Järnefelt, a girl from a well-known family in high social standing. On the other hand, Aho borrows his story from the visual arts, and the story — with its descriptions of the painting — makes direct reference to an outstanding contemporary artist, Axel Gallén, whose paintings had earlier produced smaller scandals. The great painting of the naked woman refers to Gallén’s famous Aino-painting, part of his Kalevala-based triptych [Figure 1]. It may, however, equally well refer to Gallén’s Demasquée (1888), which was regarded obscene in Finland [Figure 2].

Figure 1.

Thus, Aho mixes personalities, events and works of art so that the story both reveals and conceals the “real events” behind it. At the same time the story is an indirect payback to the reviewers for their priggish attitudes, their middle-class taste and their narrow concept of art. In short, it is an analysis of the relationship between the artist and the
public, whilst in broader terms it deals with how the institution of art functions. What is the idea of the artist and how has it changed?

It is no coincidence that, when visible signs began to appear in mid-nineteenth century art that artists had begun to live their art, i.e. live their life in terms of art, we can identify a growing interest and a passionate relation to theatre as a form of art and life. Playing with roles, transforming one-self and the environment, the flourishing of public and private performances refer during this time to a sort of "theatromania". Theatricality that runs through the avant-garde and modernism was important to the entire generation of the fin-de-siècle.

Avant-gardist behavior assumed several forms: first, we have the dandy and the clown, second, this is expressed in the ideas of acting
prominent in contemporary theatre, and especially, as an appearance of the psychological character as an artistic value, as in the plays of Ibsen and Strindberg. In these works personality, character, and outer being of man is treated aesthetically; human presence is made the subject of art.

Transforming the natural human body into an artificial role or character belongs fundamentally to the stage, to the sphere of acting. But the implications of this push us further: understanding personality as a representational innovation and ultimately as a work of art also spread to literature. Rimbaud talked about destroying the boundary between art and life. He wrote his revolutionary poetry before his 30th birthday and then found art so uninteresting that he forsook it and chose to live reality for the rest of his life. Oscar Wilde boasted of having dedicated his talent to writing and his genius to life — and then he mixed them up completely. Alfred Jarry took the last step and confused art and life in bringing the horrible character of his own making, Ubu roi and his fictive role to real life. This new way of understanding artistic personality was an essential part of the avant-garde art of the day.

"To reveal art and conceal the artist, is art’s aim," Oscar Wilde wrote in The Portrait of Dorian Gray which came out the same year as Yksin. In the publicity-seeking role of artists at the turn of the century one can see one side of the concept of personality in the modern or modernizing novel: the artist grows beyond the boundaries of the work. Aho’s novel is the first enterprise in art of that which Joséphim Péladan called kaloprosophy, the art of personality. The nature of personality and the fictional character, the status of authorship and the role of the writer in the public eye were called into question in a way that was completely new in Finland. This interplay became so complicated that the reading public fell behind — and this, naturally, was the writer’s intention in the first place.

It is fairly reasonable to assume that Aho knew in advance what was going to happen when he mixed his fictional characters with possible real ones, and indeed there is a very intimate ending to this small scandal in a small country. We know that Aino Järnefelt read the novel and that she told her mother one autumn evening in 1890 in an indifferent tone that it really does not matter, and, "anyway, I have today got engaged to Janne [Jean Sibelius]." We also know that the young newly-engaged composer read the novel on Christmas Eve in Vienna. He was furious and wrote a long letter to Aho, in which he asked the writer to choose the weapons for a duel. By the morning Sibelius had calmed down and the letter was never actually sent. Some 15 years later, the composer and the writer became neighbors in the small village of Tuusula near Helsinki, and ultimately good friends. The shadow story
of the real events closes in 1957 when Aino Sibelius, née Järnefelt, attached the motto of Aho's novel — a citation from Kanteletär's first poem — to her husband's obituary: "Soitto on suruista tehty, murehista muovaeltu" — "music is made of sorrows, forged out of troubles."

Jyrki Nummi is a professor of Finnish literature in the University of Helsinki. He has published books, articles, and chapters in books on Finland's literary giants: J.L. Runeberg, Aleksis Kivi, Juhani Aho, and Väino Linna. He has contributed to numerous literary magazines, including earlier issues of the Journal of Finnish Studies.

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ENDNOTES

1 The novel was soon translated into Swedish (Ensam, 1891) and Danish (Alene, 1892) and a few years later into many European languages but not into English.
2 See Castren (1922 I, 257–262) and K. Leino (1911).
3 The idea of crisis is emphasized in Calinescu’s (1987) concept of avant-garde; scandal takes an important position in such a classic study on avant-garde as Shattuck (1957).
5 In Finland, the agenda was realized in a somewhat less complete form but the spirit was definitely same. See Saarenheimo (1924) on the contemporary repertoire of provocative artistic and social ideas on the Finnish literary scene of the 1880’s.
6 Hansson 1887, 262.
7 Hansson 1887, 262.
8 On the development of artistic personality in symbolist theatre see Deak 1993. See Sennet 1971 and Bell 1976 on the invention of “personality” and “self” as a part of the programme of modernity.
10 Aho 1890, 9–10; quotations translated by JN.
11 Aho 1890, 14.
12 Aho 1890, 55.
13 On gazing and painterly motifs in the 19th century novel, see Kern 1996.
14 Aho 1890, 143.
15 Aho 1890, 144–145.
16 Aho 1890, 152.
17 Uusi Suomentar 27.11.1890.
18 Nordensvan 1891.
19 Päivälehti 29.3.1891.
20 Castren 1922 I, 260.
21 On Jarry’s life as Ubu roi, see Shattuck 1957, 223–251.
22 Wilde 1890/1948, 17.
23 See Deak 1993, 259–263.
24 A. Aho 1951 I, 355.
SHARED VISION & SHARED TRAUMAS: THE ETHICS AND ETHOS OF SHARED VISION IN INGMAR BERGMAN’S THE PASSION OF ANNA AND AKI KAURISMÄKI’S THE MAN WITHOUT A PAST

Roland Barthes writes on the essentially non-signifying structure of representations of trauma: “Trauma is just what suspends language and blocks signification... the traumatic photograph (fires, shipwrecks, catastrophes, violent deaths) is the one about which there is nothing to say” (19: my italics). Although one may suspect that Barthes did not intend for his statement to be interpreted confrontationally, I shall nonetheless pose the following provocation: if trauma is hostile to connotative analysis, then how precisely may we envision the ‘difficult’ image of trauma and its subsequent onscreen representation? To facilitate an examination of this subject, I will make reference to the concept of shared vision, which implies not only the stylistic exploitation of point-of-view, but the narrational model of internal focalization. My analysis begins with the model of shared vision explored in the cinema of Ingmar Bergman, progressing to the permutation and stylistic/ideological inversion of such problematic vision in Aki Kaurismäki. In the work of Ingmar Bergman, shared vision and its traumatic implications is approached as an essentially ethical query, but also as a representational possibility; conversely, the recent work of Aki Kaurismäki inverts the relational qualities inherent in shared vision as the symptom of a post-modern ethos, transcending the ‘merely’ ethical and invoking a perverse representational negation.

I should like to divide this analysis into two parts, the first part briefly detailing the preliminary ethics of a shared vision as exemplified by Bergman’s The Passion of Anna (1969); the invariable outcome of
Bergman's representational quandary is a refusal of the image itself and the emergence of a subversive system which cites denial as its motive representational force (Wilson 350). Considering this system as a mutable model, the second portion of my analysis will examine the trajectory of denial and its particular relation to the traumatic image from a Lacanian perspective, as evinced by Aki Kaurismäki's *The Man Without a Past* (2002).

The problematic aspect of shared vision remains a topic of great discussion in film theory, from feminist-psychoanalytic explorations of the contentious male gaze, to narrative and cognitivist accounts of character agency and the dissemination of diegetic information. When we share a character's point-of-view shot, essentially looking *with* him, what does this look imply? What manner of privilege does it grant us, compared to other shots which are generated omnisciently, more or less impartially, and remain uncoloured by the agency and motivations of a specific diegetic source? Moreover, how does shared vision index the desire (both diegetic and spectatorial) *to look*, and how does its address/injunction to the spectator ('look!') entail a perverse economy of intention and desire?

Such questions are no doubt familiar to any reader conversant with cinema studies, but the specificity of shared vision as a conduit for subjective — and possibly imagined/fantasized — focalizations of indeterminately 'traumatic' imagery, pushes our consideration beyond the sphere of intentionality. Rather, vision which communicates a particular trauma forces us to consider the ethical implications of the link between (diegetic) vision and (audience) spectatorship.

Although filmmaker Ingmar Bergman's work is often interpreted through a spiritual framework, his stylistic techniques invite a deeper analysis of the method behind the message. *The Passion of Anna*, a film which stemmed from Bergman's innovative experimentation with docudrama and Brechtian techniques, is exemplary of Bergman's diagnostic aspiration to provoke the viewer into questioning the ethical implications of a shared vision; likewise, the viewer must also consider the accuracy of the filmic image as a mediated form of representation. Although such statements of form and function can be applied to all filmmaking procedures, Bergman pushes the process further to an extreme form of self-reflexivity — a narrative dislocation rendered stylistically to evoke a sense of cinematic denial. Utilizing thematically charged iconography and mediation, Bergman's work aligns the polarities of representation and the refusal of that representation within the very medium placed under scrutiny, thereby constructing significance through ambiguity rather than despite it.
In *The Passion of Anna*, Bergman examines the query of truth both narratively and in terms of his own (possibly inadequate) stylistic manipulation of 'truth' as a broad metaphysical concept. The very title of the film is declarative. It professes a narrative purpose and is imbued with a prefigured identity which is deliberately contentious in its direct address. Bergman's aim, therefore, is less to impress upon the spectator that this film is indeed 'about' the passion and all its personal/spiritual permutations than to make the spectator immediately suspicious. Is the camera (and the director who commands it) truly able to capture the inner motivations of characters when Bergman himself attests to the necessary duplicity of cinematic representation, stating:

> When I shoot a film I am guilty of deceit. I use an apparatus which is constructed to take advantage of a certain human weakness, an apparatus with which I can sway my audience in a highly emotional manner... Thus I am either an impostor or, when the audience is willing to be taken in, a conjurer (Malmström and Kushner xv).

Iconographically, Bergman manages this central theme of truth and its limitations through extensive cinematographic mediation, specifically by utilizing partitions and secondary framing to convey severance and deception. Most expository activity in *The Passion of Anna* is invoked by reflective partitions between the individual characters and the viewer. When Anna speaks on the telephone at Andreas' house, she appears purely as the product of tertiary framing (Andreas' gaze, the frame of the doorway through which he watches her, Bergman's extra-diegetic frame), Andreas is often framed by the many partitions in his house, and Eva delivers a portentous monologue in half-shadow. In all cases, the film's protagonists remain inaccessible, as if Bergman's estimation of his characters' inherently traumatic complexities demanded that he place a series of partitions between the image itself (the screen-persona) and the spectator.¹ This is precisely why Bergman identifies as a director whose primary interest lies in representational ethics. As Annette Insdorf remarks, "screens, like other surfaces, are full of mysteries" (72), but such mysteries do not remain grounded in characterization, rather extending to the viewer's perception of directorial power and limitation. In these introductory shots of the protagonists, Bergman definitively engages his audience with an image that is *not* life itself, but a mediated interpretation of reality; he physically separates us (often two, but sometimes three times) from the diegetic universe of the film.

Anna's reflective shots are charged with double significance. Since the film's primary narrative focalizer² is Andreas (we are obliged to see
Anna as Andreas sees her — through windows, doorframes, and as a curiously disembodied voice on the telephone), then their first diegetic ‘meeting’ is crucial. Andreas, listening to Anna’s telephone conversation, is still relegated to viewing Anna through a compensatory partition, but the viewer is afforded several shots during this non-communicative shot/reverse shot exchange (I identify it as ‘non-communicative only because Anna is unaware that Andreas is spying on her) that are not from Andreas’ point-of-view (i.e., without the doorframe indicating his position). A similar, although a somewhat more visually compelling, trope is exploited when Andreas and Eva discuss possibly meeting again after they first spend the night together. Significantly, representation precedes reality in this sequence. Bergman includes only Eva in the shot, but addresses Andreas’ presence through his looming shadow. Eva seems to speak to the reflected/shadow non-Andreas first, but the viewer is only questionably privileged in seeing him without Eva’s motivating gaze — to the viewer, he is still only a reflection of reality because he is a filmic image. Essentially, there is no resolution in Bergman’s sudden shift in focalization, since Andreas is always-already his reflected ‘likeness’ and not himself. Such a hypothesis is particularly exploited when Eva suddenly rushes towards Andreas and embraces him; Bergman cuts rather than pans continuously as the Andreas-shadow transitions to become Andreas. The shots which identify as Andreas’ point-of-view in this sequence are convoluted: the spectator shares his vision as a matter of internal focalization (we see Eva speaking), but she speaks to the shadow and not to the camera, and Bergman deliberately avoids a direct point-of-view confrontation in having Eva address the shadow, a spectral surrogate for Andreas’ body/gaze. The gaze, it seems, is never without a source, but the gaze is suspicious as an image; even and especially point-of-view shots in The Passion of Anna have no definitive identity since they are dually possessed by everyone and no one. As the camera cuts from Andreas’ shadow to his ‘true’ image, Bergman’s use of the jarring cut rather than a more invisible pan makes it evident that only one mediative layer — the reflective surface — has been removed. The many partitions between reality and image, image and director, and image and viewer remain firmly in place.

Throughout The Passion of Anna, Bergman questions the validity of the representation of truth through a sight often devoid of subject, or through what Thomas Elsaesser terms “impossible viewing positions” (63). Traditionally, the viewer tends to associate the camera with a particular subject — either as an omniscient eye which scrutinizes move-
ment, or through point-of-view correlations with an individual character. Bergman conforms to this structure only to deflate our expectations, as we have noted in our discussion of Andreas' point-of-view shots of Eva and Anna; questions of what we see and know and how this knowledge has been mediated become inevitable. The desired effect is one of defamiliarization, of exploiting the image as malleable and often inaccurate, and therefore compelling the audience to note a distinction between knowledge and its presentation. But the question of sight remains; by aligning the camera with an ambiguous originary source, the viewer cannot help but be reminded of its presence, and in this knowledge affirm a distinction between 'legitimate' sight and its representational manifestation. Indeed, Bergman invalidates traditional and comfortable viewing positions, since such meditative cinematography dually inverts the roles of spectator/ voyeur and screen-persona/exhibitionist while implying that every depicted subject and object is a duplicitous cipher which can only exist as long as someone is willing to 'play the spectator.' As Elsaesser observes,

A given world, it would appear, becomes a reality only because it implies spectators...

[The characters'] waiting is less a waiting for something to happen..., but instead, a waiting for someone who can be the spectator, and thus confirm them... The audience is inscribed as voyeurs, but only because the characters are obliged to be such fervent exhibitionists (64).

Yet why, despite such apparent cynicism, should we define Bergman as an essentially ethical director? Primarily, it should be noted that Bergman's engagement with irony is limited; his films are (self-admittedly) conscious attempts to approximate the complexities of trauma, and while they may deny the validity, power, or persuasiveness of the image itself, they are not so cynical as to deny representation per se. It therefore follows that denial as an isolated motive force is not enough; the divide it draws between the Real and fantasy, reality and representation, and trauma and its defences is too definite and too obvious, fundamentally because it neglects to incorporate the Lacanian theory in which such rudimentary denial is established.

In claiming that the mediated image is characterized by an aesthetic denial, we have necessarily encountered the Lacanian realm of the traumatic Real and its many phantasmatic screens. Yet rather than asserting the obvious (that the traumatic image may only function comfortably throughout if it is phantasmatically 'blocked' by an aesthetic compensation, as in Bergman), I would like to state the obverse — that trauma is
Christine Evans; "Shared Vision & Shared Traumas in Bergman and Kaurismäki"

only the beginning. This is essentially why we make a distinction between Bergman’s ethics which question the image (a typically modernist query), and the increasingly post-modern approach adopted by Aki Kaurismäki which presupposes denial and subsequently presents a perverse ethos of representation.

When the Lacanian-Marxist theorist Slavoj Zizek states that films expose the “discordance between reality, observed from a safe distance, and the absolute proximity of the Real” (1994:114), his analysis — for my purposes in this essay, at least — neglects the central representational concern of theatricality and spectacle. In the essay, “David Lynch, or, the Feminine Depression”, Zizek deconstructs a filmmaker’s (David Lynch) representations as dramatizations of binary oppositions which privilege the violent intercession of a generally obstructed, “hard”, traumatic Real” (1997:175) into the symbolic or phantasmatic realm. Zizek argues that the polarization of the (traumatic) Real and (compensatory/pacifying) symbolic psychic realms is a faulty assumption which undermines the possibility that the Real — far from opposing the veneer of artifice — is rather a necessary constituent existing within it. In The Man Without a Past, filmmaker Aki Kaurismäki engenders trauma as a fantastic spectacle and not as the ‘shocking’ intrusion of the Real, as Bergman does; although such moments of trauma are disconcerting, they effectively engage in a dialectic as convoluted as sequences depicting M’s (or, as we later discover, Jaakko Antero Lujanen’s) ‘past’ or ‘memorable’ life (to which we are briefly exposed during the film’s opening sequences). Concurrently, the film’s only approximation of the Real occurs not in the explicit depiction of brutal ‘shocking’ trauma, but rather through the implied realization of empathy. A stylistic evaluation of Man Without a Past establishes it as exponentially more elaborate than a simplistic differentiation between Real and fantasy; the violence or trauma is not the Real as an ethic which defies the image, but rather a representation of a glorified construct — an ethos which accepts the image and its resultant representation in all their perversion.

The self-reflexive concept of theatricality and spectacle is a prominent feature showcased throughout Kaurismäki’s oeuvre; from his experiments with soundscapes and music in Juha (1998) and Leningrad Cowboys Go America (1989), to the narrative noir reconsideration of Shakespeare’s famous text in Hamlet Goes Business (1987), Kaurismäki consistently foregrounds the relational qualities of artifice and representation. Regardless of the possibility that the Real may permeate the image, Kaurismäki often establishes fantasy as a point of thematic departure in

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his films. The opening sequence of *The Man Without a Past* prefigures M’s ‘traumatizing’ head wound with shots of him on a bus and sleeping in a park; he appears only in liminal or transitional spaces, such that his mysterious past is representationally erased for the spectator even before the narrative occurrence of this erasure. Although these opening sequences will later gain some significance to the narrative, their placement suggests a mediated artificiality — a construction of reality — thereby establishing *The Man Without a Past* itself as a spectacle.

Throughout the remainder of the film, Kaurismäki engages the viewer in sequences of deliberately melodramatic artifice which, although not clearly delineated as ‘unreal’, are certainly somewhat suspiciously wooden in their undermining of “the obvious meaning not by endeavouring to discern beneath [them] layers of ‘deeper’ analogical meanings, but by insisting on a too-close, too literal reading” (Zizek 1997:48). Nieminen’s attempt to restore M’s memory by drunkenly swinging a beam at his head (then claiming “when I was young, I saw a film where a guy who’d lost his memory regained it by getting hit in the same spot again”), the shots of the excessively dour Salvation Army workers listlessly distributing food to the homeless, and M’s mysterious/existential rebirth at the film’s outset, are oversaturated comedic/melodramatic simulacra which oppose and therefore welcome the intrusion of a “hard’ traumatic reality” (Zizek 1997:175). Such instances of extreme artifice and cliché recall Zizek’s analysis of the necessary obstruction of the sexual act (the Real) wherein an excess of distraction “delivers us of the oppressive weight of [the Real’s] massive presence... The [obstruction, whatever it may be]... functions as the phantasmatic screen obfuscating the Real of the sexual act” (1997:182). The blatantly artificial image becomes easily identifiable in Kaurismäki because of this very excess; exemplified particularly by M’s conformity to the role of a drifting ‘dead man’, extreme artifice is not only an innocent expression of his legitimate inability to remember, but also a parodic reduction wherein pure symbolization produces a series of signifiers without substance.

Yet, the analytical contention inherent in *The Man Without a Past* lies not in the depiction of fantasy or in the existence of the Real per se, but rather in when the Real is privileged in permeating the image and shattering the phantasmatic screen. For Slavoj Zizek, these moments occur when acts of violent trauma permeate the image, thereby producing a ‘blot’ or ‘stain’ which “does not only function as a symbolic act, [but also] cuts directly into the Real” (1994:117). He describes a literal evocation of this ‘blot’ in his analysis of Alan Parker’s *Angel Heart*, whereby
the expanding stain of blood [the blot] announces the abyss of lethal jouissance which threatens to engulf us, to draw us into a psychotic night in which we are bombarded from all sides by an excessive, unbearable enjoyment... What takes place here is the disintegration of the phantasmatic support of our relationship to reality (1997:184).

We may note how it is possible (and even inevitable) to assume that fantasy and the Real are binary oppositions, each serving to contrast the other such that the inevitable intrusion of the Real exponentially shocks the viewer into recognizing the differences between the two. Such is the ethical framework of shared vision expounded by Bergman's *The Passion of Anna*, directorial 'inadequacy' compels the safeguard of phantasmatic supports (reflective/shadow barriers and other such partitions) such that the violent/traumatic and the mundane are posited contrary to one another rather than serving a complementary function. Comparatively, in Kaurismäki, trauma and banality function on a vertically-structured 'Mobius strip' wherein one becomes the other until the two are interchangeable, much like M eventually 'becomes' Jaakko Antero Lujanen. Although this identity was always already in existence, it is ontologically prefigured by M's capacity to *remember* it. Ironically, this memory is compelled by his transition from a fully-formed subject (the M who rides the bus and sleeps in the park), to the embodiment of the Lacanian Other — in short, as a perspective-observer exterior to his own subjectivity.

In its support of fantasy and an inevitable transformation into a world of parallel artifice, such violent trauma pacifies rather than signifies the incursion of the Real. And although the Real is always relatively delayed in *The Man Without a Past*, its closest approximation occurs not as a polemically engineered 'shock' meant to rouse the viewer through psychological or physical brutality (as in Bergman), but rather during a moment of empathy wherein the melodramatic/comedic excesses fall away to reveal M's legitimately tragic existential crisis and detachment from his own body. Zizek describes occurrences of such 'subjectless', selfhood-deprived bodies as follows:

... It is as if a body belonging to another, dark, infernal realm suddenly found itself in our 'normal' daily universe ... a wounded, exposed body whose material presence exerts an almost unbearable pressure on us (Notes 1994:133).

Confused and 'stripped', M is essentially removed from his own body (this is compounded by the point-of-view shot at the film's outset, in which the spectator enters M's body but cannot share his sight clearly).
Consequently, he dually embodies both a harsh, traumatic reality in the exposure of his trauma and his body, as well as an excessive phantasmatic screen in his disorientation and hysteria. Although only metaphorical, this very dislocation renders as Lacan’s ideal ‘flayed, skinless body’ — ‘Real’ only in the sense that he is simultaneously alive and ruptured.

The near-emergence of a traumatic Real in scenes which evokes empathy and pity rather than revulsion, further substantiates trauma as an agent of fantasy; an event, ensconced in the symbolic implication of an unseen act is ironically more compelling than the explicit depictions of brutality wherein trauma impedes the image and ‘shocks’ the viewer. We can here recall Schelling’s formulation that the opposite of existence is not non-existence, but insistence: accordingly, “that which does not exist, continues to insist, striving toward existence” (Zizek 2002:22). Rather than subverting fantasy, in which this very ‘shock’ of trauma entails an intrusion of the Real, Kaurismäki’s stylistic execution of contentious sequences in The Man Without a Past complicates the binary model of the differentiation between the Real and fantasy, truth and mediation, as is ethically explored in the works of Ingmar Bergman. In this alternate system of evaluating trauma as an ethos of representation, trauma is aligned with the very artifice it apparently opposes, and remains a fantasy in its theatrical fulfillment of desire; we now encounter an ethos of the shared vision and of representation itself, wherein ethical denial is merely preliminary to a perverse representational negation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Christine Evans: "Shared Vision & Shared Traumas in Bergman and Kaurismäki"


ENDNOTES

1 Bergman’s ethical concern certainly conjures the Lacanian doxa that the traumatic Real which resists symbolization can only be encountered indirectly, through the ‘placement’ of phantasmatic screens which pacify the onslaught of direct trauma. We shall see how this theory is perverted to an artificial end in my discussion of The Man Without a Past.

2 For this term I am indebted to Edward Branigan’s essay “Levels of Narration” which defines the focalizer or the process of focalization as follows: “Introducing the narratological concept of focalization is meant to remind us that a character’s role in a narrative may change from being an actual, or potential, focus of a causal chain to being the source of our knowledge of a causal chain: the character may become either a (higher level) narrator or a (lower level) focalizer... Focalization (reflection) involves a character neither speaking (narrating, reporting, communicating) nor acting (focusing, focused by), but rather actually experiencing something through seeing or hearing it. Focalization also extends to more complex experiencing of objects: thinking, remembering, interpreting, wondering, hearing, believing, desiring, understanding, feeling guilt” (Narrative Comprehension and Film. New York: Routledge, 1993:101).

3 This is made particularly evident in the actor interviews which appear intermittently throughout The Passion of Anna. The actors speak to an offscreen source who prompts them with questions, but only Liv Ullmann (Anna) speaks directly into the camera — thereby implying that for her, the camera and the offscreen interviewer are one and the same.
KALEVALA'S KULLERVO SEQUENCE: A TRAGEDY OF HOPE

It is hard to dispute the fact that the Kullervo sequence in the Kalevala is tragic. Undeniably, the character Kullervo suffers greatly during the sequence, and almost all the peripheral characters surrounding Kullervo die before the sequence itself ends. Lönrot himself was keenly aware of the tragic power of Kullervo's story — when creating the New Kalevala he expanded the Kullervo sequence from a single runo to six, despite apparent difficulties of reconciling it with the overall narrative of the Kalevala. Yet what exactly are the tragic elements of the Kullervo sequence? Certainly, the suffering of the central character is a necessity for tragedy. But suffering alone does not define a work as tragic, even according to the earliest definitions of tragedy as a genre. What, then, is a tragedy? Aristotle’s Poetics and Sophocles’s Oedipus Rex yield one classical definition of the tragedy genre. While applying that definition to the Kullervo sequence in the Kalevala to determine whether or not it can be called a true tragedy, I also hope to point to flaws in both Fredrik Cygnaeus’s and Juha Pentikäinen’s analyses of the tragic elements of the Kullervo sequence as well as advance my thesis of Kullervo as a tragedy of hope.

Before turning to Aristotle, I will give a brief summary of the positions held by Cygnaeus and Pentikäinen. Cygnaeus was the first to identify the Kullervo story as a tragedy, in a book published in 1853 on the tragic elements of the Kalevala. According to both Pentikäinen and Cygnaeus the root of Kullervo’s misfortune was the conflict between his natural birthright as a hero, and the fate of slavery to which he was subjected. Pentikäinen goes on to link fatalism to Finnish psychology, suggesting that for Finnish men the role model is often “a superman who advances inexorably toward his fate, which may even be suicide.” The Oedipal theme of a prophesied yet forbidden sexual contact that drives the hero to suicide is clearly what Cygnaeus has in mind when he dis-
cusses fate as the driving force and defining feature of the Kullervo sequence as a tragedy.

Pentikäinen, in turn, suggests that the Kullervo sequence is simply “an utterly gloom-filled tale of death.” Rather than a figure in a tragedy propelled by an indifferent fate, Pentikäinen sees Kullervo’s suffering as an example of the inevitability of death. He links Kullervo’s death to incest, which often is the consequence of transgressing the order of the cosmos, but concludes in the end that the whole sequence simply “dramatically relates the obvious fact that it is impossible to avoid death.” This too is an analysis that draws heavily on parallels between Kullervo and Oedipus, again focussing on the plot event of incest and a sense of inevitability as common (if not defining) features of tragedy. He seems to conclude, however, that the only real “tragedy,” in a loose sense of the word, is the presence of death.

When we turn to Aristotle’s Poetics, which addresses the subject of tragedy as a genre from a Greek perspective, several important observations must be made. First of all, Aristotle emphasizes that the key element to tragedy is the plot (1450a35), and furthermore that tragedy is an imitation of action as opposed to character, since “the end for which we live is a certain kind of activity, not a quality. Character gives us qualities, but it is in our actions — what we do — that we are happy or the reverse” (1450a15–20). In other words, tragedy follows a sequence of events that reveal the central character’s method of behaviour in life as one that does not lead to happiness. Aristotle takes this line of reasoning further, suggesting not only that tragedy imitates action, but that the actions it imitates must arouse pity and fear in the audience. These actions have the most power on the audience, he suggests, “when they occur unexpectedly and at the same time in consequence of one another” (1452a1-5). This is an important feature that should not be overlooked. Aristotle, in defining tragedy, is aware that it is not only the events that occur within the narrative that make a story tragic or not, but the effect that story has on the audience. The audience’s reaction defines tragedy as much as the plot does. In his concluding analysis of the features of tragic plot, Aristotle also mentions that the tragic character is ideally someone the audience can identify with, neither wholly good nor wholly bad, and whose misfortune “is brought upon him not by vice and depravity but by some error of judgment” (1453a5-20). Essentially then, in order for a story to be called a tragedy, for Aristotle, the plot must expose a way of being in the world as flawed (through the suffering of the central character as a result of the actions the character performs),
and it must also engage with the audience in such a way that the audience both experiences pity and fear, and can identify with the central character and the "error of judgement" the character makes.

Bearing this in mind, let us turn to Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*, a play that both Cygnacue and Pentikäinen see as a parallel to the Kullervo sequence, and a play that Aristotle himself mentions more than once when discussing the ideal features of tragedy. The play's key plot points are: there is a prophecy that Oedipus will kill his father and marry his mother; Oedipus is abandoned as a child, eventually hears of the prophecy, leaves his adopted parents so as to avoid his fate, and ends up fulfilling it unintentionally (all these events occur prior to the start of the play); then through his actions he discovers for himself what the audience already knows — he has committed parricide and incest. He blinds himself and goes into exile.

We must keep in mind, in recounting this story, Aristotle's injunction that tragedy focusses on activity and action, as opposed to quality of character. What is the tragic activity Oedipus is engaged in throughout the play? Certainly, fate cannot count as an "action" or a way of life for Oedipus. It guides the outcome of his actions — he is fated to kill his father and marry his mother — but it does not constitute them. Even incest, which is a particular action, is not the activity Oedipus is engaged in throughout the play — it is what he wants to avoid. Furthermore, all these actions occur outside the play itself. There must be something to the way Oedipus acts within the play that is his "action". The activity most characteristic of Oedipus's character, I would argue, is hope. This is independent of his character; we should not see Oedipus as a hopeful person, but as someone who has chosen to let his actions be guided by hope.⁸ Oedipus himself says, at the opening of the play, "One thing could hold the key to it all/ a small beginning give us grounds for hope."⁹ This seems to speak to the meaning of the play as a whole — not only is hope the ground for Oedipus, it is the key to the entire play.

However, the Greek word translated as hope is "elpis," which literally means "expectation." This links elpis to fate (in Greek "moira," literally "your portion/what has been allotted"¹⁰). Fate is something given by the gods, and so it is what you can expect to happen. How is Oedipus's hope different from the literal meaning of the word elpis? Again we return to Aristotle, who maintains that the tragic character must make an "error of judgment." Oedipus's error is his misunderstanding of the meaning of elpis: he expects the future to be different than it is, simply through his own actions. He sets himself above fate through his misguided expecta-
tions — his hubris or hamartia is identical to his hope. As a result of this error, he is shocked rather than resigned when events play out as prophesied, despite “knowing” his fate beforehand.

Aristotle also focuses on the role of the audience as a defining feature of the genre of tragedy. All tragedies aim to evoke emotions of pity and fear in the audience, Aristotle emphasizes. Pity for Oedipus is generated because the audience is aware of Oedipus’s misunderstanding, and can see the suffering that results from that misunderstanding. We see that Oedipus has a misguided sense of elpis, that he thinks he has avoided fate, and that as a consequence his fate is “undeserved misfortune” — he himself is horrified at the prophecy, and so does not deserve for it to be fulfilled. Fear is caused because, unlike Oedipus, we the audience cannot know our own fates. What if we too are misguided in our elpis, and are not merely expecting the future, but are expecting it to be different than it is? It is easy to imagine that we too have crossed the line from hope to hubris, and it is this association with Oedipus that causes fear.

Yet there is another occurrence of hope when the events of Oedipus Rex unfold: the hope of the audience for the characters within the tragedy. It would make sense, considering the revelation of Oedipus’s prophecy at the beginning of the play, that any audience watching the play would feel merely resignation. They have been told the outcome of events, and then those events occur. How is it that despite the ending being revealed at the beginning, the audience is still affected by the events within the play? Again, the answer must be hope. By hoping for the prophecy not to be fulfilled, we are encouraged to repeat Oedipus’s own fatal flaw. And as the likelihood of that hope being realized diminishes (and rationally, we knew it was impossible from the very start), we begin to hope for some positive aspect to be uncovered, even if it is Oedipus’s own realization of his error.

Oedipus himself says much later in the play, as the shepherd is approaching, “He is my last hope.” The hopes of everyone involved in a tragedy gradually dwindle, yet are still allowed to exist. With this comes an understanding of how tragedy as a genre operates: it systematically denies any rational reason for hope both to the characters within it and the audience watching it, and yet allows the audience to continue cultivating hope (unconsciously or irrationally) in vain. There can be no tragedy if both the audience and the characters feel resigned towards the events that unfold — ideally, the characters and the audience are both allowed to have just enough hope that when it is crushed by the ending.
the audience continues to fear the destruction of the hopes they have in their own lives outside the world of the play.

Let us apply this understanding of hope to the *Kalevala’s* Kullervo sequence, then, to see exactly how hope operates within the sequence as a whole, and to decide whether the movement of hope within the sequence makes it a true tragedy.

The sequence begins with a blood feud between Untamo and Kalervo, in which Untamo utterly destroys Kalervo’s clan, takes captive the one surviving pregnant housemaid, and makes her his servant. She soon gives birth to Kullervo. He is a difficult child: he smashes his cradle, tears his diapers, and at three months swears to avenge his father (Runo 31, lines 86-107). What is evident from the opening is the presence of vengeance as a driving force in Kullervo’s world. While *Oedipus Rex* began with a prophecy, the Kullervo sequence has no metaphysical pretensions, but instead involves, as an inevitable force, a rather brutal aspect of human nature — the desire for revenge. Oedipus’s prophecy serves to crush the initial hope of the audience that his life will be a happy one; the blood feud between the brothers has the same effect on the audience’s expectations for Kullervo’s life. Already, however, we can see a problem with Cygnaeus’s analysis of the Kullervo tragedy. There is no fatalism in the story along the lines of an Oedipal prophecy against which Kullervo struggles. Instead, there is merely the implacability of the hatred between Untamo and Kalervo, passed on to Kullervo as his birthright, manifesting itself as an obligation to exact vengeance.

There is something else passed on to Kullervo however, and it is this that explains the connection of events in Kullervo’s early life — an awareness of his inherent “nobility.” Kullervo was free-born and the son of a chief, not born into slavery, and so in some sense freedom is inherent in him, or at least he feels he deserves to be free.13 This doesn’t mean that he would have had leisure time, but simply that he did not need to subject himself to work for others, only for himself. This is why, when Kullervo is asked to chop wood for Untamo, he says “then even I will be a man” (Runo 31, line 235), and he refers to himself as “Kullervo Kalervoson,” emphasizing his lineage (Runo 31, line 310). Kullervo sees this particular type of work as appropriate to his status in a way that taking care of a child wasn’t. The effect of this nobility is to allow for a small glimmer of hope in the listener, even as we know consciously that such a hope is unwarranted. This too has its parallels in the Oedipus story, where Oedipus is abandoned by his father, the king, and yet is rescued by a peasant, who recognizes his noble qualities even as an infant and
gives him to another king for adoption. So too, Untamo attempts to kill Kullervo (unsuccessfully) and then treats him as a slave (and consequently Kullervo fails all the tasks assigned him). In all of these incidents, from Kullervo's surviving being burned alive to his building a fence out of whole trees, the audience sees Kullervo's inherent nobility shining through. His abject failure at the tasks assigned him further emphasizes this — no chief's son could be a successful nurse, because the nature inherent in him is called to greater things, and in particular to working for himself not others. Throughout Runo 31 his status as a slave is emphasized, further enhancing this contrast between his outward tasks and inner reality, and it culminates in the utterly degrading sale of Kullervo to Ilmarinen for a few old pots and hoes. Here again we see that Cygnaeus's attempt to identify the conflict in the Kullervo sequence as one between his heroic nature and his fate as a slave is misguided. There is no fate operating in this first Runo, and Kullervo's heroic nature is there to spark hope in the audience for a happier ending. Furthermore, if this is supposed to be the conflict that explains the entire tragedy of the sequence, why does Kullervo transcend his slavery long before the sequence ends? Clearly, there is more at work in Kullervo than the opposition Cygnaeus identifies.

Once Kullervo is sold to Ilmarinen, the audience experiences yet another hope for Kullervo — if he is still going to be a slave, let him at least receive better treatment at Ilmarinen's. Kullervo himself even asks for work, because he wants to know "for what work must I get ready" (Runo 32, line 11) — he clearly expects to be asked to do something worthy of his potential. Runo 32 quickly dashes that hope, however. It begins with Ilmarinen's wife baking a stone into Kullervo's bread, an unprovoked and malicious act, and he is given the rather lowly and messy job of cattle herder. We see the inevitable result of this in Runo 33, when Kullervo retaliates for the humiliation by killing Ilmarinen's cattle and disguising wolves and bears as cattle. These beasts maul Ilmarinen's wife and eventually kill her. Throughout the Runo, Kullervo's lineage is emphasized, particularly when he breaks his knife on the hidden stone. It also shows Kullervo's natural inclination towards vengeance, and these two elements (vengeance and family ties) are at the root of the opening of the sequence in Runo 31. The audience is shown, rather graphically, that the cycle of revenge (which is serving the function of an Oedipal "fate") is still at work on Kullervo.

After disposing of Ilmarinen's wife Kullervo is freed from his bondage, and he begins to wander aimlessly, wondering about his origins.
This sets up the next moment of hope for the audience, that Kullervo will be able to redeem his terrible childhood by regaining his lost innocence. Kullervo, who was intent on revenge against Untamo, is told of the survival of his family, and this new hope is allowed to develop. Kullervo’s eagerness to return home is emphasized with the repetition of “my dear woman, my dear woman/ O good woman, tell me, tell me” (Runo 34, line 125–6) — he clearly longs to see his mother and father again. With the realization that his father, mother, brothers and sisters are still alive, the cycle of vengeance initiated at the beginning of the sequence is apparently negated, Kullervo is no longer a slave, and the world has returned to the order it had prior to the blood feud. At the end of this Runo, however, the audience is already given warning signs: Kullervo’s sister has disappeared. Because Kálervo and his family have withdrawn from the world and have failed to exact revenge upon Untamo, the values of their surviving children have become corrupted, and this is embodied in the disappearance of Kullervo’s sister. The hills themselves cry out, saying “she cannot come back to you,/ never, never in her lifetime” (Runo 34, line 231–2). His sister has been exiled from her home and the natural world.

Runo 35 opens with the progressive deterioration of any hope we might embrace that Kullervo’s return home signals the prospect of recovery of lost innocence. Just as at Untamo’s, Kullervo fails in all the tasks assigned to him. Yet this failure, while outwardly similar to his failures at Untamo’s, stems from a different cause. Untamo was unable to see Kullervo’s true nature, and treated him as a slave instead of as a free man. When Kullervo fails at the tasks assigned him at home, it is because he is told to use all his strength, rather than only what is needed for the task. This instruction is symptomatic of the problem with Kullervo’s family: they no longer have a sense of what is needed, because they did not see that it was necessary to avenge themselves on Untamo. The fault lies not with Kullervo, but with his parents, because it is they who cannot teach him correct values or a proper attitude towards the world.

The Runo continues with Kullervo’s tax collection trip, where he encounters three girls, who all initially refuse to enter his sleigh. In Kullervo’s invitation to the three girls, we see his desire for a better future. If his family is valueless, at least he can start a new family. Here the hopes of Kullervo and the audience coincide, and for the first time it seems as if that hope could be realized by Kullervo’s own actions. He is no longer dependent upon Untamo, Ilmarinen, or his own family for his
survival. It is at this point, as well, that the parallels between Kullervo and Oedipus become particularly obvious — the one girl Kullervo manages to capture and convince to stay with him is his own lost sister. Again, it must be emphasized that there is no force of fate at work here, propelling Kullervo towards a future he has tried to resist. Rather, the tragedy springs from the very sense that there is no fate — Kullervo’s hope was, in a sense, legitimate. Again, tragedy does not operate out of resignation, and so until the revelation of the incest the audience at least must be convinced that Kullervo’s hope (and their own) could potentially be fulfilled.

There is another interesting aspect of Kullervo’s incest that merits mention — the actions taken by Kullervo’s sister. Upon learning of the incestuousness of their relationship, she explains that she could not find her way home and that she expected to die but didn’t (further evidence of the lack of values in Kullervo’s family as a result of their retreat from the world). She then throws herself into a rapids. Her suicide, which on the surface appears tragic, is actually redemptive. She re-legitimates social values by acknowledging her error and punishing herself for that error.19 When her death itself is described, we hear that she

   Faced her doom and chose her death,
   Found her peace in Tuonela,
   Mercy down beneath the water. 
   (Runo 35, lines 248–50)

What is emphasized in the text is the completion of a task and the redemptive features of her death (peace and mercy), rather than censure over the suicide. She has done what was required of her, facing her sin rather than running away from it. When Kullervo returns home to tell his family of the incest and suicide, and expresses his own desire to kill himself, he is advised by his mother to escape and to repent (Runo 35, lines 331–339). This is of course a sign of how much his mother loves him, but it also indicates how out of touch his family is with the values Kullervo himself knows he needs to live up to. Only through vengeance and death can Kullervo achieve a redemption similar to his sister’s.

Runo 36 is in a sense the denouement of the tragedy. Kullervo, now that his hopes of returning to an innocent past and of receiving for himself a happy future have both been crushed, returns to the vengeance that began the cycle. While there was no force of fate at work on Kullervo, a sense of social and moral obligation and of the need for revenge has served as a fate-surrogate. Just as the culmination of the Oedipal tragedy comes not with Oedipus’s parricide and incest but with his realiza-
tion, much later, that they had already occurred (and that his hope had been misguided), so too the finale of Kullervo's tragedy comes with his return to vengeance as a motivating force, rather than hope.

Kullervo sets off for Untamo's after rejecting his family, and in turn being rejected by them. Only his mother says she will weep for him, and it is only his mother Kullervo mourns for when he discovers his family has died. The slaying of Untamo and his clan is only briefly described, taking all of six lines (Runo 36, lines 224–30) and then Kullervo is left to redeem himself the way his sister did – through suicide. In this ending section, I would argue, Kullervo both completes his tragic narrative and moves the sequence beyond tragedy towards another meaning and another genre.

As has been repeatedly stated in this analysis, the driving force behind tragedies, what gives them their power, is their ability to keep hope alive in the audience despite there being no rational reason for it. The ending of a tragedy, then, comes with the realization that even those faintest glimmers of hope are doomed to be thwarted. This realization is almost a pressure on the audience, one that is felt (albeit unconsciously) long before the actual temporal completion of the tragedy. Thus, when Kullervo and his sister discover their incest the tragedy has already reached its climax. The rest of the action – his rejection of his family, slaughter of Untamo, and suicide – are a wrapping up of loose ends, but do not have the intensity of tragic realization that the incest does. What they do cause is a dual desire in the audience: to know the ending and have the tragic sequence completed, and to turn away from the intensity of the suffering. However, contained within Kullervo's suicide is an echo of his sister's own death. The most tragic moment of the sequence is repeated in the chronologically final moment, and it is this that hints at the second meaning of the Kullervo tragedy.

Kullervo's sister's suicide reunited her with social values, in that her inability to return home due to a lack of a moral centre was counterbalanced with her moral decision to kill herself. Kullervo's suicide also has a moral core to it. The spark of the tragedy was vengeance (as opposed to fate), and with the death of Untamo that vengeance has been achieved. However, any cycle of vengeance has far more negative social consequences than positive ones, and is not an adequate system of justice. The narrative of Kullervo's life is proof of this negativity, as are the deaths of his family. Kullervo's decision to kill himself is the only way to truly remove vengeance from the order of the universe. Kullervo in a sense takes vengeance on vengeance. In so doing, however, he also
crosses over the boundary of tragedy. In *Oedipus Rex*, there is no way for Oedipus to remove himself from the web of fate. What has been allotted to him is his, and he cannot escape it — indeed, his hubris is to hope otherwise. In the Kullervo sequence, however, because there is no metaphysical sense of fate governing the action, Kullervo himself can alter the tragic pattern in a way that Oedipus never can. By killing himself, Kullervo also removes the danger inherent in the desire for vengeance. This suicide, paradoxically, allows for hope to thrive in the audience, and as such it converts Kullervo from a tragic figure to a heroic, or at least moralistic one. He not only breaks the cycle of vengeance, but breaks the bonds of the tragic genre itself.

*Benjamin Gallagher is a graduate student of English literature with a special interest in the Finnish epic Kalevala.*

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


**ENDNOTES**

1 Pentikäinen, pp. 39-40
2 Pentikäinen, p. 41
3 Pentikäinen, p. 41
4 Pentikäinen, p. 218
5 Pentikäinen, p. 220
6 This is in line with Aristotle's position on happiness expressed in Book X ch. 6-9 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1176b1-5), where he observes that a man can only be determined to be happy after he has died, for the simple reason that happiness is not a quality possessed by an individual, but rather something that takes into account all the events that make up an individual's life. A man who has lived fortunately for his entire life, only to suffer in the last year of that life, still cannot be described as happy, according to Aristotle. So too, a tragic character is tragic not because of any feature of his personality, but because of the actions he takes in his life.
Aristotle defines the cause of pity as “undeserved misfortune,” and of fear as the misfortune “of one like ourselves” (1453a5-10). These emotions brought about in the audience are as central to tragedy as any of the events within a tragic plotline. This is appropriate to the structures of Greek thought. For the early Greeks, emotions were external to you as opposed to inherent in your psychology (the best early example is in Hesiod’s story of Pandora’s creation, where Pandora’s character traits are poured onto her by Aphrodite). Thus, it is more natural for Oedipus to “do” hope than to “feel” hopeful. By Aristotle’s time, emotions had become somewhat internalized, yet their origin as external forces remains — for example, pity is aroused by the sight of objects deserving pity (Aristotle’s Rhetoric 1385b15).

9 Sophocles, Oedipus the King, trans. Robert Fagles, lines 137-38
10 For the translations of Greek words, and several of the insights into Greek psychology, I must thank Bobby Bakhtyarinia, majoring in Classics and Philosophy at U of T.
11 There is a Greek word for this, “hupermonon,” literally “above fate.” It is seen as reckless and dangerous.
12 Sophocles, Oedipus the King, trans. Robert Fagles, line 926
13 The Greeks also had a belief in inherent nobility. For example, Herodotus tells a story of the Persian king Darius, who was given away by his father to a farmer, but who acted in such a kingly fashion that his father had to recognize him as his son. I am arguing that a similar pattern occurs in the Kullervo story: Kullervo is bad at being a slave because his nature is such that he can only work when working for himself. Because of the difficult living conditions, all members of Finnish society had to work to survive (even the chiefs). The only difference was whether you worked for yourself, or were forced to work for someone else — still, an important psychological difference for Kullervo, whose father was a chief.
14 This contrast between Kullervo’s inner and outer realities helps to explain the rather mysterious footnote Eino Freiberg inserts in Runo 4, pointing out that both Aimo and Kullervo wear shoes “with fancy uppers” despite Kullervo’s slave status. His fancy shoes and his nickname “golden buckle” both serve as reminders of his “true” status as a free man and son of a chief rather than a slave.
15 The rest of Runo 32 is taken up with a long cattle charm, which can be best explained as a way of underscoring the viciousness of Kullervo’s decision to slaughter the cattle as retribution, and perhaps also of how unfit he is to perform the tasks of a slave.
16 He may be a criminal and an outlaw, but he is no longer a slave. Furthermore, his status as chieftain’s son lends more legitimacy to his actions than if he had been born a slave.
17 The apparent contradiction between the destruction of the clan in Runo 31 and their survival in Runo 34 is thus resolved. A factual explanation (that during a battle it is easy to get confused about who has survived and who has not) certainly would explain in a logical way how Kalervo is alive. But a more compelling explanation, I think, is the narrative necessity of maintaining hope in the audience — keeping this goal in mind, most of the contradictions with the Kullervo sequence simply disappear. The “facts” are altered as needed in order to maintain the constant through-line of potential happiness.
18 The germ of this idea belongs to Professor B. Vahamäki, in his cogent analysis of Aleksis Kivi’s Kullervo. There, he writes that Kalervo’s “escapism” results in unhappiness, and an exile from the new social order embodied by Ilmarinen (Vahamäki 273-279).
19 Further proof for this interpretation is given by Kullervo’s mother’s response at the end of Runo 35. When Kullervo explains what has happened and says he too will kill himself, his mother in fact urges him to repent and flee. In other words, she asks him to remove himself from the world and its values in the same way that Kalervo did after
Untamo destroyed his clan. This is a course of action Kullervo clearly cannot agree to, since he sees its destructive nature.

20 This feeling is similar to watching a disaster movie (plane crash, train wreck, etc.) in slow motion — the dual urge to watch until the end and to turn away. This duality is the pressure of tragedy.

21 Once again, a debt must be acknowledged to Professor B. Vähämäki’s analysis of Aleksis Kivi’s Kullervo. There, Professor Vähämäki suggests that Kivi’s tragedy centres around Kullervo’s conflict of ideas: if Kullervo takes revenge, “he becomes a murderer by the ethical standards of the new morality, and if he does not, he is not a man according to the old ideal” (Vähämäki 275). Kullervo’s insight, in Kivi’s play, is to take vengeance on the institution of vengeance (Vähämäki 276), in part by killing himself, the “last representative of the outdated moral system” (Vähämäki 282).

22 This is heightened by Vainamoinen’s further moralizing in the last stanza of the Runo. Although his lesson does not draw on the moral I am presenting, its presence alone indicates the moral tone that the ending of the last Runo should contain.
Beth L. Virtanen

Female Poets in the Finnish Diaspora: An Analysis of Identity Presented in Four Poets' Works

Identity is a slippery issue in any circumstance, but it takes on a particular complication as it is worked out in poetics of the literature of the Finnish Diaspora in the United States and Canada. The issue of identity is informed by culture, race, class, gender, and dislocation narratives, in struggles to orient oneself between the old and the new worlds, to find place for oneself straddling the boundaries between the two. The poetry I examine bears evidence of these poets' struggles to locate themselves between or across worlds as well as within the historical moments of their writing. I will examine the issue of identity in the works of Wendy Anderson, Barbara Simila, Judith Minty, and Nancy Mattson.

Definition of Diaspora

I draw on the works of these poets across the spectrum of diaspora theory. To begin, let me sketch in briefly the features of a diaspora and thus brush in broad strokes the parameters of my definition. Robin Cohen is informative here as she circumscribes the characteristics of a diaspora:

1. Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;

2. alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions;

3. a collective memory or myth about the homeland, including its location, history, and accomplishments;

4. an idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety, and prosperity, even to its creation;

5. a development of a return movement that gains collective approbation;
6. a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate. (26) Cohen also lists shared senses of empathy and solidarity, among other traits.

Dispersal, a memory or myth of the homeland, an idealization of that home, a longing for return, and shared sense of group consciousness — all evidenced in the Finnish-North American experience, particularly as documented in the proceedings of FINNFORUM II, edited by Michael Karki under the title Finnish Diaspora I and II. John Kolehmainen, contributor to Karki’s collection, cites poverty and hardship, compulsory military service, and famine as impetus for the migration to the United States (2–3). Edward Laine notes that political concerns influenced immigration to Canada (5). In both the US and Canada, Finnish-North Americans had difficulty learning English, particularly as it belongs to a very dissimilar language group (Finno-Ugric), a fact that continues to influence second language acquisition by Finns today (see for example, Jim Healey’s article on Finnish-Italian translation for a discussion of this difficulty, Healey 2004). Nevertheless, the Finnish diaspora community throughout its existence has been “underwriting very expensive and sophisticated operations, such as publishing newspapers, satirical and literary journals; writing prose, poetry, and drama; producing plays and encouraging the development of music and sports” (5). In this work is figured the recollections of home, an idealization often of Finland and the plans for return. While the first diaspora publishing houses worked primarily in Finnish, today’s diaspora press is primarily bilingual Finnish and English or English-only, with very few Finnish language periodicals. Nevertheless, the thriving diaspora press continues to express the viewpoints of the Finnish diaspora community within which these poets originally disseminated their works.

THE NOTION OF IDENTITY

In terms of defining identity, I draw on Avtar Brah’s work in which she suggests “Diasporic identities are at once local and global. They are networks of transnational identifications encompassing ‘imagined’ and ‘encountered’ communities” (196). Complicating Cohen’s work on diaspora, Brah suggests that diaspora communities are not static, nor are the identities of those who occupy or visit them. Thus, in the poetic works I examine, there are multiple senses of Finland, of Finnish-North America, and of the United States and Canada that have been lived or imagined in the perceptions of the poets, but these perceptions need not be
grounded by concrete experience, which is to say that these poets possess senses of Finland or Canada or the United States that are subjectively constructed through their perceptions, whether or not they are augmented by the experience of habitation in a specific community. The poets ought to possess varying notions of place, origin, and residence, informed by their sense of identity and their transnational positions in the world.

In terms of the language of diaspora, Brah suggests, drawing on Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, there is a "rupture between the signifier and the signified," that is to say that the language itself "becomes deterritorialized," reflecting the "displacement and dislocation of identities, persons, and meanings..."(203). Working within diaspora, the poetic language should be said to exist as a "minor literature", that is, literature with its primary characteristics defined in opposition to canonical writing" (203). One must be careful, however, in understanding a "minor" literature, not as one that is determined only and always in opposition to the canon, for to do so is to turn over the power of defining it and thereby its authors to the center. Or as Rey Chow says, drawing on Spivak’s work, that “minority discourse is... a fight for the ownership — the propriety, the property — of speaking..."(111). Thus, while diaspora literature is defined as "minor," its project is the development and assertion of identity and its right to speak. Chow says, "Precisely because the truly minor is the voiceless, it can be seized upon and spoken for" (112). The impetus to study these poetic works of the diaspora is to attain voice, as Spivak intimates: "If the subaltern can speak... the subaltern is not a subaltern anymore" (158). Here, the project is to mark the trajectory of Finnish-North American female poets as they wrest their words from the competing possibilities available to them.

Brah, citing Hicks, posits that the writing in the diaspora community draws upon “multi-layered experience” that is also often “multilingual” as it depicts “cross-cultural realities” (204). Essentially, these texts should contain poetic works that are not mono-cultural or monolingual. Instead, we should feel a sense of shifting among the available identities as the individual poets lay claim to the potential available to them in the transnational community.

The poetry examined must also incorporate a sense of situated-ness, of grounding in the ethnicity, class, and gender issues which mark them as creations of specific persons who exist in specific milieus that are constrained thus. As Thomas Hylland Erikson asserts, from an anthropological perspective:
Ethnicity is the enduring and systematic communication of cultural differences between groups considering themselves to be distinct. It appears whenever cultural differences are made relevant in social interaction, and it should be thus studied at the level of social life. Ethnicity is thus relational, and also situational: the ethnic character of a social encounter is contingent on the situation. It is not, in other words, absolute. (58)

Erikson reinforces our understanding of the relationality of identity, precluding the possibility of our becoming trapped in a single moment of frame. Extending the project of Braziel and Mannur, I examine how these works depict variously how Finnish-North American female poets actually practise, live, and experience their diasporic identities within their poetry. Here, I draw on the Finnish diaspora experience to understand how these poetic identities were constructed; but further, I ask of the works Braziel and Mannur’s question: “how are these identities practised, lived, and experienced?” (9). In other words, I examine how Finnish-North American female poets’ identities are manifested in their writing, including how they position themselves among and between cultures and how they accommodate these lived realities in their poetic language.

Within the context of Finnish diaspora, markers of identity have been named in various quarters. Stoller defines the markers of ethnic identity among Finnish Americans as sauna, sisu, and Sibelius in her 1996 article. Yvonne Hiipakka Lockwood cites sauna, pasty (an ethnic dish adopted by Finns in northern Michigan from Cornish miners), and the created mythological figure of St Urho, reputed to have saved Minnesota’s wine crop from grasshoppers. Chris Susag’s list of the fifteen positive ethnic symbols of Finnish Americans in the Upper Midwest includes honesty, sauna, home, sisu, freedom, Finland, family, peace, independence, cleanliness, hardworking, freedom of speech, Finnish American buildings, church and lakes (3). Language, cultural continuity, community involvement, and naming are considered important in cultural maintenance by Kostiainen and Kaups, as well as Loukinen. Lindström and Vähämäki consider language maintenance and persevering through hardship as assisting in the maintenance of identity of Karelian Finns and Finnish-Americans. Westerberg suggests that cultural celebrations, such as FinnFest, provide for the maintenance of culture. Finally, the Finnish Kalevalan literary tradition echoes throughout these works, which is of course modified by the diaspora population.

Analysis

Identity, as I have said, is a slippery issue, informed by our senses of individuality, ethnicity, gender, class, community. In each of these poets’
works, there is a profound sense of belonging to something, but that something is different for each and depends on the poet's own cultural and creative moment. I discuss this issue of poetic identity as it manifests itself in each writer's work, in reverse chronological order, that is from the earliest to the latest.

**Nancy Mattson's *Maria Breaks Her Silence***

Nancy Mattson's work, *Maria Breaks Her Silence*, because of its historic nature is set in a context that predates the other texts. Mattson is a third-generation Finnish-Canadian writer, having lived in the western provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. While published in 1989, the text is set around the turn of the twentieth century. Mattson grounds the book in Finnish-North American identity that reflects the values of family and community as well as noting the tensions between the old country and the new. The protagonist, if there could be said to be one in poetry, is named Maria, a fictionalized working-class woman who immigrates to the US. In the first poems, it is clear that Maria was abused by her husband who has left her behind in Finland while he has gone to seek his fortune in Michigan. Because of the prior abuse, Maria is reluctant to join him, but the values of custom and family predispose her to accept the lure of a large house that her husband casts to get her to join him. Itself, the house represents one of those items intrinsically tied to identity, something that would require she pay attention to his apparently contrite and reformed status. Upon her arrival she views the house, but it is not what she had expected:

> She saw the long dining table
> such a large table for a family of five
> with long benches on either side
> the two big stoves in the kitchen... (22)

In this verse, Maria is confused by the appearance of the house. She has joined her abusive but penitent husband Matti whom she had believed bought an appropriate home for her and their children.

It does not take long before Maria realizes that the house is indeed much too large for her family. The massive proportions were appropriate to a public house: "Many rooms upstairs to shelter men/many plates in the cupboard to feed men/miners, loggers, anyone who could pay... (22). Further, the layout of the "home" was not welcoming as was her father's house in Finland.

> Not like her father's house in Kauhava
> with its many bedrooms for guests
> many children, many servants

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In this poem, Mattson captures the vulnerability of working-class immigrant women in the circumstance as newcomers, much as Varpu Lindström has done in her important historical work *Defiant Sisters*. Without the traditional oversight of family and community, women may have been at the mercy of their spouses. While I do not suggest that all immigrant women were thus taken advantage of, the potential for abuse was heightened because of the displacement. As non-English-speaking or limited-English-speaking immigrants, women in the Finnish diaspora might also have been reticent to seek assistance from authorities. Clearly, Maria felt alienated from those who occupied her new home community: “She never wanted to be a foreigner/a gypsy singing her children to sleep/in a language everyone stares at/here in America/on the train to a place/her tongue can’t pronounce...” (20). The immigrant identity recreated in Mattson’s poetry addresses the harshness of life as an immigrant. This isolation compounds spousal abuse with the vulnerability of those working at the lowest ends of the economic scale. When Matti, Maria’s husband is killed in a mining accident, Maria feels relief, in spite of her vulnerability as a woman alone with three children. But she maintains the boarding house where she ekes out a living.

The text is thoroughly imbued with Finnish mythology and the worldview appropriate to the historic moment of the text, especially in Mattson’s poetic examination of the death of Maria’s son. Before his death, “he [Matti] had changed/said he confronted the aaveet/ the evil spirits that had tormented him” (34). First he tried to overcome his abusive ways as a spouse, second as he was ill and fighting for his life, and third when he was in a mining accident and struggled to survive. The last aave that Matti struggled with was Maria herself whom he believed became an evil spirit and killed their son with her milk when the child died of consumption. Throughout the text, Mattson calls up figures from the Finnish culture, making them live in the work.

A second example of the recreation of a Finnish worldview is demonstrated in a prose poem in the text, where Maria is writing to her father who has remained in Finland on the occasion of her second marriage to a man she truly loves. About her first husband she wishes to say, but says it only in the verse, “What I must keep locked inside: Matt was seldom kind, though he struggled. You saw in his eyes what I could not see, tried to warn me. But why did you and mother close your door to me when I married him?” (italics in the original, 39). She writes in
between the lines of letter other things she can not really tell her father either. She writes of her discovery of love in her second marriage:

David scrubs my back in the sauna
tickles me with the vihta
we throw cool water slowly
on the hot stones
prolonging the löyly
the stones laugh with steam
our bodies soften and ripen
we go outside to cool off, recite the stars
come in again for löyly.
After sauna, the house is quiet
the girls are asleep in the loft
we drink tea and look at each other
make love as slowly as we can
cool off and start again (40)

In this deceptively simple passage embedded in the newsy letter to her father is expressed the questions that she wishes to ask but does not: "Why did you [her father] and [her] mother close the door to" her when she married Matti who turned out to be so abusive. Here Mattson replicates a cultural norm in the sanctity of marriage in the home culture, that fact that such vows are taken seriously. The strength of this passage in many ways rests in the cultural matters taken for granted: that the audience knows and understands the sauna, vihta, and löyly as something more than a bath and bathing tools, that the audience is familiar with Finnish architecture and understands the structure of the house where the girls sleep in the loft; that the audience is familiar with the language of the home culture in the retained nouns and phrases: Uusi suomi and pohjan tuuli. Neither are complex so that even I with my limited skills in the Finnish language can understand, "Uusi Suomi" is New Finland, the name of the town where Maria lives, and "pohjan tuuli" is the north wind that blows in Finland and in New Finland, Canada.

In Mattson’s works, diasporic identity is complicated, incorporating the culture of the old country and the values of the new. She draws on the worldview of Finns as they are transplanted into the new world, but she also depicts people in everyday life, working, loving, failing, dying, raising families, and simply being people. The Finnish diaspora identity in her work is subtly nuanced but grounded in the lived experience of her protagonist. It examines cultural values of sauna and cleanliness as well as Finnish mythic figures and the harsh realities of working-class life in the early 1900s. Linguistically she merges the two, forming a hybrid language
where she can speak between and among cultures to capture both the past and the future in the present word.

**JUDITH MINTY’S YELLOW DOG JOURNAL**

Judith Minty’s *Yellow Dog Journal* is next in its setting at some point in the twentieth century, but looking back upon the habits of an earlier existence. Minty is a native of Michigan. Chronologically, it is copyrighted in 1979 and it is not set in a previous historical period, even while it examines the artifacts of someone whose life has become completed at some recently passed moment. It is, in fact, similar to Mattson’s work in that it examines the poetic persona’s relationship with an antecedent. Mattson’s work examines a relationship of a distant antecedent, a grandmother, perhaps, while Minty’s work examines a relationship of the poetic “I” with a father figure who passed away. In either case, the antecedent may have been based on an actual past relationship or a mythical memory of a relationship, the grounding in an actual past in not essential. The salient issue is that both take as their theme, or topic, the complex relationships among individuals who are connected in personal, historical and familial ways.

The text is opened and set immediately in its context of Finnish-diaspora literature with the overleaf containing Runo 18 from the *Kalevala*:

Go my daughter, to discover  
why the grey-brown dog is barking  
and the long-eared dog is baying.

And on the next unnumbered page is one word: “Fall.” Consecutively, the opening is re-oriented yet again for the reader. This third unnumbered page contains only Runo 46, further orienting us for the read:

Welcome, Bear, be thy coming,  
Honey-pawed, who now approachest  
To our dwelling, freshly-scoured,  
To our household, now so charming,  
This I wish for all my lifetime,  
All my youth I waited for it.

Even before we know the central story to take place in the poetic narrative, we know for certain its place in literary history, of its connection to works preceding it.

Minty’s *Journal* takes us on a trip with the poetic “I” who visits her father’s “shack leaning over the riverbank,/ the Yellow Dog barking home to Superior.” As the protagonist approaches the cabin, “400 miles into north land, driving hard,/ like a runaway, each town peeling away the woman skin,/ turning me pale and soft, as if I/ had never married,
had not been planted for twenty years in the suburbs" (1). As she approaches the location of her father's home, from which he has been absent for some months, she reverts to an earlier state, one in which she retakes a position in relation to her father that she previously occupied. In some ways, perhaps, as she dons her dead father's slippers that are "[t]oo large, creases in the leather, barely touch the flesh," she takes on her father's persona in effort to reclaim or to know him again. In those slippers, "[h]is feet clump over linoleum floor/ table to dishpan, wood-box to stove./ Only the scrap of rug by the door/ muffles his presence" (3). And so, poetically, the protagonist moves into the life of her father who has passed on to the next. But her figurative occupation of his corporeal entity is not static. It is representative of something she is trying to discover or rediscover.

In stanza one of poem 8, for example, the persona in a dream state encounters a bear, the antagonist and driving force of the work as prefigured by the Kalavelan verse:

At first I think they are dogs trailing bear,  
I run to the door, that old dream:  
copper fur trundling low to my ground,  
circling yelping. The bear  
crashing through the brush into my clearing,  
black coat bristling, eyes burning.

Through the readerly experience of the text, we share with her the fear of the bear. Our hearts pound with hers, whether we have known the bear in actuality or in the literary rendition of the Kalevala. She is here — we are here through her — to come to know something that this sequence is prompting her to uncover.

We find hints in the third stanza of poem 10, but only a few when the protagonist recalls her father's words:

It was he told me the Yellow Dog,  
made my sleep spin into the woods, to the falls  
above the clearing, the ore shining gold in the sun,  
Late nights, he'd whisper its bends,  
my face close to his Finnish guttural,  
cheeks flushed from his beard's rough stubble.

The thing she is seeking, the thing we all seek, is identification, and the clues are subtle here: He "told" her the Yellow Dog, not "of the Yellow Dog." Here, when he tells, he tells in Finnish form by omitting the preposition. In doing so, the poet owns the interlanguage, a hybrid formed somewhere between Finnish and English with the subtlest of hints. More, the poet recalls to us some significance of the Kalevala, the
speaking into existence of the world by Väinämöinen. Here a father
speaks into existence for his daughter what is the Yellow Dog, gives it to
her so that it lived, “made her sleep spin into the woods,” but, here, the
girl speaking, English forms dominate, and it becomes “into” the woods.
Identity here, is indeed a complex issue, represented by equally complex
and subtle differentiation.

This subtlety is echoed throughout, where bears and dogs mean more
than what they appear to be: a beagle that is scared of the dark keeps her
company as she is scared of the dark (poem 16) and in poem 19 there
seems a juxtaposition of her fear of and simultaneous desire for the
bear, implying that she is confused:

At the river I kneel and cup my hands

   to drink. Behind me, the bear
   rattles his throat,
   rears up, charges. His claws
   rake my back, and I fall into heat.

This stanza creates primordial images of male and female. He over-
powers her; she “falls into heat,” suggesting the mating rituals. It also
suggests an apprehension concerning her daughter’s imminent adult-
hood. In the following stanza, she says:

Grit of sand and water, flames

   snapping, his breathe,
   this weight to bear.
   I know the bleeding
   only comes from inside, but far
   away, my daughter cries out with her own dream of it.

In some senses, I think she depicts her figurative ownership of the bear,
that it represents her while it is also that which she fears. In larger
terms, we could say that whatever darkness lurks within our hearts both
fascinates and repulses us. For Minty, there is resolution to be found
through the pursuit of the bear, which is the focal point of the narrative
structure. The protagonist knows the bear in her dream, wakes from its
presence:

Awake, sweat gathers in my palms,

   the moon opens on my ceiling, and my heart
   beats as if I have been climbing the ravine.
   The mh, mh, mh, mh from the bear’s throat
   still echoes in the cabin. It is only
   draft from the stove as embers cool.
   When I was a child, I never dreamed
   I’d have to hold this beast inside.
The question remains, however: Who is this beast? What is this beast? We find as she reveals it in the closing five poems.

In the first, number 25, Minty juxtaposes the act of love making and procreation with the protagonist's climb down the ravine to survey the waterfall and its environs:

Groping down the ravine
on a stairway of tree roots
the roar rising, I sink
into pines, the pitch smell lifting,
the stream rushing down.

Woman opens to man.
Mouth, arms, thighs soft as petals.
She waits for him to enter
the flower of her.

I climb the rock
center of the rapids,
white water boiling, wind
drowning, a thunder
everywhere. Everywhere
stops breathing.

Long after he leaves, she holds
the wet seed of him, his child
swimming in her darkness.

On the one hand, the protagonist takes into her purview all the world of the falls, its height, the smell of pine pitch, the rush of water, the rapids, the white water, the leaf caught in the eddy. On the other, she experiences love, the joy and loss of motherhood, that giving up of the product of love to a life of its own:

Boulder below, big as a bear,
crooked pine on the opposite bank,
maple leaf held in the pool.
No shadow, but the fall
of water. All motion caught
blazing in the sun.

When my daughter was born
I wept for three days,
I did not want her
to leave the secret place.

It is, then, something of the natural that she is seeking, something in the natural that connects herself with her father and her daughter, something that connects her with the world from whence they have come.

Maybe we begin to get the picture of what she has effectively covered over:

I tried to bury it,
but it's surfaced now.
When the dog slept with me
he was my father.

The dog was the beagle who kept her company, who never strayed more than fifty feet, who stayed at night when she was too scared to stay alone. He was the same dog who did eventually leave when she was learning to take care of herself on this quest to understand her own identity.

At end, when she does bury “it,” its identity is clear: she buries of herself that which keeps her from her own strength as part of the natural order, the strength that reflects the power of the bear she holds within herself at the same as she contains the tenacity of the dog that won’t back down from the bear. She is both the primordial creator and protector, loosed from the layers of suburbanization that have separated her from knowledge of herself:

In the morning when I leave these woods,
I will fill this hole and cover it over.
But tonight, sweating from my own effort, my own
animal odor rising, I step away from the hole.
Never looking over my shoulder,
I roll back on my haunches
and let the long, shrill howl rise.
It runs out like a song from my throat. (29)

Without looking over her shoulder, she howls her identity — she is made whole by loosening herself from and burying the fear that has kept her knowing herself. In the process, she becomes an adult, taking her place in adulthood next to her father, rather than as a child protected by him. Identity, then, becomes the act of living the connectedness of oneself to one’s mythical and actual past: she is *Kalevalan Naiset*, daughter of the Finnish father, daughter of the poetess, poet herself, and mother of a daughter whom she hopes belongs to her mythological, natural, and familial origins. Identity is being large enough to acknowledge one’s own nature as variously informed.

**WEN D Y AN D E R S O N’ S  W I L D T H I N G S I N  T H E  Y A R D**

Of the four poets I discuss here, Wendy Anderson’s work might be most subtle in its expression of diaspora identity. Anderson is a third generation Finnish-American from northern Maine. The ground of her work moves whimsically among relationships that her protagonist has shared with others; in the text we find representations of mother and grandmother, self in love and loss, friends in life and death, but still there is an underlying haunting of diaspora here, that sense of being that originates in the contested space of a home one strives to own but is
never certain of belonging to. This dislocation, the sense of being out of one's place, play in the poem, "For Arvid, My Father":

A bear of a man, Matti
carried the butcher's trade in his hands
across the sea from Finland.
The skill stuck in his overcoat pockets,
Matti eyed New York from the deck.

In America, Matti's son skipped school,
stayed on the farm to chop wood—
at dusk, an axe stuck in the stump,
through the field a blue trail of snowprints
led to the shed
where two voices talked quiet Finn.
A man and his son labored long past dusk,
frieezing fists warmed ruby red by fresh meat. (10)

Matti, arrived from Finland, "a bear of a man," surveys New York from the deck. In his portrayal, there is the sense of a man grounded in his own certainty of being, a man in his prime. In the second stanza, Arvid, the son, works with the father, drawing in his Finnish strength. He chooses to avoid what is Americanizing, staying instead in some safe confine of Finnishness, a place of safety he has tried to pass on to his children. The poem closes with Arvid's children assisting him is removing his slippers as he is now an old man saying to each:

"In you, child, is the reason
for these shuffling feet,
in you is the spring,
in you, the summer." (11)

As we saw in Minty's work, Anderson's themes include the connection of past to future through the family, through the soft voices carrying on in the Finnish language where things are safe. While she does not ground this collection titled Wild Things in the Yard specifically in the tradition of Finnish literature as others have, Anderson draws more subtly on the values of that literature and some of the themes that come to the forefront at the third generation of diaspora.

In "Daddy's Face Was a Neighborhood," wildflowers, blueberries and creatures from the outdoors represent the aspects of the world of this child:

Trout leapt up the brooks in Daddy's arms,
and bear cubs touched noses
by the pool of his shoulder blades.
His thick neck was Borestone Mountain
Where pine trees swayed on misty days.
Blueberries ripened on his chest,
wildflowers overflowed,
and hawks caught the wind to soar. (15)
Beth L. Virtanen: "Female Poets in the Finnish Diaspora"

One could say that every "Daddy" is everything in the world to a child. What is remarkable here is not the fact that "Daddy" is so important, but how he is so. He is the provider of safety to the unnamed child, the mountain, the tower of strength, the location at the center of the world where all important things exist, and those things harken back to the pastoral in rural Finland, or the poet's childhood home in northern Maine, where blueberries and pine trees grew next to trout streams, and where wildflowers overflowed. The solid stature of the father is the grounding for this child in her childish world, a world, perhaps, as it appears juxtaposed among the poems of sadness, shattered dreams, and tattered loves, that the unnamed child seeks to rediscover through the context of the work.

The works of Wendy Anderson embody that haunting sensation that accompanies a search that is doomed to fail. In spite of the fact that we can never return to childhood, we revel in its lessons, including those that remind us of who we are and where we come from. In this particular collection, I find most profound the ache of the character's wishing to go home, but they can not find it in any person they know. The reason, I suspect, is as she says in "For Arvid, My Father": "In you, child, is the reason..." For those within the diaspora, sometimes equilibrium within one's hybridity is hard to find.

BARBARA SIMILA'S WATERMARKS: POEMS FROM THE COAST OF THE KEWEENAW

Of the four poets, Barbara Simila's work seems to embody that hybrid identity the most emphatically. The persona within the confines of the text is informed by the Copper Country world of which Simila is a product, including reflecting its finite geographical structures as well as its Finnish heritage. Within the text of Watermarks, Simila combines knowledge of censure for one's difference as well as a celebration of that difference.

Simila's book opens with a poem titled "Heritage," which demonstrates that hybrid Finnish identity in its rendition of sisu as well as sauna:

Heritage

Log by log
he tore down
the sauna,
dragged it
for miles
to the backstreets
of Fulton,
transplanted
the careful tongue

and groove behind
the house where
it blossomed with
birch leaves..
two small rooms,
one for changing
one for bathing
and a kerosene lamp
in the window between.
Beth L. Virtanen: “Female Poets in the Finnish Diaspora”

Riverbed rocks
in the stovetop
benches and buckets
wood smoke and
lades and steam

a place to celebrate
the Finnish heart
it steady life beating
in the sweet cedar heat. (12)

As frame for the text, demarking its intellectual territory, “Heritage” sets the stage for a poetic study of Finnish American identity, for the sauna as well as the attitude of **sisu** required to dismantle, move, and rebuild a sauna tell of the notion of Finnishness. Also, Fulton is located near the mining community of Calumet, Michigan. It isn’t a neutral opening, but rather an assertion of grounding both in a specific location and a specific ethnicity: **sauna** and **sisu**, a stovetop covered with rocks, “the sweet cedar heat.”

The poem “Gatherer” furthers the territorial stake in defining Finnish ethnic identity on the shores of Lake Superior. Here, there is a merging of the past and the present in the consciousness of the observing persona in the poem:

She collects the tales
of the grueling winters
of weavers, potato farms
lumberjacks, trout.
They spill like berries
into the pail of her dreams
Ahti, Satima, Lempi, Taimo
the music of old names
chanted in the old land
of glistening birch and water.

Here where granite boulders
grow beds of lichen
on the cliffs over Superior
she sees farms in the distance
a mottled cow grazes
an old woman in a flowered
housedress leans toward the canes.
The field burns with raspberries.

In this poem, at work is a juxtaposition of the old and new. While we know that Lempi and Ahti might be names in contemporary usage in Finland, here, in North America, they sound of the “old” country, of a place located figuratively in the time of immigration, perhaps a century ago, and thus the names are old as they draw connection to the past.

The notion of old, though, is juxtaposed with the present. The old woman in a flowered housedress embodies within the present the old, perhaps the original immigrant from the old country. Yet the old and
new are merged in the granite boulders, old glacial till that are home of lichen, ancient plant life, and both the old woman and the observer are rendered relative new-comers. All of this exists in the finite ground of the consciousness of a single woman picking raspberries: all of time as represented by the granite and the lichen, the time of immigration depicted by the names and the presence of the elderly woman, and the present as it is informed in its hybridity by the ancient past, and the immigrant past, and the concrete sensual world is captured in the raspberries and the pail and the consciousness itself that brings these divergent sensations together.

In Simila's work, too, we find echoes of Kalevala mythology, but not nearly as strongly as was present in the other poets I discuss. In "Miner's Blues," Louhi, the mistress of Pohjola, is not named, but her persona is recognizable, both as informed by and different from the earlier myth:

I hear her
wailing out of the north
like some frozen banshee
singing songs
of winter nights
and star-spent pain
calling to the part of me
that remembers
empty lakeshore daydreams
chokecherry wine
biting flavor
out of summer harvest
shaft-cut wounds healing not
with bodies of fathers and brothers
locked tight in the mending vein. (28)

In this poem, located in Part Three, Simila merges more emphatically the American, or specifically Michigan, themes with mythology from the original culture. The merging is strong, forceful even, as she matches Louhi's strength with the power of the earth that in the mines of Upper Michigan crushees whole and healthy fathers and brothers in the bosom of the earth. The vision bites like the flavor of chokecherry wine.

This horrific force is reiterated emphatically on the social level in "Mother Tongue":

"If you speak the
Finnish language
within the confines
of this classroom we will
rap your knuckles. If you
persist in your foolishness
we will bloody your
noses and your mothers
will regret you exist."
Attentively we
listened to the voice
of authority speaking
in the tongue of
success. (33)

The voice belongs to the teacher who will bloody their noses and their mothers, at least that is what is suggested by the particular line break. What is also intimated in the poem is the violence that precipitates the creation of a hybrid identity, that is the intensity and violence, perceived or real, of the cultural forces enacted through public schooling to “civilize” new immigrants by whatever means necessary. The poem raises for us questions regarding the fundamental animosity between and among cultures which constitute the terrain that hybrid identities traverse.

In Part Five, Simila releases some of the tension built through the progress of the text. In “Superior Coastline,” she calls up tradition, but again tradition that has been modified in the diaspora:

We are bound and trade wry
by blood and Finnish
familial insults.
reticence. We sit
Hand over hand
like wave-washed stones
we pull
in the sixteen footer
two hundred feet
five miles from the shore.
of line into the bottom
Beyond the shoals
of the boat.
of Traverse Island
We are silent
it’s four hundred feet
as the ghosts of Superior
between the reefs
dance into our palms.
creep up the edges
We laugh our way back
of the reef.
slamming the bow
We settle
into the rising swells
onto the shelf
freshwater anglers
drop our lines
jubilant. (51)

This work, I think, operates on at least two levels. On the surface, we are witness to a simple fishing trip, but directly under that level is embedded the notion of difference from and similarity to other fishermen. These are freshwater fishermen who are five miles off shore, only possible on large inland lakes. Yet they are reticent, like Finns, round like the wave-washed stones on the shore, and like Finns, challenging the sea/lake by being well beyond the limit of reason in a sixteen-foot boat. And like Finns, real or created in the poet’s imagination or in the collective imagination of her diaspora community, there is a sense of sisu or braveness surrounding the act. The laughter on the way home attests to
the sense of jubilance evoked by and named in the poems — jubilance for the interaction, the bravery, and the catch altogether.

Simila closes, as she opens, with an enigma with “All the Rest Is Silence:

Let time go by
let suns rise
and I’ll still be here.
When the sky hugs
the returning geese
I will still be here;
there will be no words
just the embrace

of muted horizons
a memory of winter syllables
across the night sky
no metaphors.
There will be love
just love
and all the rest is silence.

The close brings together the themes of her text: the passing seasons, the natural world, her own identity, and love, none of which is completed on its own, but which is expressed within the context of the whole. In the world of this poem, it is spring with the return of new life, represented by the return of the geese to the gesture of love from the sky. The speaker is at one with this world in her silence, in her reticence, in her comfort with the love of the world she inhabits. She is, as she demonstrated through the course of the book, a Finn and an American, a person informed by the hybrid world out of which she was born and within which she stakes her cultural territory. The themes that emerge within her world include sauna and sisu, but here too we find the beauty and birthright of water, the horror of cultural imperialism as expressed through American education, a valuing of the Finnish language and the firm grounding in the hybrid sense of self of which these poems are evidence.

THE FINNISH-AMERICAN DIASPORIC IDENTITY WORKED OUT IN VERSE

Based on the study of Finnish diaspora identity as it is represented by these four very different poets, it appears the slipperiness of the issue is reinforced. In the literary context, reality and through it identity is represented in idealized forms and within those forms it can be seen in greater relief than is possible in everyday life. Thus, Finnish diaspora identity, expressed here, admits the specificity of the everyday. In that sense, while pasty may also be construed a cultural symbol in Upper Michigan, it qualifies as a cultural marker of Finnish Diaspora identity insofar as it is imbued with new meaning in circulation in the Diaspora community, as we see with some other symbols below. Sauna and sisu, integrated as they are into the everyday world of the Finnish Diaspora population, serve to maintain Finnish identity as is predicted in the critical research. The dominant symbols these poets use and which also
appear on Susag's list of positive traits include lakes or water, *sisu* and *sauna*, and home. What is clear is that the worldviews implicit in these works all rank highly the importance of family, honesty, independence, peace, and freedom.

Living through the trials of becoming established citizens, new immigrants may well have shared in a sense of *sisu*, that intestinal fortitude required to make a new home within a new and sometimes hostile cultural environment. These two notions in their depiction within the poetry are connected to the social fabric of life — Maria must have *sisu* to live through those moments as a widowed mother of three in an unfriendly new country. The enacting of the notion of *sisu* reinforces her sense of self and her validity as a human being. Similarly, the students lectured by teachers to give over using their first language must also have shared a sense of *sisu* both in learning English and in finding places where they might assert their Finnish, in their poetry perhaps.

The mixed relationships with language that are depicted in these poems demonstrate its significance and also its malleability to meet the needs of speakers in diaspora. Drawing on myth and cultural narratives, each poet variously defines a linguistic "turf." For Mattson and Simila, that includes the use of Finnish words in their predominantly English texts. Also for Mattson and Simila, there is depicted the violence of the forces within North America that has insisted that those of the Diaspora give over their languages of origin and become monolingual, but these two poets do not seem inclined to do so. For Mattson and Minty, that includes the explicit use of Finnish cultural narratives, the former in the form of the discussion of the evil spirit (*aave*) in the context of one poem and the latter in terms of citing verses from the *Kalevala* in the introductory sections of the work to set it in its literary context. For Anderson and Simila, there seems a quiet joy, almost elation, over the strength that is imparted through the quiet Finnish speaking voice.

These poets remind us in new ways what diaspora scholars have illustrated in their critical works, that diaspora identity is about selective cultural maintenance, interpretation, and reformulation, and all of this in a community that vigorously lives the identity it recreates in the every day. Thus, even while language might be said to be the strongest determiner of cultural identity, the absence of the language of the country of origin does not deny continued senses of ethnicity. In place of fluency in the language of origin, diaspora writers make use of what fragments of language they still possess, incorporating it into their creations in such ways as to render clear their take on the matter of identity.
Finally, I think that this study demonstrates how poets in the Finnish Diaspora in North America work within the contested space they occupy. They represent harsh history and exuberant living; they take and make use of language in novel and useful ways, preserving what they choose to remember and sometimes remodeling heritage to suit their needs. They are children of the working class as well as professionals in their own right, they are scholars and teachers variously informed by their traditional and reformed cultural myths, and they assert their right to self expression, both in the controlled meter of verse and in that wild abandon of liberation, as Minty does:

I roll back on my haunches
and let the long, shrill howl rise.
It runs out like a song from my throat. (29)

Beth L. Virtranen is Associate Professor of English at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez. She has published articles in the Journal of Finnish Studies and other journals on North American Finnish diaspora literature, children’s literature, and women’s literature. In 2005, she published her first collection of poetry, Guarding Passages.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Maria Lähteenmäki and Päivi Maria Pihlaja (eds.)


In the opening article of this collection P. Stadius sets out its overarching perspective and project: “The question remains whether the North Calotte area [Norway, Sweden, and Finland above the Arctic Circle, and the Kola Peninsula; i.e., the northern ice cap/skull cap] will remain a far north marked through its periphery condition or exoticism, or if it will become a subject with its own voice and natural and recognized place in the European concert? History suggests that there are considerable traditions to deconstruct before the idea of a [sic] exotic far north will be completely forgotten in the mental map of Occidental Man.” Together, the eleven articles are a virtuoso presentation of a northernmost Europe vital on its own terms and robust in its outer relations. While the voices of eleven researchers can hardly be the region’s “own voice,” they successfully sustain a perspective of the region from the inside out.

The origins of this perspective are found in its opposite, the Enlightenment’s will to universal knowledge, and hence its reductive, scientific fascination with the exotic, reinforced by a compelling drive for discovery and personal recognition by the “learned elite” of Europe. P.M. Pihlaja writes of a “scholarly race to the northern parts.” In 1728, the Russian Academy of Sciences published a work on plants along the Arctic Ocean. The race was now on. In 1732, the Swedish Upsala Society sent an expedition north to gather more material of scientific interest. Then the French Maupertius expedition (1736–37) to the Tornio area incited the formation of the Swedish Academy of Sciences, which, in turn, established a prideful connection with the world of learned societies. Between 1736 and 1815, the pride of Swedish natural philosophy was its eight correspondents and three associates of the French Academy of Sciences.

Three features of current scholarship work their way through these essays. First, the collection is eminently interdisciplinary, informed by history, ethnology, and geography, and international, with contributions from four nations.
Book Reviews

Second, as V-P. Lehtola explains in his chapter “The Right to One’s Own Past: Sami Cultural Heritage and Historical Awareness,” a “still continuing paradigm shift in the discipline of history” has opened up everyday history, or social microhistory. Third, indigenous studies, many Canadian, have supplanted conflict with contact as a more appropriate model of cultural encounters.

Several of the articles examine conflict/contact. M. Lähteenmäki writes of Finnish settlers in Lapland from the boon years of the 1850s on, and finds Sami subjugation by “white men” “too polarized.” The Sami acted rationally in their own interests. Further, Sami-white settler ethnicity in Lapland has to be expanded to Sami settlers and a “mixed Sami-Finnish population,” as some Sami had long taken up farming and white settlers married farming Sami. Ethnic diversity in northern Norway has comprised the Sami, the Finnish-speaking Kven, and the Norse. A policy of “Norwegianization” from the 1850s to the 1940s, T. Ryymin shows, failed. The Sami were recognized as an indigenous people in 1988, and in 1999 the Kven and four other groups received official minority status. L. Mueller-Wille and S. Aikio describe the division of the regional Sami by the Teno River boundary between Norway and Finland. The river made one society and, later as an international boundary, it split that society, but with the ironical consequence that when Finnish and Norwegian officials need to talk about boundary matters at the local level, they must resort to English, whereas the tongue of the Sami serves both sides of the border equally well in such talks.

In some aspects the North Calotte’s experience, while distinct, parallels developments outside the region. J. Nyysönen points to the self-perceived need of the Sami in the early 1950s to modernize their image, at the same time as the Finns were questioning theirs. L. Elenius, discussing “a northern mentality of equality,” draws on the appeal of religious revivalism and communism. Soviet Communism, H. Ruotsala relates, made nomadic reindeer herders into Soviet citizens, with the same resistance to control and collectivization seen elsewhere. (500, or 300, reindeer defined a kulak, and kulaks where marked for “psychological” and “physical” destruction.) The material past of Finnish Lapland was laid waste, as M. Tuominen recounts, in 1944-45, only to be followed by the baby boom of all post-war societies. Today, migration to larger centres seems the future. “Women Working Their Way through Logging Camps,” H. Snellman’s article, are no more.

Insightful in perspective and wide-ranging in content, this collection of articles advances social research and continues the challenge of interpreting the life of ordinary people from their standpoint. Although this work contributes to the deconstruction of the idea of an “exotic far north,” the subject’s northernness remains inescapable. But that means the subject is speaking through the study.

Taisto Kulpio
Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario
The Kalevala Graphic Novel. Kristian Huitula. Elias Lönnrot, Eino Friberg
Fantacore Media, Tampere, Finland. 180 p. 2005

Comic books or book-length cartoons, now uniformly termed graphic novels, have gained well deserved acceptance and respect in recent years. The graphic novel is a legitimate literary genre today. It is therefore not surprising that Finland’s national epic, the Kalevala, has been adapted to the graphic novel format. The pioneering graphic artist is Kristian Huitula of Tampere, Finland, who published Part I of his Finnish language version in 1998 and Part II in 2000. A Russian translation appeared in 2003 and now in 2005 an English language edition. Huitula’s Kalevala is not a comic cartoon in the sense of Mauri Kunnas’ The Canine Kalevala, but a serious and dignified rendition of the Kalevala in the graphic novel format.

Kalevala Graphic Novel has been received enthusiastically, largely due to Huitula’s wise decision to use only direct quotations from the Kalevala, in the English language version is taken from Eino Friberg’s translation of 1989. While the choice of events included is necessarily subjective, it can be argued that Huitula’s choices are informed by a good understanding of the mythological and shamanistic meanings embedded in the Kalevala itself.

Huitula’s art is quite stark and powerful, includes imaginative and mythic images, even nudity and some gory scenes. It is, however, never in bad taste. The entire work is stylish and dignified and clearly appeals to various age groups and graphic novel aficionados.


Börje Vähämäki
Comparative religion professor Juha Pentikäinen has studied Finno-Ugric folk beliefs, folk culture and folk poetry for over 40 years. These years have brought many insights and convictions Pentikäinen’s way, and among them the realization how central the bear is in Finnish and Finno-Ugric consciousness. While published for distribution in conjunction with an extensive exhibit of Pentikäinen’s personal collection of cultural artifacts and religious objects amassed during dozens of field trips to Siberia he has undertaken over the years, Karhun kannoilla is clearly much more than an exhibition catalog. It can be said to offer the beginnings of a definitive treatise of the role and function of the bear in Finnish folk poetry and in folk belief. The book is divided into six fascinating chapters: “The Spirit of the Forest and the Bear”, “The Bear Myth: the Bear in the Sky and on Earth”, “The peoples of the Great Bear”, “Skiing Down the Bear and the Bear Festival in Finland and Lapland”, “The Bear of Shamans and Sages”, and “The Bear on the History of Finland and Finnishness”.

The book leaves no doubt of how deep the bear tradition lies and how strong the bear taboo is in the Finnish psyche. The large number of endearing names for the bear in Finnish — over 200 — none of which is the “neutral” appellative karhu, attests to the bear’s special significance to Finns. In fact, it is probably time to compile into one book all Kalevala meter poetry dealing with the bear. Such lines are available by the thousands in Ganander’s, Gottlund’s, and Lönroth’s published and unpublished works as well as other extant bear verses. Such a Bear Epic could ideally be published in Finnish and English translation simultaneously. Should Juha Pentikäinen — and I cannot think of anyone more qualified — embark upon such a project, it would indeed leave a lasting legacy for generations to come.

Börje Vähämäki

Tytty Soila (ed.):

The Cinema of Scandinavia. 24 Frames Series.

The Cinema of Scandinavia is totally different both in structure and objective. While the earlier book attempted to provide a balanced and chronological account of the cinema traditions in each of the Nordic countries, this volume — dictated by its inclusion on the publisher's series on national cinemas called "24 Frames" — offers 24 articles highlighting individual films. The chronologically organized articles offer close ups of both prominent and successful films as well as virtually unknown ones, available only in film archives. The end result is a fascinating kaleidoscope of intriguing information and unorthodox interpretations.

The 23 contributors are mostly Scandinavian cinema scholars who bring varying perspectives and approaches to their material. The articles are well written, and, unlike some of the articles in Nordic National Cinemas, they are translated into excellent idiomatic and expressive English. The Cinema of Scandinavia turns out to be a useful, thought-provoking and out-of-the-ordinary collection of well-researched articles on films from the Nordic countries.

Börje Vähämäki

Hanna Snellman:
The Road Taken — Narratives from Lapland.

Hanna Snellman is an ethnographer and migration scholar with an exceptional record of publications over the past few years. Her book The Road Taken is the crowning achievement in her studies of the reality of the immigrant workers of Lapland and Sweden, particularly the lumberjacks. The book consists of chapters some of which have been published as articles and/or delivered as scholarly papers at various academic gatherings. The end result, though, is cohesive and synergetic. Her chapters — "Reality and Romance as Historical Portrayals", "Symbols of Power and Nostalgia", "The Surprise of Similarities", "The Challenge of Differences", "Sad Histories", "Doing Field Work", "Telling Migrations", "The Finnish Worker in Sweden", "Longing for Home", and "A Thousand Life Stories" — come together well.

The style of writing is that of an engaged ethnologist, the tone reflects empathy and engagement: it is a warmly human voice in a scholarly publication. The book is a delightful read.

Börje Vähämäki