From Cultural Knowledge to Cultural Heritage: Finnish Archives and Their Reflections of the People

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EDITORIAL

It is my pleasure to present the newest theme issue of the *Journal of Finnish Studies* to our subscribers and readers around the world. Pia Olsson and Eija Stark, the guest editors of *From Cultural Knowledge to Cultural Heritage: Finnish Archives and Their Reflections of the People*, have compiled a fascinating collection that focuses on the acquisition and storage of cultural knowledge intended for archives in Finland—and how this cultural knowledge becomes our cultural heritage.

These essays reveal that the facts now contained in the Finnish historical archives have been collected and selected by people who themselves were living in times and places very different from our present. While applauding the collectors of these materials from our societal past, these essays also contest some aspects of the process. The collectors’ decisions to include certain materials in the archives and to exclude others were made based on their own times and not on ours.

In the four articles that constitute the core of this collection, the readers will learn, for example, about the representation (or better, non-representation) of the Roma in Finnish archives. One also gains insights into the old Finnish upper class through an investigation of proverbs. In addition, we learn how questionnaires were designed and deployed in the collection of these archival materials over long periods of Finland’s history. Likewise important is the analysis of Elias Lönnrot’s procedures for collecting textual representations of the figure of Aino in the *Kalevala* and the *Kanteletar*.

In sum, this issue encourages the reader to question, to contest, to challenge, and—not to take its topics for granted. It reminds me of the title of a poetry collection by my colleague, Professor Nick Lantz: *We Don’t Know We Don’t Know* (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2010). Lantz builds his poems on questions—sometimes funny and comfortable ones, sometimes dark and disturbing ones. In similar fashion, the authors of this issue ask some questions that we can easily answer, but they also ask those questions that make us, the consumers of the Finnish cultural
heritage, ponder: how is it that we know what we know—and is there something that we don’t know we don’t know.

In this issue, we also offer to our readers a large number of books reviews. And we include a polemic exchange between two of our editorial board members, Dr. Douglas Robinson (Hong Kong Baptist University) and Dr. Jyrki Nummi (University of Helsinki), who engage in a heated discussion about the new critical edition of Kivi’s *Nummisuutarit*, edited by Nummi and his colleagues.

Enjoy.

*Helena Halmari*
In Finland, as in many other countries, archives and museums are places where fragments of the past are stored. This collection of articles focuses on the historical processes in which these fragments, such as folklore items and life histories, have been gathered and judged worthy to be preserved. These collections, and the information they contain, are part of the knowledge upon which we base our understanding of the past in Finnish society and of the individuals who lived in it.

Nonetheless, the extensive amount of information and the multiple sources of data available in modern times force us to question and contest the nature of this knowledge. Who defines what kind of information is important to collect and preserve? What is acceptable and unacceptable in different periods and contexts? How do the different social hierarchies of knowledge affect our worldview? These are the questions addressed, from the perspective of cultural knowledge, in this volume of the *Journal of Finnish Studies*. We are not the first to approach these questions. Human knowledge is based on information received from sources one can trust. People’s understanding of their own culture has always been more diverse than the representations preserved in traditional archives and museums. The articles of this volume focus on how cultural knowledge was produced in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Finnish society. All authors discuss perspectives on knowledge as it concerns common people, and they all consider information management from historical perspectives.

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1 The theme of this volume of the *Journal of Finnish Studies* evolved in the project financed by the Kone Foundation in 2011. Kati Mikkola and Eija Stark made their contributions to the volume in conjunction with a project financed by the Academy of Finland.
Information related to ethnography and folklore has been collected in archives and museums in Finland (as well as in other Nordic countries) extensively since the turn of the twentieth century. This gathering of knowledge has been done in different ways and through various channels: for example, the ideas of traditional culture have been captured in recordings in which informants talk and write about their own experiences. These collections are—and have been—compiled by researchers on the basis of their fieldwork and by collectors who are or were both professional and lay volunteers. However, all of the collectors have been insiders, at least to some extent, in the culture they describe. The materials stored in various archives have been, and still are, important resources in the academic disciplines of European ethnology, folklore studies, and history. Yet, they also reflect the disciplinary division between folklore studies and European ethnology in Finland. Different archives have historically dedicated themselves on the one hand to the non-material, intellectual, and literary heritage collections, and, on the other hand, to the material and social aspects of culture. Although this duality has gradually lost its relevance from the viewpoints of the archives, the collections analyzed in the articles here still, to an extent, represent this distribution of work. In other words, the Finnish Literature Society (Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura) represents the oral tradition, and the National Board of Antiquities (Museovirasto) represents the material and social culture. The shared mission of both of these archives, however, is to collect, arrange, and preserve cultural heritage.

The collections, which have grown in number between the nineteenth century and the present day, include folk poetry, folk tales and songs, proverbs and sayings, life histories, and thematic writings connecting fact-oriented reporting and personal narratives. The viewpoints of the respondents are varied, including those of lay collectors and reporters of information from their personal surroundings, as well as of people writing about subjective experiences from their own lives. A collection of ethnographic questionnaires, for example, can include detached descriptions of cultural phenomena and confessional episodes from daily life—even within one response (see Ekrem 2005).

All the articles in this theme issue are based on materials unearthed in the archives of the Finnish Literature Society (FLS) and the National Board of Antiquities (NBA). The Finnish Literature Society was founded in 1831, and from the beginning its members and lay enthusiasts collected information on folklore and folk customs. The collections encompass oral tradition, folk music, ethnographies, and
biographies. Whereas the Society’s primary function was, and still is, to promote Finnish oral traditions and the Finnish language and literature, most of the collections in the National Board of Antiquities, founded in 1884, are dedicated to the material cultural heritage. In addition to the archaeological and historical artifacts and objects, the Board has collected ethnographic materials from the nineteenth century up to the present. The initial aim was to enhance the understanding of the artifacts in the museum collections. Its ethnological collections consist of responses to questionnaires and manuscripts from individual collectors, mostly written by scholars and officials. The questionnaire activity began in 1956 and is based on a network of informants writing descriptions on themes chosen by the archive.

The articles in this theme issue start from the premise that the ethnographic questionnaires and the folklore archive collections represent the cultural knowledge of common people embedded in words and stories. Although this knowledge is obtained from and shared with various people, it is not everyone’s culture, and it is not a representation of Finnish culture as a whole. For a long time, the folklore and ethnographic questionnaires treated the object, the common people, as one entity devoid of any inner social stratification or ethnic variability. The intention of the early researchers was to gather, edit, and conserve the products of tradition located in the archive collections as representing a Finnish tradition that was shared by the majority of the population. From the perspective of the folklore collectors, who were highly educated and often Swedish-speaking, the common people were those who were illiterate Finnish speakers with no political, economic, or social power. Therefore, the most “authentic” folklore and folk-life descriptions were ideally old, orally transmitted, and collectively shared. The concept of one single folk was considered the norm, and everyone was forced into the category of the masses. In the discipline of European ethnology and the early collections of the National Board of Antiquities, the land-owning peasant culture was considered the ideal, representing authentic Finnish culture. This was in line with the nineteenth-century European ideals of nationalist movements, in which the peasantry as a single class was the symbol of genuine nationhood.

Collecting information on certain kinds of common people reduced the image of folk culture to one entity without inner cultural or social variations. The Finnish common folk included ethnic minorities such as the Roma and the Sami, who were well identified as such in grassroots daily life. However, they are almost absent from the archival collections. In their contribution to this theme issue of the
Journal of Finnish Studies, Risto Blomster and Kati Mikkola take a different view of the national-romantic collections in analyzing the roles that the Roma played during various periods in producing material for the Finnish Literature Society. Roma-related folklore and ethnography are examined from the perspectives of the various interests on which the Finnish Literature Society focused over the decades. The position of the Roma sheds light on the Finnish nation-building process and ideas of “authentic Finnish folklore.”

In recent years, researchers working on the archive materials have paid more attention to the processes by which cultural knowledge was formed. The dialogical relationship between a researcher asking questions and those giving information to the archives and museums has been made visible in order to enhance understanding of the different aspects that affect what information is shared, how it is shared, and who are the ones who share it. Ideological and political motives, among others, shape the content and form of these archive materials, and these motives also become an important part of the research process. The choice of topics that are considered interesting and important enough to be recorded or noted in the archives (and therefore relevant to future generations) depends on the social, economic, political, and cultural realities of a certain time (see, e.g., Heikkinen 2003, 141–44; Mikkola 2009). Just as Blomster and Mikkola claim in their article, the assessment of the authenticity of the collections illustrates the scientific notions of the time and shows how certain materials have become signified as worth collecting.

During the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, Finnish folklore was collected on the ideological basis of the historic-geographic method. The main purpose was to discover the original form, contents, idea, and distribution of a folklore item. The early collectors and scholars paid very little attention to the folklore users’ engagement in expressive realms. The articles in this volume of the Journal of Finnish Studies that deal with the Finnish Literature Society analyze the cultural processes in which the materials have been collected, selected, and produced from the point of view of the societal strata that were considered socially inferior. However, the notion that the archive materials in question merely represent something “from below” is challenged in the articles through a focus on processes of producing knowledge. The aim of this issue is—in Peter Burke’s words—to make people more aware of the “knowledge system” by describing and analyzing the different source materials, how they were formed, and the information they offer (Burke 2000, 2). The focus is on the interplay between the sources of information, the archives, and the
Eija Stark shows in her article how old proverbs collected by the Finnish Literature Society using the historic-geographic method reflected the class differences of nineteenth-century Finland. Stark points out the difficulties that small rural communities faced. Up until the early twentieth century, Finnish society was comprised of estates, although the majority of the population remained outside of these estates. These outsiders included tenants, cottagers, servants, and urban factory workers. This heterogeneity of folk life was also a blind spot for late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century folklorists, who interpreted the common people’s culture either nostalgically as a vanishing rural culture or as a way of life stigmatized as undeveloped and peripheral. In her analyses, Stark uses the theory of folklore as a culture of contestation, introduced by Luigi Lombardi-Satriani (1974). According to this theory, everyday reality provided an adequate sounding board for the critical social attitudes manifested in different ethnographic narratives and folklore genres. Contestation points to the “opposing testimony” of the hegemonic culture, in other words, the culture that is defined by the people in power in a given historical society. This resistance is, as Stark claims, manifested in the adoption of different ways of thinking and behaving than did the people in power. Contestation also highlights the critical eye needed when using the material stored in folklore archives: In order to understand its nature, it must be set and therefore seen within the context that produced it.

The initiative to collect materials only on certain themes has typically come either from the archivists themselves or from the non-profit organizations with an interest in particular topics. In other words, themes that have been considered important are pre-determined in the questions. The archives, in their active collecting work, have the authority to define the information to be “saved” for future generations as a part of the shared understanding (Mikkola 2009, 109). Examining the motives and aims of collecting and sharing cultural knowledge—which are not always explicitly expressed but are, at times, implicit—is one of the most important tasks for this critical analysis of the collections in the archives and museums. Pia Olsson examines how one specific archive has constituted routines for collecting information via questionnaire booklets, and, through these booklets, this archive has guided the substance of information that is considered to represent traditional Finnish culture. Olsson analyzes the signals emanating from the archive and the changes that can be traced to them reflecting the scientific trends in European ethology. Her
analysis is based on the questionnaire leaflets circulated by the National Board of Antiquities from the 1950s to the 1990s. The aim was to secure good factual knowledge, but what did this include, in the end?

The process of collecting folklore and ethnography is rooted in the academic aims of folklore studies, as well as in the ideological project of building the Finnish nation. In terms of history it goes back to the Romantic era, which was inspired by an attempt to highlight Finland as a collective unit with its own nationalist past and language. Folk tales and oral poetry were loaded with national-romantic cultural significance. The *Kalevala* (1835), compiled by Elias Lönnrot, and the oral folk poetry behind it were symbols of the civilization that included the stereotypical picture of a hard-working peasant Finn. The symbols interwoven in the folk poetry are traceable through the scholarly use of single poems. Textualization is the process whereby oral tradition is transformed into text and made available to wider audiences. In 1832 Lönnrot made notes for a poem about anxiety. In her article Niina Hämäläinen analyzes the way this poem “En ole musta luonnon musta” [I’m not black by nature] has been textualized. According to Hämäläinen, it reflects national and ideological objectives. Lönnrot not only represented the oral culture but also intentionally shaped the texts to fit contemporary upper-class ideas of folk poems and their moral and aesthetic contents. The motif of the poem is typical: the appearance of the sad “I” reflects the depth of the sadness. Even though he collected different versions of the poem during his many journeys of discovery, he did not include it in all versions of the *Kalevala*, nor did he publish versions of it elsewhere. Hämäläinen examines how this particular poem and its placement or non-placement reflect the politics and representations of oral folk tradition in general.

The current scholarly view of ethnological and folklore material—folk poetry, narratives, and ethnography—emphasizes this material as a means by which people can freely share their memories, experiences, ideas, and values. Those involved in contemporary research—whether as informants or narrators—are expected to represent only themselves and their personal, sometimes idiosyncratic, views, whereas earlier they were assumed to represent a certain region and its vernacular culture (Hagström and Marander-Eklund 2005, 9, 11). As the articles in this issue point out, the early scholars in the late nineteenth century paid very little attention to individual people using their vernacular genres and living their daily lives. Although contextualizing was not the main collecting principle of the oral tradition, the texts do not lack contextual information.
With the sources the scholars use in their individual articles, we want to make visible the complexity of the phenomena that have, until the late 1960s, been considered unproblematic, uninteresting, and homogenous. The authors show that folklore, narratives, and ethnographic responses have the potential to give a more precise view of the common folk of the past than perhaps was genuinely intended. This can be done by mixing different sources and intellectual histories: Archived texts need pertinent knowledge about the world in a given social context concerning, for example, information on sources of livelihood, the conditions of landowning, the class structure, and the distribution of wealth. The attempt to understand the different factors behind the formation of archived cultural knowledge is not to make value judgments in hindsight about the archiving practices but to make them as transparent as possible. We hope that this historical analysis could also make us more aware of the possible present-day factors affecting the contemporary archiving of cultural knowledge.

In their everyday operations, the archives authorize the selection from and management of elements contained in the stream of information. No matter how desperately one would like to equalize this process and give responsibility to people outside academia and the archives, the decisions about what information—in what form and at what time—is to be “safeguarded” cannot be externalized. However, the cultural knowledge collected in the archives also shows us that the people responding to the calls presented by the archives have their own presuppositions—and the means of exercising power in accordance with such presuppositions—when they decide what kind of information they want to share with the institutions in question and for what ends. It is this dialogical relation between the archives and the informants, narrators, respondents, or lay collectors—whatever role we give them in our research—which the contributors of this volume are interested in.

It is possible to untangle the practices of contestation as expressions of cultural knowledge from below only through the closer analysis of folklore, narratives, and responses to the questionnaires. In other words, it is necessary to take into account the perspectives of those who were the objects of the collectors, as well as of those who collected the materials. Those analyzing cultural knowledge from below inevitably encounter multiple meanings and insights within the texts. This enables them to see beyond the priorities of the collectors and to recognize other contexts in which the historical phenomena are rendered comprehensible.
References


INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION OF ROMA
IN THE CATEGORY OF FINNISH FOLKLORE:
THE COLLECTIONS OF THE FINNISH LITERATURE SOCIETY
FROM THE 1800s TO THE 2000s

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Kati Mikkola, University of Helsinki

ABSTRACT
In this article, we examine the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society from the point of view of material on the Roma from the mid-1800s to the 2010s. The article demonstrates that the kind of material on the Roma that has been incorporated into the archives during various periods is indicative of not only changing interests in the study of folklore but also of the inclusions and exclusions carried out in the building of the Finnish nation and of the Roma’s own choices in keeping secret or disclosing their traditions. The article also points to the partially random nature of the archival materials: materials that were not purposefully collected have also made their way to the archives.

INTRODUCTION
Oral folklore has played a strong role in the building of the Finnish nation. Interest in the roots of Finnishness arose in academic circles as early as the eighteenth century; however, it was not until Finland, at first a Swedish province, became an autonomous area of the Russian Empire in 1809 that the educated classes found a new need and opportunity to build a Finnish national identity. During the next few decades,
The collection of Finnish folklore and the study of Finnish folk culture took a central position in the construction of national history and the definition of a national character. The Finnish Literature Society (FLS or SKS [Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura] in Finnish) had a major role in this project, having been founded in 1831 to promote the position of the Finnish language and of Finnish literature in a country where the language of administration and of the educated classes was still Swedish. From its very outset, one of the key activities of the society was the collection and archiving of Finnish folklore. As a result of this work, one of the world’s largest collections of oral narrative tradition and folklore was created.

We will look at the collections in the Finnish Literature Society’s archives from the point of view of the borders of Finnishness, with particular attention to archival materials on the Finnish Roma. What kind of materials concerning the Roma does the Finnish Literature Society possess and why? What do they tell us about the building of the Finnish nation and the exercises of inclusion and exclusion that constituted its formation?

At the beginning of this article, we will present a short general overview of the history of the Finnish Roma. We will then analyze the roles that Roma have played during various periods in producing material for the Folklore Archives. We will take a look at the Roma materials from the perspective of the various collection interests of the Finnish Literature Society during different periods, the position of the Roma in the Finnish nation-building process, and notions of “authentic Finnish folklore.” We will also analyze two sets of materials, each defining the relationship between the Roma and non-Roma: Roma as the subject of the folklore of non-Roma and the folklore of the Roma themselves. We will end this article by articulating the nature of the Roma materials from the perspective of mutual exclusion and inclusion, with particular attention to the aim of both the Archives and the Roma communities of preserving folklore.

**Who are the Finnish Roma?**

The first mention of the Roma (or tattarit) in the Swedish Kingdom dates from as early as 1512, when a company of roughly sixty people, said to be from “Little Egypt,” arrived in the country. It is known that at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Roma were also traveling in the eastern parts of the Kingdom, in what is now Finland (Fraser 1995, 121; Rekola 2012, 18). During the next few centuries,

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2 See also Tervonen 2011.
they arrived in this area several times from both east and west. Based on the language and culture of the Finnish Roma, the oldest layer of the Roma population probably came from the west and was comprised of the Sinti subgroup (Granqvist 2007, 10–11; 2012, 273; Viljanen 2012, 416).\(^3\) In the eighteenth century, there were an estimated 1,000 Roma in Finland (Granqvist 2012, 277).

The earliest research on the language and culture of the Finnish Roma is from the late eighteenth century. In 1780, Kristfrid Ganander (1741–1790), a chaplain at Rantsila in North Ostrobothnia, wrote a forty-six-page paper for the annual writing competition of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History, and Antiquities, where one of the assigned subjects was “research on the so-called Gypsies, their origins and language.”\(^4\) Ganander’s text was the only work on this subject. Although he drew from written sources in laying out the origins and history of the Roma, the ethnographic descriptions and vocabulary were based on his own work with the Roma. This is apparent, for example, from his keen observations on the dress, music, dancing, modes of livelihood, routes of travel, and culture of the Roma (Joki 1956, 1, 13; Pulma 2006, 40).

In the nineteenth century, Roma colonies were mostly located in the east in Karelia and in the west in Ostrobothnia. Despite concentrations in Karelia and Ostrobothnia, partly or completely mobile communities of Roma were dispersed throughout the country. Most of the Roma living in what is now Finland led an itinerant life right until the mid-1900s. They made their living primarily through a combination of many different livelihoods. None of the trades practiced by the Roma were unique to them, but many were suited to the Roma’s traveling way of life, such as peddling, folk remedies, and mending shoes and pots. The most common trade entered into nineteenth-century parish records for Roma men was either crofter or “traveler.” Roma men’s work generally involved horses; the men earned a living, for example, by shoeing horses, weaving reins, and selling horses. The Roma also practiced trades shunned by non-Roma. These included gelding, tanning, and whipping. Typical work for Roma women included handicrafts, agricultural work, and fortune-telling (Tervonen 2012a, 104–107).

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3 Romani is an Indo-European language (part of the Indo-Aryan sub-group of the Indo-Iranian branch), whereas Finnish is a Finno-Ugric language (see Granqvist 2012, 272).

4 The exonym Gypsy (mustalainen) was used by both non-Roma collectors and the Archives until the 1970s. The term Roma gradually entered use after the civil rights movement of the 1960s (the singular masculine of Roma is Rom). In this article, Gypsy is used when we refer to the primary sources that use this term.
Throughout history, the culture of the Finnish Roma has somewhat diverged from that of non-Roma. Roma have tended to stand out because of their darker complexion, different language, and distinctive customs. Among the Roma, the relations between generations and genders were governed by strict rules of propriety, with many habits relating to food and hygiene unknown to non-Roma (see Viljanen 2012). Among themselves, the Roma have used their own language, which is one of the Sinti dialects of Romani, but when communicating with non-Roma and authorities they have used Finnish, Swedish, and Russian. For a long time, Romani was spoken only among Roma, and was thus used as a secret language in situations where both Roma and non-Roma were present (see Granqvist 2012, 285).

Despite their culturally distinct customs, the Roma have throughout the centuries been in constant contact with non-Roma. In the agrarian Finland of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Roma and non-Roma generally enjoyed good trading relations. However, in some areas the Roma acquired a bad reputation among non-Roma; in fact, some people were especially suspicious of itinerant Roma and sought to avoid them. Yet it must also be said that there were certain houses where Roma were welcome and given accommodation. These included both the houses of members of non-Roma and of settled Roma. In the records of contemporary authorities, the Roma appear to a large degree as a group living on the margins of society, failing to adapt to its norms. This is evidenced, for example, in sentences of vagrancy given to Roma and in difficulties in getting Roma children to attend school. Church records also have incomplete information concerning the Roma, and many Roma marriages were not carried out by the Church (see Komiteamietintö 1900, 55; Tervonen 2012a, 97–117, 121–24; Viljanen 2012, 414–15).

The structural changes in society after the Second World War had a powerful impact on the lives of both Roma and non-Roma. The itinerant way of life of the Roma started to become obsolete, and the change in living conditions led to a breakdown of the earlier system of extended families spanning several generations. Unemployment, discrimination, and many different social problems made the lives of the Roma difficult, though a slowly growing welfare state offered opportunities for social mobility and a secured livelihood. Particularly as a result of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, there were increased efforts to prevent discrimination against Roma (see Viljanen 2012, 417; Tervonen 2012b, 176, 191; Friman-Korpela 2012, 217–23).
There are currently approximately 14,000 Finnish Roma, of whom 4,000 live in Sweden, even though no exact figures are available. The unique customs and strong sense of community that are part of Roma culture still play an important role in the lives of most Roma. However, the situation for the Romani language is grim: in 2009, only one-third of the Roma felt that they had an excellent or good command of the language (Hedman 2009, 24). The Finnish Roma language is still mostly oral, with only an estimated few thousand pages of written material (see Granqvist 2012, 281, 285).5

In terms of social standing, it is also clear that Roma equality in Finnish society has still not been entirely reached in terms of education, working life, living conditions, and services. Various social problems such as unemployment and dropping out of school still cause friction in the Roma’s relationship with mainstream society. Although the social position of Finnish Roma is fairly good in comparison to many other European Roma minorities, there are still prejudices among non-Roma, and many Roma feel that they have experienced discrimination.

**The Changing Interests in Folklore Collecting**

When the large-scale collecting of folklore began in Finland in the nineteenth century, the Finnish Roma communities not only had their own traditions and their own cultural features, but they also shared a great deal of cultural knowledge with non-Roma; after all, most of the families had lived in the country for centuries. This raises the question of how the oral traditions of the Roma show up in the Folklore Archives and what roles the Roma themselves played in the processes of producing and recording folklore.

When the collecting activities of the Finnish Literature Society started in the 1830s, almost all of those collecting Finnish folklore had a university education, and many of them were native Swedish speakers. The Romantic Movement formed the background for this work, along with a desire to reconstruct the culture and historical periods of ancient Finnish culture (see Hautala 1954, 118). A milestone of the early Finnish Literature Society was the 1835 publication of the *Kalevala*, compiled from folk poetry collected by Elias Lönnrot. Lönnrot’s example inspired even

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5 Most of these texts are translations of religious works, and, for example, not a single novel has been published in the Finnish Romani language. In 2012, the Romani Literature Society (RKS in Finnish) was founded to promote the study of and raise awareness of the Roma language, culture, and folklore (see romlit.org).
more people to collect folklore, with invitations to collect material printed in newspapers. The members of the educated classes, university students in particular, were for a long time the driving force behind this collecting, but gradually, particularly from the late 1870s onward, ordinary people joined the effort in larger numbers. These new collectors had little or no formal education, and they earned their living from physical work (see Kauranen 2006; Stark 2006, 116–17; Mikkola, 2009, 68).

During the first few decades of collecting activities, the FLS collections grew somewhat sporadically, occasionally in even a haphazard manner. However, from the 1880s onward, the historic-geographic method (also called the Finnish School) of Julius and Kaarle Krohn came to strongly influence collecting policies, with comparisons of collected folklore informed by evolutionary ideas and a search for the original forms and changes of folklore (see Hautala 1954, 187–90; Stark in this volume). There was also an effort to achieve a more systematic way of collecting data, with more detailed instructions for collectors on the genres of folklore most desirable to the FLS. In announcements relating to collections, citizens were urged to collect both old poems in the Kalevala meter as well as structurally more modern poems, proverbs, riddles, fairy tales, stories, and descriptions of folk customs and beliefs.

While one might imagine that Roma folklore would be a fruitful object for a discipline investigating the international routes along which folklore traveled, and while Romani had already become a topic of interest for linguistics in Europe, only very few materials on the Roma were incorporated into the archives of the Finnish Literature Society during its first hundred years of existence. This may be partly a result of the idea behind the collecting efforts: the work was urgent because an old way of life was quickly dying out, and the spread of literary culture threatened to destroy the treasures of oral folklore (see Abrahams 1992, 38; Knuuttila 1994, 18–19; Anttonen 2005, 38, 52, 171; Stark 2006, 139; Mikkola 2009, 117–18). From this point of view, the great national project to collect Finnish folklore in order to preserve it in the archives was seen as more important than the folklore of ethnic minorities. The few Roma materials that ended up in the archives in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were thus not a result of the active policies of the FLS, but were included because of either pure chance or the enthusiasm of a handful of amateur collectors.

During the 1930s, the collecting activities of the Finnish Literature Society grew more efficient and varied, but collecting interests still did not cover Roma folklore. In the mid-1930s, to celebrate the centenary of the Kalevala and to save the
“treasures of the intellectual heritage of the people,” an extensive collecting competition was organized, with prominent advertisements placed in newspapers throughout Finland (Haavio 1936, 1–2). After the competition, a collecting network was established in the manner of the correspondent networks of the Swedish folklore archives. This network included people who had sent material to the FLS earlier and those who had taken part in the collecting competition. A separate department was founded as part of the FLS in order to maintain and accumulate new materials for the folklore collections. This department came to be called the Folklore Archives (Peltonen 2004, 211–12; Häggman 2012, 362–64, 372). At its largest in the late 1930s, the collecting network of the Archives had about 1,000 collectors (see Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran kansanrunousarkiston vuosikertomus 1939). The network represented a broad range of different areas and professions in Finland, though with a significant focus on rural areas and with agricultural trades forming the clearly largest single profession (see Mikkola 2009, 87). The network had few representatives of ethnic and linguistic minorities, and not a single one of the active collectors was identifiable as a Rom.

EARLY COLLECTORS OF ROMA LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The nature of the archival materials on the Roma varies to a great degree depending on who is speaking in them, to whom, in what language, and on what topic. The earliest Roma language item in the collections of the Finnish Literature Society is a word list sent to the collections of the FLS in 1860 from two ladies who were members of the gentry, Miss Lydia Bergroth (1844–1916) and Miss Lydia von Essen (1842–1872). The young ladies with a passion for collecting Roma words were cousins, collecting their material at Keuruu in Central Finland and Härmä in East Ostrobothnia. The material does not reveal exactly why two non-Roma girls decided to collect Romani words. The list does reveal, however, that they had personal contacts among the Roma who traveled in the area and visited the houses.

The list contains approximately 150 Roma words or sayings, along with translations. The words are mostly the names of objects, buildings, animals, and food ingredients. The religious terms on the list are pappi (priest), lukkari (cantor), Jumala (God), Perkele (the Devil), and the benediction Jumal’ antakoon (God willing). There are also some short phrases indicating interactions between non-Roma and

6 Bergroth’s father was the parish chaplain and later the vicar of Keuruu (Peltonen 2008, 10–11).
the Roma, such as Anna ruokaa (Give food), Anna viinaa (Give booze), Anna kahvia (Give coffee), and Tule syömään (Come eat) and Mene syömään (Go eat). The following greetings and questions also relate to everyday interactions: Hyvää päivää (Good day), Mitä sinulle nyt kuuluu? (How are you now?), Mihinkä menet? (Where are you going?), and Vie terveisiä (Give my regards). The list also includes the phrases koria tyttö (handsome girl) and koria poika (handsome boy). The longest single sentence is Voi kuinka suuri nenä sinulla on (Oh what a big nose you have).\(^7\)

Figure 1. Romani words written down by Lydia von Essen and Lydia Bergroth. The young ladies were from families belonging to the nobility and clergy, with several manors in different parts of Finland. Roma were frequent visitors at manors on their peddling trips because of the interest in the handicrafts they produced. The word list was submitted to the Finnish Literature Society in 1860. (FLS/Literary Archives)

Although Bergroth and von Essen’s word list was included in the FLS collections, other sources clearly indicate that the collection and promotion of Romani was not of interest to the FLS. For example, in the 1890s Adam Lindh (1843–1924),

\(^7\) SKS KIA. 4635–3636, XII 806. Mustalais-Sanoja Härmästä ja Keuruulta.
a teacher at a prison school who had earlier sent the FLS notes on a poem in the Kalevala meter, offered to the FLS for publication a Romani grammar and vocabulary that he had written. It was turned down; the FLS did not seize the opportunity to publish Finland’s first Romani alphabet book (see *Uusi Suometar* November 23, 1898; Blomster 2012a, 288).

In his role as a teacher in prisons in Eastern Finland, Vyborg, and Lappeenranta, Lindh was interested in Romani, though he was not a Rom himself. He was enthusiastic about educating the common people, actively taking part in many associations, holding municipal positions, and writing articles for local newspapers, with commentary on matters relating to the Roma. Lindh’s written works include the book *Siperian tie* (The way to Siberia) (1881), where he ponders the state of prison care and presents his opinions on the treatment of prisoners, including Roma. Lindh’s Romani alphabet book was part of his long-term goal to improve the position of the Roma. The manuscript, called *Aapisliin, romaned sibbah* (Alphabet book in the Romani language) (1893), contained not only reading passages as part of the alphabet book, but also a grammar, vocabulary, the Ten Commandments, and “a tale of the creation of the world and of the birth of our Savior” (*Uusi Suometar* November 23, 1898; Blomster 2012a, 288–89).

Lindh faced many difficulties trying to get his manuscript published. In 1900, after not only the Finnish Literature Society but also the Lähetyssuora (Evangelical Lutheran Mission) and the Kansanvalistusseura (People’s Education Society) rejected the manuscript, Lindh sent an application to the education committee of the Finnish Senate, requesting that “Your Imperial Majesty in His mercy sees it fit to order that” these books, “particularly the Alphabet Book and God’s Ten Commandments,” be published using state funds and distributed free of charge to the Roma. According to Lindh, many Roma were “in a state of paganism and ignorance,” and because they lacked “the spirit of propriety,” they were easily led to “crimes and prisons.” Lindh firmly believed in the civilizing effects of learning to read and write. He indicated that indeed the Roma themselves had told him that it was precisely the lack of literacy that prevented their social mobility (Lindh 1900). In the preface of his manuscript, Lindh presents a wish that linguists would later

8 The *Uusi Suometar* newspaper on November 23, 1898, published an article concerning Lindh’s aims to publish an alphabet book, predicting that the book would soon be coming out.

9 KA SD 1126/188, 497/79, 1900. Lindh’s application to the education committee of the Senate.
on continue his work and “to a great degree perfect this book.” His stated purpose was that “even the Roma, in this age of progress, become writers of their own lan-
guage”\(^{10}\) (Blomster 2012a, 288–89).

The person selected to give a statement on Lindh’s application was Arthur Thesleff (1871–1920), a famous expert on Roma culture and language. The state-
ment was extremely negative. Thesleff roundly condemned the Romani transcrip-
tion and the notation of the sounds as inconsistent. He also stated that it was not
the purpose of the state to promote Romani, as it was precisely the language that
supported and increased the isolation of the Roma from the rest of the population
(Thesleff 1900).\(^{11}\) Lindh’s alphabet book and grammar, therefore, never saw pub-
lication, partly because of the shortcomings of the manuscript, but also because
of assimilative policies on minorities. Thesleff, however, published his own Roma
language dictionary in 1902 (Blomster 2012a, 289).

Thesleff, born to a wealthy Fenno-Swedish/Russian family, was familiar with
the Roma from his childhood home, the Liimatta mansion in Karelia. He also did
groundbreaking work in collecting Roma folklore. While traveling around Finland
with a group of Roma in the 1890s, Thesleff amassed a wealth of Roma vocabulary
and folklore. The collected materials, part of the collections of the Stockholm Royal
Library, include notes on Roma songs, seventy-five in Romani and thirty in Finnish,
which are rare even on a global scale because of their age and the high portion of
Romani text (see also Svanberg 1985; Montesino 2001).\(^{12}\) Besides Finland, Thesleff
also traveled with the Roma throughout Europe and North Africa, as well as in the
Asian territories of Russia. He recalls having always written his notes in secret from
the Roma, in a place where inquiring eyes could not see him (Laaksonen 2010).

At the turn of the century, Thesleff was part of a state committee known as
the Walle Committee, whose task was to propose ways of improving the Roma’s
adaptation to mainstream Finnish society. Thesleff was in charge of collecting in-
formation on Roma culture, and he acted as the secretary of the committee, which
submitted its report in 1900 (Tervonen 2012a, 90–93).\(^{13}\) Thesleff had also gained

\(^{10}\) Lindh 1893. In the possession of a private individual.

\(^{11}\) KA SD 1126/188, 497/79, 1900. Arthur Thesleff’s statement concerning Adam Lindh’s
application.

\(^{12}\) Thesleff’s extensive photo collection, including Roma photographs, is part of the collec-
tions of the Nordiska Museet in Stockholm.

\(^{13}\) Part of the committee’s fact finding included a survey carried out in the mid-1890s,
requesting information from Roma living in various areas. Information was received from 1,551
international renown as a Roma expert. From 1911 to 1913, he was the president of the Gypsy Lore Society, an international association of Roma scholars. It was his plan to found a Gypsy culture world institute in London, where all linguistic, ethnographic, historic, and other scientific information on Roma culture would be gathered. This project, however, was never realized (Laaksonen 2010).

In addition to his own firsthand notes for his publications, Thesleff also made use of the work of earlier collectors of Romani vocabulary. This work included the notes made by Adolf Ivar Arwidsson (1791–1858), a university teacher, author, and journalist, after his meeting a Roma community in 1817 at Padasjoki in Häme. In addition, Thesleff consulted a vocabulary list, compiled by Klaes Johan Kemell (1805–1831), the chaplain of Ylivieska, and the work of Henrik August Reinholm (1819–1883), a prison preacher who worked in Helsinki and Turku, and whose notes made up a Romani vocabulary of over 2,000 words (Granqvist 2012, 278–79). None of these materials made its way to the collections of the Finnish Literature Society, even though Kemell and Reinholm both were members (see Sulkunen 2004, 274, 283).

During the same period as Thesleff and Lindh, Oskari Jalkio (1882–1952, born Johnsson) also worked with the Roma in Finland as a founding member of the Finnish Roma Mission (now called the Romano Missio), which was established in 1906. Jalkio learned Romani while doing missionary work among the Roma. He also collected an extensive Romani vocabulary and translated many spiritual songs and texts into Romani (Granqvist 2012, 281). These songs became part of the heritage of Roma spiritual songs, and many of them later ended up, from the 1960s onward, in the record collections of the Finnish Literature Society, sung by Roma performers.14

Roma As Informants of Finnish Folklore

The process of collecting Finnish folklore organized by the Finnish Literature Society had its roots, on the one hand, in the academic aims of folklore studies, a discipline that was taking shape in the nineteenth century, and in the ideological project of Finnish nation building, on the other. In Finland, just as elsewhere in persons, though this number was considered to be smaller than the actual number. A similar survey directed at the clergy had netted information concerning 740 “persons considered to be Gypsies” (Tervonen 2012a, 86, 90–93).

14 For early collectors of Roma language, see also Granqvist 2010a.
Europe, the study of folklore was closely linked with a discourse on nationalism and nation (see Wilson 1985; Anttonen 2005, 155; Abrahams 1992, 36; Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1996, 251; Stark 2006, 136–37; Mikkola 2009, 65). However, this did not amount to a protest against the Russian authorities, as Finnish national culture was constructed within the auspices of the Finnish Literature Society in a way that was generally loyal to the Russian Emperor, and the collecting of folklore was colored by a strong anti-revolutionary conservatism (Anttonen 2005, 161; Klinge 1997, 177; Liikanen 1995, 102–103). After Finland’s independence in 1917, this naturally changed, though there would soon be a new challenge in terms of uniting a people ravaged by the Civil War of 1918.

From the perspective of nation building, the project to collect folklore was based on the central features that formed a nation: geography, language, and history (see Smart 1983, 18). The geographic distribution of Finnish language folklore was deemed to prove the “natural borders” of the nation; therefore, there were efforts to collect folklore extensively from every corner of the country. There were also some collecting activities beyond the borders of the country, for instance, in Russian Karelia and Swedish Värmland. Indeed, many of the original verses of Lönnrot’s Kalevala had been collected in Russia, in Viena Karelia.

At the same time as the language of folklore was delineating the geographic boundaries of the nation, the contents of that folklore drew out the temporal dimensions and historical continuity of the Finnish nation. Folklore was used to build a narrative of the past and the unique qualities of the Finnish nation. This was a popular idea throughout Europe. After all, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), an early proponent of ethnic-cultural nationalist thinking, believed that the national culture was manifested precisely in the oral folklore of the “lower classes.” In Finland, this link was further emphasized because Finland did not have any existing written history of its own before the 1870s (Anttonen 2005, 83, 170; Stark 2006, 136–37).

Already in the nineteenth century, the unique qualities of the different provinces and peoples of Finland were a subject of interest for the nation-building project. Zachris Topelius (1818–1898) gave an extensive presentation of the characteristics

15 The “natural borders” of Finland were defined not only linguistically and culturally but also through natural geography. For example, Zachris Topelius (1818–1898) was known to have asserted that the Finnish eastern border ought to run from Lake Ladoga to the White Sea, along a “natural border” (see Tiitta 1994, 150–63).
Inclusion and Exclusion of Roma in the Category of Finnish Folklore

and external features of the various peoples in his Maamme Kirja (Book of our land, orig. Swedish Boken om vårt land, 1875), which was used as a schoolbook from the mid-1870s right up to the mid-1940s (Eskola 2003, 68; Mikkola 2000, 95–105). The book describes the different tribes and provinces of the country as forming a harmonic whole: “This people has become one, just as many trees form a great forest. Redwood, spruce and birch are different species of trees, but together they form a forest”16 (Topelius 1905, 130). Roma, however, were not deemed to be a tree in this forest. Instead, the “Gypsies” were described, like the Jews, as a group from which the Finns could “learn to know what a great misfortune it was to be without a fatherland. Such a man is like one on the open sea, without sight of shore or harbor. He lives and dies a stranger in the world”17 (Topelius 1905, 196).

However, the way Roma were treated in the processes of collecting folklore gives a more varied picture of the inclusions and exclusions involved with Finnishness than the Maamme Kirja. What is interesting is that even though the Finnish Literature Society did not specifically collect Roma folklore in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were still Roma informants in the materials containing Finnish folklore. For example, collector Eino Levón asked a “Gypsy girl” and “Gypsy boy” to sing for him in 1902, though he did not note down their names as he usually did with non-Roma. Both sang for Levón rhyming folk songs with two verses, songs that were later incorporated into the Finnish Folk Tunes (orig. Suomen Kansan Sävelmiä) publication (section II Folk Songs, part 3, 1932, and part 4, 1933)18 (Blomster 2012b, 318).

Based on the manuscripts, it is a mystery under what circumstances and based on what choices these kinds of songs from Roma ended up in the Finnish Literature Society collections and in the publications made on the basis of these collections. Were the Roma explicitly asked to sing rhyming folk songs, or did they volunteer to sing them of their own initiative? Were some songs by the Roma not collected? (Blomster 2012b, 318). It is indeed clear that the Roma had plenty of their own songs, different from those sung by non-Roma, which Arthur Thesleff, for example, managed to collect while he was traveling with the Roma. It is therefore quite possible

16 In Finnish: “Tämä kansa on tullut yhdeksi, niinkuin monta puuta tekee suuren metsän. Petäjät, kuuset ja koivut ovat eri puulajeja, mutta yhdessä ovat ne metsänä.”
17 In Finnish: “oppia tuntemaan, kuinka suuri onnettomuus on olla isänmaata vailla. Silloin on ihminen niin kuin avalla merellä, hän ei näe rantaa, ei löydä satamaa. Hän elää ja kuolee vie-raana maan päällä.”
that the collectors who were looking for Finnish folklore consciously neglected to write down the free form or Romani songs sung by the Roma, because they did not fit into the canon of Finnish folk music (Blomster 2012b, 318). Rhyming folk songs, however, were a dominant style of Finnish folk songs, and thus even when sung by Roma were interpreted as Finnish folk music, even though rhyming folk songs, as part of a relatively recent stratum of folk songs, were considered by folklore collectors to be “ditties” of lesser value than the old verse poetry sung in the Kalevala meter, which were apparently never collected from Roma informants.

When looking at the archives of the Finnish Literature Society as a whole, it is notable that, as collecting interests were restricted to material in Finnish (and Karelian), this limited and indeed distorted the picture of folk culture as a whole. The data collected rendered invisible the everyday and natural bilingualism of the population. Not only did the Roma—many of whom were bilingual or even multilingual—constitute a linguistic minority, but there were also other linguistic minorities, for example, Finns who spoke both Finnish and Swedish at home.19

**CAN THE STRANGE BE AUTHENTIC?**

With the shift in the collecting methods of the Finnish Literature Society toward a more scholarly and systematic approach, a greater emphasis was placed on acquiring above all “authentic” folklore, namely, material that was as old as possible, orally transmitted, and collective. This criterion of “authenticity” was embedded in the minds of collectors through the society’s collecting guidelines and the personal letters sent to collectors. Gradually, the quality of the material came to be systematically controlled as the materials were sorted into categories. From the 1930s to 1977, materials sent to the archives were sorted according to reliability, and those considered unreliable, based on collecting methods or uncertain origins, were labeled with the letter f (cf. fake lore). “Inauthentic” folklore was mostly material invented by the collectors or informants themselves, material derived from written sources and combined from several different poetic elements20 (see Kurki 2004, 66;

19 For example, in the early 1900s, Maria Österberg (1866–1936), a collector of folklore, sent songs in both Finnish and Swedish, with the explanation that in her bilingual childhood home these songs were sung in turn. Fully aware of the collecting interests of the archives, she indicated her wishes that Swedish songs be forwarded to those who were interested in them. (SKS KRA. Österberg, M. 2. 1909–1931. Letter, November 23, 1925 and November 22, 1909.)

20 SKS KRA. Muistio August 18, 1978 Kansanrunousarkiston ns. f-kokoelman uudelleen-käsittely ja -sijoittaminen.
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Mikkola 2009, 105). There was still a focus on the material being explicitly “Finnish folklore.” For example, notes on a flute-playing elephant had no place in this category. According to a letter sent to the person who submitted this material, “[t]he Finnish people do not tell stories about elephants or things like that.”

In the late 1950s, Matti Simola, an uneducated manual laborer, sent Roma folklore, which he said he had written into diaries for two decades, to the Finnish Literature Society. In his cover letter, Simola indicated that he had been drawn to the Roma since childhood, having spent time “in the camps of the old men and women of the Roma, as their most eager listener,” and had written down the folklore of this “tribe of wanderers” in different parts of Finland and also abroad. The


people working at the archives were bemused by Simola’s submissions, as they generally failed to fit into the categories and themes of Finnish folklore. The Folklore Archives, in its answer to Simola, wrote that its collections had not until then included Roma folklore, and aware of how unwilling the Roma were to share information with outsiders, stated that “it must indeed be very difficult to get authentic [material from them].”

Simola’s submissions, however, did generate enough interest to be welcomed into the collections of the Archives. Raino Vehmas, in *Suomen romaniväestön ryhmäluonne ja akkulturoituminen* (The group character and acculturation of the Finnish Roma population), his sociology dissertation from 1961, described Simola’s material as forming the “core of the Gypsy folklore collected in Finland” (Vehmas 1961, 124). Yet it must be said that for decades the Archives staff had tacitly agreed to approach Simola’s materials with reservations. First of all, the folklore of the Roma was generally considered “really strange and exotic” (which was also stated in a letter sent to Simola). Second, Simola’s materials included the narratives of Roma living outside Finland, and, third, the Roma during later folklore collecting efforts were unable to recognize all of Simola’s materials as their own folklore.

Leena Hukkinen’s 1963 report on “inauthentic” folklore stated the following concerning Simola’s materials: “The Gypsy folklore collected by M. Simola is unusual, though probably completely reliable. There are however many aphorism-like musings mixed in, the authenticity of which is uncertain.”

It is possible to observe how the authenticity of the collections has been assessed throughout the different phases of the Archives’ history by examining 

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24 See SKS KRA. KV. Letter by Lauri Simonsuuri to Matti Simola, March 1, 1957.
25 Simola mentions, for example, the worship of the sun and moon, which Roma informants interviewed in the late 1960s did not recognize as Finnish Roma folklore (Anna Maria Viljanen, January 13, 2013, and Pekka Laaksonen, April 24, 2012, personal communication with Risto Blomster).
26 Orig. “Omalaatuinen, vaikkakin todennäköisesti täysin luotettava on M. Simolan keräelämä mustalaisten perinnettä. Joukossa on kuitenkin runsaasti aforisminluontoisia mietelmiä, joiden aitoudesta ei ole varmaa tietoa.” As general reasons for the creation of “inauthentic” folklore, Hukkinen lists inappropriate collecting methods, the temptation to copy materials for competitions, the personality of the respondents being too visible in the collected material, as well as ignorance of what “folklore” consists of (Hukkinen 1963, 1, 17, 19, 23–24, appendix).
the scientific notions of the day have informed the Archives’ operations—for example, how certain materials have from this perspective been marked as “authentic” and worthy of being collected. The advent of a constructivist theory of knowledge has nevertheless transformed the discourse on the authenticity of folkloric materials; from this perspective, all folklore is socially constructed, and thus no materials can be categorized as “more authentic” or “more made up.” In essence, the relative prestige of different categories of folklore is more dependent on academic politics than ontology (Anttonen 2005, 106–107).

**THE ROMA PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE IN THE FOLKLORE OF NON-ROMA**

Even though the Finnish Literature Society did not seek to record the folklore of the Roma during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Roma did, however, show up in the collections in a different role: as the topic of the folklore of non-Roma. Folklore about the Roma can be found in many different folklore categories; in fact, there is a whole card file on anecdotes concerning the Roma. According to folklorist Seppo Knuuttila (1992, 240, 242), Roma are typically presented in Gypsy anecdotes as the antagonists of ethnic Finns. The anecdotes one-sidedly present and assess the cultural differences between Roma and non-Roma from the perspective of the non-Roma: Roma behavior is stereotypical, determined solely by their ethnicity. The setting for Gypsy anecdotes is commonly a farmhouse, where the Roma arrive to engage in trade or to ask for food or lodging. In the anecdotes, Finns play tricks on the Roma, who are unable to retaliate because they depend on the goodwill of their hosts. The anecdotes justify and explain the humiliating treatment of the Roma with a bundle of stereotypes, often contradictory: suspicious yet gullible, devious but also childish, not to mention, superstitious, dirty, and lazy.

Additionally, Tenka Issakainen, in her research on Finnish vernacular magic (2012, 73), has shown how the Roma, though unintentionally, took part in the magic practices of non-Roma. For example, the hypersexuality attributed to Roma women could be used for love magic; young women eager to secure marital happiness would either walk in clothes worn by Roma women or give their own clothes to Roma women, to be used in very specific ways. Moreover, the mobility of the Roma was also used for magic aimed to eliminate unwanted entities—for instance, it was believed that brambles could be removed by secretly hiding some in a Roma sleigh.

There are also some references to the Roma in Finnish folk songs. From the 1890s onward, a series of publications called *Suomen Kansan Sävelmät* (Finnish Folk
Tunes) was compiled from materials from the Archives of the Finnish Literature Society. Of the 4,847 tunes in the Folk Songs section (1904–1933), three mention “Gypsies.” The romantic lyrics to one waltz mention a Gypsy dance, and another tune, a rhyming folk song describing a market atmosphere, describes a singing Gypsy boy traveling on horseback. The third song is about a Gypsy who was not recognized as a Gypsy—a subject that also turns up in the songs of the Roma themselves. In this song, the verses “jeegatsuma, jeegatsuma, jeegatsuma jellen” and “ventasuklenge” are repeated, referring to Romani and particularly a well-known song in Romani, “Kutujensa kamajensa” (Blomster 2012b, 345).

Examination of original archival materials reveals that in the folklore of non-Roma, verses in Romani have not only been virtually transformed beyond recognition but that they have also often been incorporated into bawdy songs. The same is also true of descriptions of the “Gypsy dances” danced by non-Roma that serve to parody the Roma and their dances by including sexually charged moves. Significantly, so-called Gypsy dances were excluded from the category of canonical folk dances considered to be Finnish; what is more, Roma dances were left out of Finnish folk dance publications. According to folk dance researcher Petri Hoppu (2006), there was a desire to maintain a kind of high-class aesthetic in the national dance canon, and consequently “Russki” or “Gypsy” dances, as well as improvised solo and pair dances, were omitted in favor of more easily standardized group dances, for the latter were regarded as older and more “Finnish.”

While it is impossible to find verses of the “Gypsy language” songs that have been placed into lewd contexts in the late-19th- and early-20th-century folk song publications, such as Finnish Folk Tunes, they were welcomed into the collections of the Archives. Indeed, the collecting guidelines issued by the Finnish Literature Society to collectors of folklore explicitly state that collectors should not censor or omit words or descriptions that they found to be lewd or inappropriate, as lewd folklore was part of the big picture of the Finnish people (Mikkola 2009, 107; Blomster 2012b, 345).

29 SKS KRA. Levón, Eino. 238. Kuusamo. Sung by small boys. Other performances were later recorded of the same song: see SKS KRA. Harju, Otto. 2998. 1938.
30 Other songs referring to this same Roma song have also been included in the recordings of the FLS (see Blomster 2012b, 345).
Besides disconnected phrases, non-Roma also ended up using longer sections from Romani songs. When the card catalogues of the Archives of the Finnish Literature Society were being compiled in the 1940s and 1950s, there was a separate category for “Gypsy language” songs, as well as “Sami language,” “Russian language,” “Estonian language,” and “Swedish language” songs. These categories had only a few entries, and these were linguistically indeterminate. This was because the systematic collecting of the folklore of Finnish linguistic minorities was not part of the collection program of the FLS, and the analysts or collectors of the songs, and sometimes even the informants, did not necessarily know the language in question (Blomster 2012b, 346).

Archives staff have generally regarded “Gypsy language” songs in the folk song card catalogue as examples of mimicry and parody of Romani, and originally not necessarily intended to mean anything. Yet the songs in the “Gypsy language” category can also be seen as a kind of “second hand” transmission of folklore, where an informant unversed in the original language has, based on what he thought he was hearing, learned songs that were identified as being in Romani, which then had become unrecognizable even to speakers of the original language. No doubt, the collection and classification of these songs, which were ultimately placed in the category of “Gypsy language” songs, posed a real challenge both to those writing them down and those charged with the task of classification (Blomster 2012b, 346). The situation was somewhat analogous to the collecting of vernacular magic: this folklore was also often passed on, collected, and analyzed by individuals with no inside information of the real uses of these spells (see Issakainen 2004).

The most well-known pseudo-Roma language song is probably “Ala dengeli tii ala vengeli vii,” published in the 1950s as an example of a “Gypsy song” in the Laulan ja soitan (I sing and play), a school songbook edited by Ahti Sonninen. The collections of the Finnish Literature Society include many performances of the same song. The melody of the song does not resemble those of the usual Roma rhyming songs and romance songs, and the text has been transformed into an almost illegible corruption of Romani. Indeed, the song was brought to Sonninen’s attention by non-Roma. It is possible, however, to trace the Roma roots of the song in the collections of the Archives (Blomster 2012b, 346).

In an interview in 1972, Saska Borg (1914–1994), a Roma singer and tinker from Sysmä, explained his own interpretation of the song’s background to researchers. According to Borg, it was a lewd, mocking song, made to fool listeners who
were not fluent in Romani. As the text drifted further away from its original context of use, the meanings attributed to it also changed. It was thus possible for elementary school teachers to end up singing a lewd, mocking song with their pupils, blissfully ignorant of its original meaning. This case is indicative of a chain of misunderstandings, caused in part by the Roma’s own linguistic-cultural protectiveness and the function of Romani as a secret language (Blomster 2012b, 347).

**Protecting Roma Folklore and Playing Pranks on Non-Roma**

The ability to communicate in several languages explains why the members of a minority like the Roma knew the majority culture much better than non-Roma knew minority cultures (see Knuuttila 1992, 242). This linguistic ability also enabled them to mock non-Roma, as is shown by the case of the “Ala dengeli tii ala vengeli vii” song. People who spent time with the Roma, such as Arthur Thesleff and Oskari Jalkio, also wrote about being the butt of linguistic chicanery or at least attempts at such (see Laaksonen 2010; Kiertolainen 9/1907, 5–6). The Roma made fun of inquirers by giving Romani words erroneous definitions, and when asked for translations of Finnish words, provided the wrong Romani words in return.

These sorts of tricks represent the perspective of the Roma themselves, which is otherwise completely obscured in the Finnish folklore materials on the “Gypsies.” Of course, collecting folklore or conducting interviews has always made the outside investigator vulnerable to the informant’s jokes or pranks—among non-Roma as well.32

Seppo Knuuttila (1994, 24–25) has applied the ideas of Jean Baudrillard to the study of folklore. If the group being studied enjoys the advantage of irony, they have the power to leave the investigating scholar in a state of helplessness; this strategy allows the object of investigation to disappear. By ceasing to exist, it can no longer be trusted. In cases like these, the collectors and analysts turn into dupes; their naiveté and gullibility make them sincerely believe in the willing collaboration of their informants. At the same time, the object of study manages to resist the attempts of the collector and analyst at analysis, thus executing its own ironic vanishing act (see


32 The letters and memoirs of folklore collectors contain references to how a too finely dressed or oddly speaking collector made his informants want to trick him. A careless collector recording what he thought was the magical lore of the old folk might end up with a joke devised by the local men (see Mikkola 2009, 101).
also Arppe 1992, 159–60; Mikkola 2009, 101). There are undoubtedly many more of these vanishing acts in the Roma materials in the Archives, far more than we can even uncover. Indeed, the Roma even have an expression that describes deceiving non-Roma: “making them talk” (“puhuttaminen” in Finnish).

The Roma tendency to mistrust all inquirers stemmed in part from their negative experiences with authorities (Viljanen 2012, 379). They feared that outsiders would use the knowledge given to them to control and threaten the continued existence of Roma culture. Attitudes arising from these kinds of fears also had long-term effects on the activities of researchers interested in Roma culture. Roma with strong Christian convictions have also brought an additional challenge to collecting folklore, for they have tended to condemn the narration and collection of the folklore they have deemed secular. Of course, the Roma are not a unique group in this respect, as collectors have faced similar suspicions when collecting magic or folk remedies or the folklore of the Sami (see Mikkola 2009, 224; Hirvasvuopio-Laiti 2008, 47–49).

**Roma Activism and the 1960s Shift in Folklore Collecting**

The 1960s witnessed a significant change regarding the openness of the field to the collection of Roma folklore; at this time, the interests of researchers and Roma activists intersected in a historically and socially novel way. Indeed, in this decade an ethnopolitical shift took place both in folklore collecting as well as in minority policies in general. The status of the Roma became a high-profile object of a new kind of emancipatory social discourse, and Roma activists went public, drawing attention to discrimination against Roma, for example, in terms of living, education, and job opportunities. At the same time, there was a growing feeling among minority activists that minorities had a right to their own languages and cultures. Additionally, the change in living conditions and modes of livelihood among the Roma caused a break-up of family structures, from multi-generation families to two-generation families, which made the Roma more concerned about the oral transmission and preservation of oral folklore for future generations (Viljanen 2012, 379–80). It was thus a more opportune moment to collect Roma folklore as a result of changes in the attitudes of the Roma themselves.

This public discourse also affected the interests of researchers, who, instead of seeking to help minorities assimilate into the mainstream culture, were increasingly driven by the desire to learn more about this group of people who had lived
in Finland for centuries, yet had remained unknown to non-Roma (Viljanen 2012, 380). The personal contacts established by the staff of the Folklore Archives with Roma intellectuals in Helsinki opened new possibilities for collecting Roma folklore (Blomster 2012b, 318). The efforts of Roma activists and the contacts to Roma gradually established by researchers offered access to a cultural and social realm that had until then been relatively out of reach.

In the late 1960s, the Finnish Literature Society for the first time started to intentionally collect the songs and other folklore of the Roma. This was done particularly in cooperation with the ethnological department of the University of Helsinki. In 1968, the Folklore Archives of the FLS carried out fieldwork at two sites, Sysmä and Kauhajoki. This was a significant step in terms of collecting local folklore in general as well as Roma folklore in particular (Blomster 2012b, 318).

Figure 3. From the 1960s onward, the development of recording equipment had a significant effect on the accumulation of Roma materials at the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society. These recordings also feature fortunetelling. (FLS/ Folklore Archives)

Another significant factor in collecting Roma materials was the proliferation of reel-to-reel recorders. Easier and cheaper to use in field conditions than earlier recording devices, these enabled researchers to make more recordings (Asplund 1976, 26–27). The fieldwork carried out by the Folklore Archives produced a considerable wealth of recorded Roma materials, consisting of not only recorded
interviews but also a large number of songs. For example, from 1967 to 1973, approximately 1,300 performances of songs in Finnish and 90 in Romani were recorded. From these materials, a double LP called *Kaale džambena* (FLS & Love Records, 1972, eds. Kari Huttunen, Pekka Jalkanen, and Pekka Laaksonen) was released in 1972, to present traditional Roma songs to the general public. Students of ethnology at the University of Helsinki also wrote up theses on the basis of the interviews concerning the unique features of the Roma, such as dress, food, and initiation rites (Blomster 2012b, 318). There was long-term cooperation with the Roma, and many of the researchers working at the Archives had their own key informants. The researchers interviewed them in the field, and sometimes the Roma would come to the Archives to meet them. As a result of these visits, over the years the Archives accumulated “supplementary materials,” namely, a significant collection of laces, some of which have in fact been officially incorporated into the collections of the Archives.

By contrast, it was difficult to reach the Roma through questionnaires. In the 1970s, for instance, the National Board of Antiquities sent out a questionnaire called “Traveling Gypsies,” which was answered by an impressive total of 834 persons. As it turned out, however, there was apparently not a single member of the Roma population among them—no doubt, the questions were formulated from the perspective of non-Roma. The surveys carried out by the Finnish Literature Society, which would have been more agreeable for the Roma regarding subject matter, also failed to generate interest among Roma respondents. Even though roughly one-third of the Roma population had lived in Karelia during World War II and had had to emigrate from their homes as a result of the war, no Roma responded to the collecting efforts requesting the biographies of Karelians in 1980 and 1983. The only contribution to the collection was a recorded autobiographical interview with one Rom.

The efforts to collect more Roma recordings for the Folklore Archives, starting from the 1960s, continued in various forms in the next few decades. In the late 1990s, there was a project to record Roma biographies, in which most of the

33 Dissertations by Jouko Heinonen, Mervi Naakka, and Anna Maria Viljanen.
35 Päivi Kankkunen interviewed Emel Nyman, born in Sortavala in 1901, during the Karelian biographies collection (see SKS KRA. KE 26:5524–5534; SKSÄ RN 207. 1984a; 1984b).
interviewers were also Roma (Rom-sf-romanielämäkerrat). As a Rom-to-Rom interview project, it was a very important break from earlier collection practices. The extensive interview materials of researchers working with the Roma, namely, Anna-Maria Viljanen, Martti Grönfors, Airi Markkanen, and Kai Åberg, have also been incorporated into the collections.

From 2009 to 2012, the FLS carried out a research project funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture, led by historian Panu Pulma. As a result of this, the book Suomen romanien historia (The History of the Romany in Finland) was published in 2012. The project made extensive use of Roma materials that had earlier been accumulated into the collections of the FLS, and many of those writing for the book were from Roma backgrounds. The written legacies of several Roma associations and individual Roma were also received as donations for the Archives in connection with the project. Instead of a Roma-excluding Finnishness or a perspective looking “tsiganologically” at Roma culture as its own isolated phenomenon, the project aimed to draw attention to the constant interaction between the Roma and non-Roma and the processes of change within Roma culture. With this aim in mind, in 2010 the FLS, together with the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs (RONK), which works under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, sent out a thematic, written questionnaire titled “Roma in Finland—memories of living side by side from the 1950s to the present day.”

The questionnaire was brought to the attention of respondents through magazines and radio programs directed at the Roma population, and the cover letter with the collection notice emphasized that responses were desired not only from non-Roma but also from Roma. A total of fifty-three respondents answered, but not one of them was of Roma origin. With yet another written questionnaire failing to reach Roma respondents, a simultaneous thirty-interview recording project was carried out, interviewing both Roma and non-Roma. By 2013, the collections of the

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36 These include, for example, manuscripts by the pioneer of Romani as a written language, Education Councillor Viljo Koivisto (1931–), as well as a copy of an extensive manuscript called Mustalaiskansa kristinuskon ristivedossa ja rotusyrjinnässä (The Gypsy people between Christianity and racial discrimination), by the violinist Ferdinand Nikkinen (1894–1971), where he presents his own views on the history of the Roma people, using written sources (see SKS KIA. Koivisto; SKS KIA. Nikkinen; Rekola 2010; Granqvist 2010b).

37 For example, Romano miritš, Romano Boodos, Latšo Diives.
Finnish Literature Society had accumulated more than 450 hours of Roma folklore recordings from roughly thirty collectors.38

**Mutual Exclusion and Inclusion**

When looking at the folklore materials of the Finnish Literature Society up to the 1960s in terms of the Roma, the most interesting question seems to be why so little Roma folklore has ended up in the Archives. From the 1960s onward, the issue changes: what factors explain that the Archives started receiving Roma folklore? The context of the Archives is one of a cultural field wherein the desire, or the lack thereof, of the Roma to share their folklore intersected with the intentional collecting interests of researchers and collectors, which either were or were not focused on the Roma. Consequently, Roma folklore was subjected to a mutual process of exclusion and inclusion, where both the actions of the Archives and the Roma played a part.

The intentional exclusion of Roma folklore from the archives of the Finnish Literature Society in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was part of a national landscape where the position of the Roma in Finnish nation building was marginal, if not wholly estranged. While nationally minded folklore enthusiasts accepted the folklore of the various provinces as the foundation of the nation, and even Karelian folklore from across the border was incorporated into Finnish folklore, the folklore of ethnic minorities was excluded from the category of Finnishness. From the point of view of collecting folklore, Roma folklore was for a long time considered marginal, especially as it was to a large degree transmitted in a marginal language that outsiders could not speak.

At the same time, it is also undeniable that the Roma themselves were unwilling to expose their culture and folklore to non-Roma. It was also a question of the Roma wanting to maintain cultural distance. From the point of view of the exercise of power, the reasons the Roma sought to protect themselves are obvious. As their experiences had been of information given to outsiders being used against their group, cultural secrecy and conscious isolation were quite understandable.

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38 Roma folklore recordings can also be found in other archives in Finland. For example, the folklore archives of the University of Tampere include approximately fifty hours of Roma folklore, including, for example, recordings made by music researcher Erkki Ala-Könni from 1970 to 1972.
However, there were some early enthusiasts in Finland who, ideologically inspired to educate the masses, religiously motivated to carry out missionary work, or driven by pure wanderlust, managed to collect the folklore of the Roma. Yet, their activities were not connected with the collecting efforts of the Finnish Literature Society. It is also significant that some of the early collectors of Roma folklore made notes in secret about the Roma, so their materials may at least in part have been folklore that the Roma wanted to keep secret from non-Roma as a whole.

Up until the 1960s, the materials on the Roma in the collections of the Finnish Literature Society mainly constituted folklore from the perspective of non-Roma, with the Roma as the topic of folklore—stereotypical Gypsies. Even performances of “Gypsy language” songs were collected as Finnish folklore, a mockery of Romani. When, in the 1950s, the manual laborer Matti Simola, of his own initiative, sent his own records of Roma folklore to the Archives, these materials were regarded as strange and eccentric, as they did not fit the folklore categories and themes of Finnish folklore.

Interestingly, from the perspective of the category of Finnishness, there is a noteworthy deviation in the material: at times the Roma turn up in the folklore materials as the transmitters of Finnish folklore; thus, in this context, they were “Finns,” not different from other Finnish informants. Indeed, rhyming folk songs sung by the Roma ended up in the Finnish Folk Tunes publications, but none in Romani and none with a “foreign” melody—in other words, songs that deviated from those favored by non-Roma.

Nonetheless, it is extremely difficult to find out how many Roma served as informants for “Finnish folklore” materials, unless the Roma background of the informant in question was specifically indicated in the records. Typical Roma surnames can help a researcher with this task to some extent, but not with absolute certainty. In terms of more recent materials, legislation also makes finding personal details difficult: the Finnish Personal Data Act (section 11) prohibits the handling of sensitive personal data that describe or are intended to describe race or ethnic origin.39 This also indirectly makes it more difficult to draft archival lists on Roma culture.40

The gradual opening up of Roma culture from the 1960s onward on the terms of the Roma themselves, however, has made it possible to collect the folklore of the

39 Section 11 of the Finnish Personal Data Act, entered into force in 1999.
40 Cf. the RN series of tapes of the archive of records of the Folklore Archives, where the interviews of Roma informants have been collected. This series is no longer being added to.
Roma more extensively than before, and at the same time to reach a more varied view of Roma culture. Non-Roma researchers working with Roma informants have learned the paramount importance of using collecting methods compatible with Roma culture. As even the most recent collecting efforts have shown, written surveys are not likely to inspire Roma to cooperate with researchers. In contrast, establishing personal contacts based on trust and good rapport and conducting recorded interviews have led to significant collections of ethnographic materials on Roma culture. Moreover, the fact that the Roma themselves have assumed an active role in folklore collection by also acting as interviewers has further enhanced the voice of the Roma themselves in the last few decades.

To be sure, many aspects of Roma culture still remain unrecorded and undocumented in the Archives. The suspicious attitude of many Roma informants towards non-Roma, a suspicion that has often been well grounded, has contributed to the often surreptitious nature of folklore transmission among the Roma, a significantly distinct body of traditions than that performed for non-Roma. The complicated system of taboos informing Roma culture also regulates how, and with whom, information is shared. Such factors play a role in what kinds of materials concerning Roma culture end up in the Archives.

The careful restrictions on what information can be told to outsiders as well as the folklore of the Roma concerning non-Roma are examples of a culture of contestation (cf. Lombardi-Satriani 1974), where a group in a socially subordinated position resists the power of the actively hegemonic culture to define itself and others. It is also a question of using the power that inheres in the possession of information, not to mention having a different point of view. Yet there is always an element of chance and unpredictability when it comes to how archival materials are formed. Indeed, even the Archives of the Finnish Folklore Society have over time acquired many Roma materials that the Roma would never have knowingly given to them, not to mention, materials never intentionally collected for the Archives, or even especially wanted. Renewed efforts to evaluate these materials more extensively and systematically would give us the opportunity to reassess the relationship between the collecting interests of the Archives and how they were carried out. At its best, this could also deepen and change our view of the cultural reality of people who have lived in Finland during various periods.
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FOLK VIEWS ON THE RURAL UPPER CLASS AND QUESTIONS OF HISTORICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION OF FINNISH PROVERBS (1885–1950)

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ABSTRACT
The article examines Finnish proverbs that include the word herra, or “master,” in relation to the social history of the common people. The sample in the analysis consists of 174 proverbs that were collected on the ideological basis of the historic-geographic method where the primary focus was on the evolution of folklore texts. This quantitative emphasis led to the large collections in the Folklore Archives, which now need new methodological choices, such as analyzing the texts as the history of ideas from below.

INTRODUCTION
In the early twentieth century, the Finnish folklorist, Kaarle Krohn, in collaboration with his father, Julius Krohn, developed a research method that came to be known as the historic-geographic method or, alternatively “the Finnish method.” Based on the idea of comparison, the method’s focus was on the migration of folklore, and it combined the idea of textual criticism with an evolutionary perspective. Folklore texts generally resembled each other to a greater or lesser degree depending on the time that had elapsed since their collection and the distance between the places where they were collected. The main purpose was to discover a folklore item’s original form, its contents, idea, and distribution.

The legacy of the historic-geographic method for the scholars working with Finnish folklore is still evident in the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society. Researchers interested in folklore have to be especially aware of the
fundamentals of the historic-geographic method and how the archived folklore texts have been organized by utilizing the principles of this particular method. This concerns proverbs, fairy tales, magic rituals, and beliefs written down on the majority of the index cards, which can only be accessed manually at the Folklore Archives. However, this old folklore in the archives, with all its breadth and variety, provides scant information on informants (Apo 1995, 48), and technically it consists of “mere” pieces of texts.

In this paper I examine proverbs that include the word *master* (in Finnish, “herra”) at an ideational level in relation to the context of the known social history of the Finnish common people. I assume that the proverb sample reflects the social and cultural domination of the rural peasant past. As long as the Finnish rural social structure remained inequitable, that is, rural village life consisted of a dichotomy between the rich and the poor or the landowning peasants and smallholders and the landless, verbal resistance existed.

When trying to analyze the rural commoners from the period in which classical collections of folklore archives were assembled, one should not just go to the folklore archives and search for answers there (Beyer 2011, 45). One might say that scholars using archive materials often become lovers of archives to the degree that it prevents them from understanding the ideology behind language use and the changing goals of such language use over time and across contexts (Bendix 1997, 15). Instead of interpreting proverbs or folktales as totally independent from other archive sources or historically oriented fields of studies, we need a more precise research question and an awareness of blind spots in dealing with the archive materials. In order to avoid “a source-positivist fallacy” (Beyer 2011, 37), the question I would like to ask in this article is whether old proverbs offer us a view of the estate society from the perspective of the people “below,” even though the proverb sample was collected on the methodological and ideological basis of the historic-geographic ideas. What was the historical context for the proverbs that were collected from the nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth century?

My initial assumption is that master-proverbs carry histories of the views of the commoners and represent the cultural knowledge of a certain socially coherent group of people. This cultural knowledge can be approached by “folk ideas.” The term was originally coined by Alan Dundes, and by it he means the following: “Traditional notions that people in common culture have about the nature of man, of the world and of man’s life in the world” (1972, 95). Folk ideas can be found not
only in old, and sometimes even archaic, folklore, but also in more recent manifestations: movies, television, and the mass media as a whole. These are all raw material for the study of human thought (Dundes 1972, 96, 103).

Another view for interpreting master-proverbs as social manifestations of a certain social stratum comes from the anthropologist Luigi Lombardi-Satriani (1974). He claims that the common people used the culture of contestation in order to cope with upper-class hegemony. Lombardi-Satriani traced out the idea that daily reality provided an ample sounding board for the critical social attitudes manifested in different narrative and folklore genres. Contestation points to the “opposing testimony” towards the hegemonic culture, that is, the culture defined by the people in power in a given historical society (Lombardi-Satriani 1974, 103–104). This resistance can be discerned in the adoption of different ways of thinking and behavior from people in power, producers of dominant ideologies. Contestation as a concept also highlights the critical eye needed when using materials stored in archives: in order to understand the nature of sources of this kind, these materials must be set in the context in which they were produced.

This article deals with the cultural knowledge, “know-how,” produced and transmitted by certain social groups of Finnish people in the past. Different social groups or strata had distinctive knowledge, and there were “knowledges” in the plural between social classes (Burke 2000, 13). In recent decades, some folklore scholars have actually analyzed folklore texts as reflections of social and economic tensions at the level of rural village life (see, for example, Beyer 2011). In this article, I have generalized the underlying ideas of the proverbs to allow coherent cultural themes to emerge. I focus on the ways in which the common people, or the folk (in Finnish, “rahvas”), categorized masters (in Finnish “herrat”). Before the proverb sample, I briefly present an overview of the Finnish method that determined proverb collecting in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Finland.

**The Historic–Geographic Method and the Archive Collections**

The idea of the historic-geographic method represented a broader development within scientific thought in Western societies. In his work *Folklore Methodology* (orig. *Die folkloristische Arbeitsmethode*, 1926), Kaarle Krohn scrutinized his method for handling folklore texts, arranging them geographically and chronologically. He wanted to construct a genetic analysis of a special folklore topic in order to find its origin and distribution. Scholars using the method were expected to collect as many
text variants as possible, and the value of the folklore variants was determined by comparing each text sample with the others. All source material had to be carefully considered and ranked according to the criteria (Krohn 1926 [1971], 28–37). The whole process of the method was intended to show how a specific text had emerged (Krohn 1926 [1971]; Wolf-Knuts 2000, 262–63).

The first generations of practitioners of the Finnish method concentrated only on the geographical distribution of folklore and paid very little attention to social environment of the folklore users. Variants of the same folklore item, for example, a fairy tale, formed a redaction from which the scholar could construct a hypothesis of an evolutionary tree (Kuusi 1994, 55). Detractors claimed that the historic-geographic method failed to consider literary influences, although all the studied folklore items themselves represented written and “unauthentic” sources. In other words, collected items of folklore were not recorded in the actual everyday life situation. Therefore, the quantitative emphasis and the efforts to collect a vast number of folklore items led to the creation of large collections, which thus left a substantial number of various folklore genres for future generations of scholars.

The rise of the historic-geographic method was closely tied to the Finnish Literature Society (FLS). Founded in 1831, the Society endeavored to collect and publish oral folk poetry from the very outset. From the beginning, the FLS collected vernacular genres quite systematically, giving detailed instructions to collectors about what genres of folklore were desirable. Until 1890, all the folklore collections were kept in the possession of the members of the Finnish Literature Society. The new space, the house of the Finnish Literature Society, for storing folklore materials created a need for systematic filing of the data, a task undertaken by Kaarle Krohn. At first, the collections were arranged alphabetically according to the last names of their collectors. Thereafter, archivists organized each collector’s material by folklore genre—namely, tales, epics, proverbs, and riddles. During the early decades, Kaarle Krohn himself was the only one who mastered the entire archive system (Laaksonen and Saarinen 2004, 7).

The most common method of collection was for an interviewer to ask a member of the “folk” to mention or recite from memory all the “pure” types of folklore, such as myths, proverbs, and charms in verse form. Therefore, for example, the proverbs of the Folklore Archives were not captured from “real life” situations; strictly speaking, these written items fail to represent the authentic use of proverbs. Although many of the folklore collectors were often young undergraduates spurred
by a nationalistic spirit, the collectors also included members of the peasantry. Many representatives of the “folk,” mainly landowning peasants or artisans, contributed large collections of all types of folklore texts, collecting material from their home parish, and subsequently sending them to the Folklore Archives (Stark-Arola 1998, 54). As a result, the Folklore Archives’ proverb collection was made up of the proverbs and sayings amassed by individual collectors and collection campaigns. Yet this extensive collection of proverbs cannot be understood without reference to an understanding of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century rural Finnish context of collecting folklore.

In the early stages, at the beginning of the twentieth century, folklore researchers and practitioners of the historic-geographic method turned their gaze away from modernity, to the cultures of the bygone past, to illiterate and unsophisticated peoples (Anttonen 2005, 51). Many of the most influential folklorists of the time were students of Kaarle Krohn. Among them were Walter Anderson in Estonia, as well as Stith Thompson and Archer Taylor in the United States (Kuusi 1994, 54; Virtanen 1997, 444). The Finnish method was employed widely in the humanities among Kaarle Krohn’s contemporaries, but it was he who formulated it into a rigorous procedure, not to be applied at random (Taylor 1929, 486, 489). During the twentieth century, the historic-geographic method underwent many modifications from genre classifications to tale-type identification and motif-analysis. One of the most influential and long-lasting works was done by Antti Aarne on the types of the folktale (orig. Verzeichnis der Märchentypen, 1910). This original tale-type index consisted only of European narratives, and, later in 1928 and 1961, after Aarne’s death, the tale-type index was translated, revised, and enlarged by Stith Thompson (Aarne and Thompson 1961 [1981]; Zumwalt 1988, 56–58, 101). The Aarne–Thompson (AT) tale-type index organizes folktales into categories such as fairy tales, anecdotes and jokes, and realistic tales. Within each category, folktale types are further subdivided by motif patterns. The system of AT-tale types was rewritten in 2003 by Hans-Jörg Uther and became renamed the ATU-tale type classification (Uther 2004).

Proverb scholars also studied their preferred genre using the historic-geographic method. A. A. Koskenjaakko (1913, 1929), for one, employed the method in his works Laki, oikeus ja oikeudenkäynti suomalaisissa sananlaskuissa (Law, justice, and trial in Finnish proverbs) and Virkamiehet ja herrat suomalaisissa sananlaskuissa (Officials and masters in the Finnish proverbs). In the latter study, Koskenjaakko classified and compared proverbs concerning masters and officials from different dialect areas to
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one another. He categorized proverbs according to their indigenous occurrence or whether they were known in the neighboring countries of Finland, too. This task of categorization constituted the main result of his study, and the socio-economic reflections about the hypothetical proverb users were not considered. The study concludes with the claim that the Finnish proverbs concerning masters differed from Danish, Estonian, and Russian proverbs for the following reason: “The last two were nations that were born under serfdom, and therefore, their proverbs reflected the circumstances and social environment of those people” (Koskenjaakko 1929, 67). On the contrary, Koskenjaakko noted that open hostility toward the estates was unusual in the Finnish proverb data. His discussion delved no deeper than this into the views and thoughts of the supposed proverb users or the society that gave rise to the proverbs in the first place.

Trained as philologists, most of the early folklorists applied the principles of textual criticism to folklore. Stith Thompson, for instance, was an English teacher, and, to him, folklore was “a side issue” (Zumwalt 1988, 57). As time passed, folklore scholarship gradually began to concern itself with other aspects of folktales. The questions of narrative structure, storytelling processes, narrators and their audiences, and the interpretations of tales thus came into scholarly focus (Hansen 2002, 6). From the 1960s on, folklore scholars turned their attention to individuals’ use of folklore in their daily activities, their thoughts, their traditional repertoires, and their folklore performances. The paradigm of folklore studies shifted from the folklore text to a more holistic description of cultures. Folklore had to be related to culture as a whole; its study required more information and a better understanding of the models inherent in culture (Dundes 1976, 89–90; Seljamaa 2008, 90). In the course of time, rival perspectives such as structuralism and performance studies eclipsed the historic-geographic method, making it seem outdated and irrelevant for answering research questions that had gained importance in the twentieth century.

For early folklorists, such as A. A. Koskenjaakko or Stith Thompson, the focus was on the collection, classification, and preservation of texts, and the interpretation of folklore was not included (Zumwalt 1988, 101–2). The Finnish method was based on the idea of folklore serving as a mirror of a common human or European tradition instead of individual informants as active users of these texts. The more precise occupation or social class of the informant was not important or even of interest: informants represented “the folk” or “the plebeian masses,” and the cultural messages mediated, for example, by proverbs, were ignored. Therefore, the people
who used those texts—that is, the songs, poems, proverbs, and tales—in their daily life were uninteresting because they were seen as only passive tradition bearers.

The challenge of the old folklore collections in the Folklore Archives is that they are often mere texts. While regarded as a merit to Kaarle Krohn and his successors, this appears to be a problem for the contemporary researcher interested in Finnish oral culture from the past. In order to analyze the texts we need different kinds of folklore texts, and a deeper understanding about the past peasant Finnish culture—or both.

**Analyzing the Proverbs in Relation to Social History**

Nowadays the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society contain a substantial collection of old folklore classified in card indices according to genre and content. One of the most substantial genres in the Folklore Archives is the proverb. In its entirety, the proverb database consists of over 500,000 proverb texts. Each proverb text is on a single written or typed card, and the file is for manual use. These cards are arranged in alphabetical order according to the first noun of each proverb or proverbial saying (Lauhakangas 2001, 15; Laaksonen and Saarinen 2004, 64). Although the majority of the Folklore Archives’ manuscripts date from the nineteenth century, most of the proverbs were collected between 1885 and 1950. The people behind the proverbs were mainly from the rural working class and the poor peasant background. In Finland, users of these proverbs were generally individuals outside the ruling groups, at least from the point of view of social power (Granbom-Herranen 2010, 96).

Until the early twentieth century, Finnish society was made up of estates where—with a few exceptions of the clergy—a person’s social position was determined by his or her origin of birth. The Diet consisted of four estates or major social groups: nobility, clergy, burghers, and land-owning peasants. However, the majority, about 70 percent of the population, that is the common people (in Finnish rahvas; in Swedish allmoge), remained outside these estates (Alapuro 1985, 67). The people outside the estates were diverse: tenants, crofters, cottagers, servants, and urban workers in the factories. In Finnish, they were called the estateless (“säädyttömät”). Basically, the estateless were the people who did hard, physical work. The system of the estates was more than a political institution: it was the basis for the social order, thus constituting and regulating social boundaries and cultural hierarchies.
The proverb sample in this analysis consists of 174 individual proverbs out of approximately 1,000 proverbs. Since many of them are variants of others, the actual number of proverbs concerning the upper class is notably fewer. Many of the proverbs often have 5 to 100 variants, which increases the total number of master-proverbs. For a proverb to be valid for the analysis in this article, it must have at least two independent variants from different collectors. Some of the proverb items have included an explanation by the informant, and therefore I have used these explanations in order to understand the users’ view or logic. The proverbs that contain the word master ("herra") can be divided into three categories: 1) the concept of master refers mostly to the better-off people of the estate society, for example, “Masters first, then the peasants” (Herrat eillä, talonpojat jäljestä); 2) the concept of master serves as a metaphor of an individual sense of power, for example, “Master is the one who controls himself” (Se on herra joka ittensä hallitsee); 3) the concept of master, “herra,” refers to God, for example, “The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away” (herra antaa, herra ottaa). This article examines the first two of the groups of proverbs mentioned. Here herra is used in reference to social categories in the rural society and situational communication. The third group of proverbs uses herra as a reference to God, and, accordingly, exemplifies the notion that God is more powerful than the humans and has moral authority over them (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 303).

So do we, then, have a problem when trying to collect, categorize, and analyze the old folklore? The analyst of the archived proverbs needs pertinent knowledge about the world in a given social context. It is unlikely that the proverb could have its say about matters that have no social relevance or topicality (Krikmann 1974). The first contextual frame concerns the historical context: the sources of livelihoods, the conditions of landowning, the class structure, and the distribution of wealth (Apo 1995, 139). The second frame is connected to the discourse system of the social classes and boundaries. Not all speech genres addressed the issues of social class to the same degree, and therefore different genres—if possible—must be compared with one another. Within one genre and the same text, different variants must also be compared. Stereotypical expressions, stocks of common formulae, and other recurrent elements of the representations of the common people, for example, the frequent use of the word of work to refer to physical work, or lazy as synonymous with people who did non-physical work, exemplify the notion of social boundaries. The proverbs that are analyzed are not the products of individual minds
isolated from society, but rather they can be seen as strategic responses to a continuous chain of narrative flow arising in everyday social life (Stark 2006, 116).

The problem and challenge is that a single proverb may often have a number of meanings, for proverbs are especially polysemic. The metaphorical quality of the genre enables people to employ proverbs in many different situations (Krikmann 1974; Mieder 1993, 11). Researchers have generally regarded the folklore user’s meaning as the most precise one or at least the most important one (Holbek 1987, 192). However, just as the folklorist Satu Apo has noted, a researcher’s view is valuable, too, because of his or her ability to place the proverb or some other folklore genre in its broad cultural and intertextual settings (Apo 1995, 139). A folklorist usually has several versions or modifications of the same proverb or narrative that are structurally isomorphic. In addition to this, a researcher has a vast amount of information on the ethnography and social and economic history of the given society.

As a genre, proverbs are especially problematic because proverbs and historical reality seldom match. Proverbs are viewed as reactions to situations that demand commentary (Hakamies 2003, 310). The relationship between proverbs and real performative situations is almost always indefinite: we cannot be sure that a certain proverb is a sign of a certain situation (Krikmann 1994, 123; Hakamies 2003, 310). Keeping this in mind, I suggest that proverbs can be studied and analyzed without knowing the actual performance situation of the proverbs, provided that the chosen sample is coherent by theme. Proverbs make sense only in a specific situation or context, and it is up to the researcher to decide which is the most suitable one (Mieder 1993, x).

The proverbs that include the word master definitely reflect some perspectives from the everyday life of the proverb users. We can no longer return to the actual proverb performances, but we have good reason to say that proverbs in general express a given society’s history of ideas and their users’ attitudes (Kuusi 1994, 130). In this article, I classify and analyze the proverb sample to find out what image of a master and, therefore, the upper class, it creates. Like Koskenjaakko, I am interested in proverbs containing the word master, but my focus is on the proverbial representations of the Finnish masters.

Investigating a particular sample of proverbs, the researcher soon discovers that if one proverb contradicts a master’s authority, another proverb pays tribute to a master’s power. However, when considering Finnish proverbs in general, Matti Kuusi has noted that they represent the male peasant way of life. There is a
determined, hard-working, and moderate peasant, who is unwilling to make new friendships and who places more value on austerity than aesthetic pleasure (Kuusi 1954, 91–93).

**The Essence of a Master**

Generally speaking, proverbs that include the word *master* make observations about the better-off people, their essence, and their supremacy. In the Finnish language, the upper classes or simply those who were better off were called “masters.” In the folk dichotomy, there were only two classes: masters and servants, or the masters and the folk (Haapala 1995, 99). Proverbs serve as a form of folk definition, for they define the category of mastery: what kind of people are masters and how they can be recognized. According to folk logic, the easiest way to determine if a person was a master or not was the language he or she spoke: “All those are masters, who speak Swedish” (Kaikki ne herroja on, jotka ruotsia puhuu), or “Indeed, masters understand each other’s language” (Kyllä herrat toisensa kielen tajuavat). Nonetheless, not all Swedish speakers were masters. For sure, members of the Swedish-speaking working class had to do a great deal to convince their Finnish-speaking counterparts that these folk views were merely stereotypes.

Another characteristic that distinguished the masters from the common folk was education, for the latter group had very little formal schooling. This, however, did not bother those with lower social status. In fact, popular attitudes to public schooling and education in general tended to be suspicious, as reflected in the proverb “Masters are learned, but I am experienced” (Herrat on lukenut, mutta minä olen kokenu). From the perspective of the poor peasantry, education was long seen as a liability, since it failed to provide the hands-on experience needed on, for instance, the logging site. Yet even though symbols of mastery (schooling or education) were vehemently opposed by the common people in principle, they were often adopted in practice. Many common people, despite their negative assertions about formal education, nonetheless enrolled their offspring in the local school (Mikkola 2009, 318).

Proverbs generally portray masters as inept and incapable of doing physical work: “If work were fun, the masters would do it themselves” (Jos työ herkkua olisi, niin herrat sen tehisikin), or “If working were easier, the masters would do it themselves” (Jos työ ois helempa tekis sitä kaikki herratkin). These proverbs challenge the notion that the lower class loved their life of hard work and hardship.
There was a common belief among the elite that the poor peasants, forest workers, and tenant farmers loved what they did for living. This view was strengthened by Zacharias Topelius in his book *Maamme* (“Our land,” published in Swedish 1875, in Finnish 1876), where he described typical Finnish commoners. The views presented in the proverbs contradict those held by the better-off people. Instead, according to the proverbs, the common people believed that the masters’ life was mainly one of enjoyment: “Masters are those who eat goodies” (Herrat ne on kun herkkuja syövät). The rural culture was largely defined by material scarcity. Peasants were often barely able to make a living from the poor soil during the short growing season; even among the landowning peasants, the standard of living was generally low. Therefore, the theme of nutrition represented the question of visible social hierarchy and served as a metaphor for the estate society’s order.

Likewise, according to proverbs, masters could live without doing any real work, and they did not have to make any physical effort. The concepts of a master and mastery were the metaphors of negative things. For example, a lazy person was compared with a master: “Mastery is packed into a body just like winter frost into a shoe” (Herruus pakkaa ruumiiseen niin kuin pakkanen rajakenkään). The social hierarchy represented in the estates was long believed to be ordained by God. This folk model, the “Great Chain of Being,” was derived from classical antiquity and, according to it, all kinds of objects constituted a hierarchical system in which every creature or thing belonged inherently and immutably to a certain level of the chain. The highest level was occupied by God; this was followed by the angels, various classes of people, then animals, and so forth (Lovejoy 1936).

This view was gradually undermined as Enlightenment ideas gained greater currency and the labor movement expanded (Stark 2011, 332). For instance, the proverb “It is money that makes a man a master” (Raha se on, joka miehen herraksi tekee) is a good example of how new ideas penetrated the folk view and thinking of the lower classes, even though most of the estateless had no formal schooling. The proverb “Masters have a belly and the rich have money” (Herrooll on mahaa ja rikkahilla rahaa) describes the distinctive appearance—that is, an ample girth—of those of the wealthier people that marked them as members of the upper class. In other words, masters were believed to occupy their higher social position for their income, not God’s will.

From the standpoint of the commoners, the lives of the masters were easy, as in the next comparison pointing out that one “is having the master’s days and
the dog’s troubles” (On herran päivät ja koiran vaivat). It is worth noting, however, that proverbs containing the word master also underscore the mortality shared by masters and commoners alike: “Even the masters’ horses take a breath after running a long way” (Hengähtää ne herroinkin hevoset pitkän matkan juostuansa). Matti Kuusi has noted that this view of the natural order of the social classes held by the estate society was not shared by the common people. In fact, theirs was a more egalitarian understanding of human nature and rights (Kuusi 1954, 88). This is expressed in the proverb “Even a master has his master, and the poor man his God” (Herra on herrallakin, köyhälläki Jumala). This proverb has over fifty variants so it has been widely known in Finland. It proved that the lower class did not fully accept the hegemony of the upper class (Stark 2013, 132). Although no serious efforts were made to collapse the dominant social hierarchy, a culture of contestation—namely, verbally expressed opinions and views from below—enabled the common folk to criticize the existing order.

If we look at the proverbs that include the word master, masters are represented as wicked and cruel, or, at the very least, as simply laughable. In the view of the common people, masters also sought to take advantage of or cheat their well-intentioned servants. Even the honorable master always sought to make things easier for himself: “A master’s living is the poor man’s tax” (Herrain elo on köyhäin vero). According to the folk views, the extent of the masters’ power was vast, for it covered not only their family, relatives, and houses but also, as the next proverb with more than ten variants amusingly suggests, their pets: “Even a master’s dog is a master” (Herra se on herran koirakin). Even a master’s dog behaves as a master and should be treated as one.

**MASTERY IN US**

The second category of the master proverbs concerns the concept of the master as a metaphor for an individual’s sense of power. More than the masters’ appearance or language, it is the person’s behavior and attitude toward the other people that is interpreted as being a characteristic part of a master’s nature. For instance, the proverb “Everyone is the head of his home, master in his manor” (Jokainen on isäntä kotonaan, herra omalla kartanollaan) maintains that anyone can be a master of his or her own destiny. Therefore, mastery serves as a metaphor for freedom and self-determination. If a person were to gain material wealth or some other form of good fortune in a society largely marked by poverty, this stroke of luck would be
compared to having the position of a master: “Living like a master, although a day less” (Herroiksha elämä pitää vaik päivää vähemmän).

Another, though semantically distinctive, theme in this category is the proverb that subjects opportunism combined with arrogance to the cool eye of irony. For example, “Great master, but a small position” (Suuri herra, mutta pieni virka) refers to anybody whose behavior clashes with the behavior appropriate to his or her social status. The next proverb employs sarcasm: “The lower the master, the higher his hat” (Jota matalampi herra, sitä korkeampi hattu). This proverb pokes fun at people who desperately seek to rise above or to appear to belong to a higher social class. These proverbs reflect the distinctive clothing worn by the different social classes (Talve 1997, 154). The proverb “Masters are recognized for their hats, the king for his helmet” (Kyllähän herrat hatusta tunnetaan, kuningas kypärästään) marks the difference between the ruling groups. The older version of this proverb, “A master walks with a hat, the king with a helmet,” employs poetic meter (Herrat kulkevi hatussa, kuningas kypärässänä) and was collected by Elias Lönnrot (Koskenjaakko 1929, 55). In fact, many of the old Finnish proverbs—some of which are still in frequent use—have a poetic form that dates back to oral culture. As these examples demonstrate, the concept of mastery is divided into subcategories, for there are all kinds of masters, and mastery is always in relation to a particular social context.

Christianity and Lutheranism stress not only the religious value of work and discipline but also life after death. All deeds in this life will be reflected in the afterlife. Finnish proverbs, however, suggest that the good life is to be achieved in this worldly life. The good life is understood as a process of gaining wisdom and growing mentally to a stage comparable to mastery: “The one who is a fool as youngster, will be a master as old” (Joka on hullu nuorena, on herra vanhana). There is a proverb that expresses the same idea in reverse: “The one who is a master in youth, will be a fool in old age” (Joka herra nuorena, se narri vanhana).

The folk concept of a master includes the idea of superiority. The term master potentially refers to a boss, a leader, or someone belonging to a higher social order, and thus accorded certain kinds of privileges. Equal social status occasionally leads to conflict in daily communication, with each party seeking to overcome the other and assert his superiority. The next proverb reflects the dilemma of two masters: “I am a master, you are a master, which one of us will carry the sack” (Minä herra, sinä herra, kumpi meistä kontin kantaa).
Looking at the historical process, achieving a degree of economic and social mastery became a reality for the majority of the Finnish population as the general welfare improved and economic growth expanded from the 1930s onwards. Nonetheless, the standard of living for the common people was very low for a long time, which led to conflicts in the grassroots activities and made other poor and working-class individuals appear as rivals. In other words, behavior regarded as “uppity” by a social equal was subject to proverbial criticism: “He’s the kind of man that has stepped into a master’s shit” (Se on sellainen herroin paskaan astunut mies). The term master is often used in proverbs to mock boasters and social climbers. The saying “a master without a post” (herra ilman virkaa) subjects the professional status to an ironic smile, a status that, according to the folk views, should determine the behavior of an individual. In other words, people from the commoners’ background were expected by their peers to behave in accordance with their station in life; the proverbial mind abhors pretentiousness.

CONCLUSION
Can we think of proverbs as manifestations of folk views? One answer is that we can see these proverbs containing the word master as expressions of a culture of contestation. In other words, folklore texts, which are documents of an everyday reality of the past, can reveal the resentments and critical social attitudes once held but no longer directly accessible. Lombardi-Satriani (1974) saw resistance in everyday life as non-revolutionary by nature. A culture of contestation was thus encompassed, for instance, in alternative ways of thinking and behaving from those in power, and it was thus able to produce the dominant ideologies in the society. The position of master depended on context: a master could have been a landowning peasant but sometimes the appellation referred to a teacher, a doctor, a priest, or the wife of any of these professionals. The concept of a master could also be used to refer to a person in charge of his or her own life, regardless of whether the speaker him- or herself came from a poor peasant or forest worker background. Therefore, the concept served as a metaphor for self-sufficiency and high self-esteem.

The historical context of the master-proverb sample is that the data collection was informed by the historic-geographic method; moreover, the collections and their archival organization were undertaken when Finland was still a predominantly poor agrarian society. Until the Second World War, the country relied mainly on agriculture; therefore, these proverbs continued to have meaning and resonance.
even in the 1950s. The last hundred years have seen a rural and virtually static society turn into one of industrialization, increasing wealth, rapid development, and regional differentiation. Although some of the proverbs that include the word *master* are still familiar to contemporary Finns, most of them are strictly tied to the rural peasant way of life and its inherent social hierarchies.

During Julius and Kaarle Krohn’s day, significant structural changes were caused by economic growth, modernization, and the historical shifts in the concept of “folk.” In other words, folklore scholarship continued to focus on the oral traditions of illiterate commoners in the rural backwoods, not on the traditions of the workers in the growing forest and textile industries. On the contrary, the employers of the historic-geographic method in Finland saw the modern innovations as destroying the authentic folk views and the verbal art of the common folk. The early folklore scholars retrieved a large number of folklore items because they believed it was useful to have as many variants as possible in searching for the most original one. However, what counts as useful knowledge worth achieving has varied from one period to another (Burke 2012, 111).

The knowledge we have today about the common people of the Finnish society of the past has been drawn mainly from the official reports and documents made by the elite class that Julius and Kaarle Krohn themselves represented. In the previous studies, the common people themselves, *the folk*, hardly ever had the opportunity to tell and explain how they viewed the social structure around them. The historical description of the poor, often illiterate, peasant culture and the birth and rise of the modern welfare state lacks important data. In the past, the common folk did not produce written personal documents about themselves for future generations and scholars. Therefore, to understand more deeply the processes of macro-level development in a society, researchers need more information about the micro-level acts, interpretations, and views. By studying these proverbs in light of the information available on social history, together with the large corpora collected and organized using the historic-geographic method, it is possible to reconstruct a thematic system of the folk views from below.
SOURCE MATERIAL
The Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society in Helsinki: Proverb cards including the word *master*.

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“Good Factual Knowledge” for Future Generations: Questionnaire Activity Defining Traditional Culture

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Abstract
This article examines how a specific questionnaire activity, originally created by the National Museum of Finland and produced between 1956 and 1996, affected the way traditional culture is understood. The article analyzes the questionnaire in terms of the objectives that guided the activity and the ways in which these booklets reflected the practices of ethnological research. Having been initiated and collected by one of the country’s leading cultural institutions, the questionnaire material could be interpreted as an expression of institutionalized cultural heritage.

Within the overall framework of societal and disciplinary change, these cultural symbols reflect the ways in which cultural objects are given significance and meaning. In the Finnish context, the idealized and homogenized rural setting was an essential aspect of the questionnaire for a long time. The most significant changes happened gradually, most particularly during the 1980s when there were changes in the questionnaire themes and in the ways in which respondents were expected to describe the phenomena in focus.

An Initiative for Dialogue
In 1956 the National Museum of Finland invited people who were interested in traditional Finnish culture to write about their memories of life in the old days. This call was not made in vain. Almost 500 people responded, although some were not quite sure what was expected of them. The “esteemed museum keeper” received a letter from one anxious individual asking how well she had done in this competition
and apologizing for any mistakes she may have made (National Board of Antiquities: letter to the ethnological department November 4, 1956). Otherwise, the new project seemed to have started successfully. Year after year, hundreds of willing informants submitted their written descriptions, thereby enabling the writing of history “from below.”

It has been argued that a substantial part of our culture is based on things we remember and on our experiences. Experiences are not given and unchangeable, however, but are structured through the processes of remembering and writing (Korkiakangas 2005, 129, 135). There are various ways of constructing these reminiscences. Archives and museums use questionnaires to collect information about the past, and recently also about the present. One of the organizers of such an activity in Finland is the National Museum. The reminiscences archived there have a special role in defining “traditional Finnish culture.” The focus in the following analyses is thus on the role of the questionnaire activity in this process.

The questionnaire booklets circulated by the National Museum to its network exemplify the use of ideological power in defining the concepts tradition and traditional culture. They reflect the various ways of classifying, evaluating, and organizing people’s opinions and experiences (Klein 2003, 70). As Regina Bendix argues, cultural heritage does not exist, but is made. Aspects of everyday life are chosen to represent the valuable aspects of a culture (Bendix 2009, 255). This construction is visible in the ways the archives operate both on the practical level and in terms of substance, in the “collecting” of tradition. Thus the archive collections comply with both the technical and functional definitions of cultural heritage: they preserve concrete objects for future generations, but there are certain social objectives and the need to put an official stamp on what of the institutionalized heritage is being preserved (Lillbroända-Annala [2014], 21–22; Anshelm 1993, 13–14).

My interest in questionnaire activity was awakened when I used two of the above-mentioned questionnaires as source material in my research on Finnish women’s lives: the first dealt with the war experiences of a specific group of women, members of the Lotta Svärd auxiliary organization (Olsson 2005), and the second one had a broader focus on Finnish women’s self-understanding (Olsson 2011). Analyzing these very popular questionnaires aroused in me the desire to reflect on the way the respondents may have been guided in their reminiscence work.

At the same time as I became familiar with and very enthusiastic about questionnaires as sources of ethnological research, there was an upsurge of interest in
the methodology of oral history in general and questionnaires in particular, both in Finland and in her neighboring countries (see, e.g., Fingerroos et al. 2006; Hagström and Marander-Eklund 2005; Mikkola 2009; Nilsson, Waldetoft, and Westergren 2003). Attention was focused on the formation processes of the produced knowledge and the way it is always a product of selection made in the different phases, among other things.

Even though it is not simultaneous, the interaction between the archive and the respondents could be described as dialogue, with one asking questions and the other one giving answers (Korkiakangas 1996, 101). I refer to this dialogue, woven within the interaction of the questionnaires and the responses, as meta-dialogue. The authority of the archive is evident in the way it determines the themes and the questions that are considered important as a record to be kept for future generations. The way this authority manifests itself is, again, based on the historical and cultural contexts of the time. The initiative to concentrate on certain themes in the questionnaire comes from an official source, and the sub-themes considered important are pre-determined in the questions. However, the authority of the respondents is visible in the act of responding (Klein 2003, 70; Mikkola 2009, 109; Olsson 2011).

The history in the National Museum of collecting written sources by questionnaire can be traced to the beginning of the twentieth century. However, it was not continuous (Kaukonen 1959, 8; Lehtonen 1972, 116–19) and became more regular only in the 1950s, specifically in 1956, when the above-mentioned questionnaire was circulated. The beginning of the activity has been traced to one individual, Niilo Valonen (1913–1983), who was appointed head of the ethnographic section in the National Museum in 1955 and was a professor in European ethnology at the University of Helsinki from 1961 to 1977. Thus there was a personal link between the research done in the university and the questionnaire activity. The strong link between research and museum work goes back to the first years of European ethnology at the University of Helsinki. The first professor of what was then Finno-Ugric ethnology, U. T. Sirelius, also acted as the head of the ethnographic section and initiated the early questionnaire work in the museum (Lehtonen 1972, 113–19).

The questionnaire activity at the National Museum was part of a broader program on both the national and the international level: the Finnish Literature Society has been engaged in similar activities since the late nineteenth century (see Blomster and Mikkola and Stark in this volume). It was not a unique phenomenon
in 1950s Finnish society either, the different departments of ethnology, for example, being engaged in similar practices. Niilo Valonen acquired experience with questionnaires during his studentship, drawing on the collections of the Dictionary Foundation and Uppsala University, and perhaps most importantly in connection with the Nordiska Museet in Stockholm in 1947, when he was involved in conducting an inquiry into the use of birch-bark (Korhonen and Räsänen 1992, 152). The first questionnaires were drawn up in cooperation with the Seurasaari Foundation and the National Museum of Finland (the last joint questionnaire was compiled in 1974). The Seurasaari Foundation was established to support the Seurasaari open-air museum. This connection with the rural way of life and its material culture automatically guided the themes in the first questionnaires. The regular activity at the National Museum (then under the wing of the National Board of Antiquities) continued until 1996, when it stopped for more than ten years. For the purposes of this article I refer to all questionnaires as having been administered by the National Museum, although there were organizational changes along the way.

My aim in this article is to take a closer look at the questionnaires circulated by the National Museum. I will concentrate on the kind of knowledge that was considered of interest and the way certain themes and aspects of life were highlighted at different periods of time. To understand the processes behind this knowledge production, it is essential to consider not only what “survives and what is recoverable” but also what is given attention in any political and social climate (Byrne 2009, 230). My overview of the questionnaire themes covers the four decades of activity before the break in 1996. I am interested in the objectives that guided the questionnaire activity, and the way these objectives reflected the practices of ethnological research at the time—which, again, has not been separate from the rest of the societal sphere. The focus here is not on the substance of the responses, but on how the questionnaires may have carried hidden—and sometimes more explicitly brought out—messages to the potential respondents. The analysis is based on the forty-one questionnaire booklets circulated via the museum and its partner from the 1950s to the 1990s.

**Defining the Essential**

The questionnaires distributed by the National Museum were published in booklets, all of which were similarly designed during the period in focus here. The booklets cover many different themes: the 1964 version, for example, contains questions
about traditional food, clothing worn in different situations, women's trousers, and morning routines. The forty-one booklets that were published cover a total of 314 themes. Some of them are very specific, such as “yeast” and “cabbage,” whereas others are more general, including “changing agriculture” and “raising children.” The number of questions on each theme varies, but in most cases they are plentiful and comprehensive, and, especially on matters concerning material culture, they are complemented with drawings or pictures. The compilers vary, even within one booklet. Most of them, however, represent researchers in the field of European ethnology; thus, in this sense, the questionnaires also reflect the objectives of the discipline and the individual researchers at the time (see also Lilja 1996, 114).

Figure 1. “The forms of the tables in the farmhouse living room reflect the influences of cultural styles from different times. We know of several local variations. Which of the main forms in drawings 10–19 have been used in your area?” Question 11 in the first questionnaire reflects one of the objectives and practices of the activity: an interest in areal specifics. (Kansatieteellisen osaston kysely 1, 5)
The booklets are informative, including the results of earlier questionnaires and background information on the current themes. They also give some details about the museum and changes in personnel, thus making the organization more familiar to the network of respondents (see, e.g., Seurasaari 1961, 1962, 1963). They all give brief guidelines for informants at the beginning, reflecting the intended content of the responses. The guidelines remained very much the same over the years: a “good” respondent did not necessarily answer every question. It was far more important to write in as much detail as possible, to include pictures and drawings by way of illustration, and to use the dialect form of the words describing objects and special phenomena. One addition was soon made, however, in the fourth questionnaire: no information taken from the literature, such as on local history, would be included (Seurasaari 1/1958, 8).

This further guideline primarily reflects the way some respondents may have misunderstood the purpose of the questionnaire activity: for some reason—perhaps to ensure factual accuracy or because they did not have any experience on which to draw—they conveyed information from published sources rather than from their own lives. It also emphasizes the fact that the main interest was in gathering information that could not be conveyed in any other way than through personal cultural knowledge.

The way the reminiscences and fragments of information were to be “collected” is explicitly stated in the questionnaire compiled in 1958 with the co-operation of the Chapter of the Kuopio diocese to deal with “church folk memory,” which as “a token of honor for the work of our fathers [. . .] was quickly to be archived [. . .].”

1 The church council would appoint a chief collector (such as a teacher) in every congregation and a suitable number of helpers (scribes, photographers, illustrators). The best thing, however, is for those with a good memory to write their own descriptions. (Seurasaari 1A/1958)

This guideline shows the bipartite method of collecting data on traditional culture, and also the hierarchical structure. Knowledge obtained in interviews was welcome, but the most valued information came directly from the informant.

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1 The quotes, either italicized or indented, are from the questionnaire booklets or archived minutes originally in Finnish. They have been translated by the author.
Questionnaires were distributed approximately once a year, although in some years early on (1957, 1958) there were two or three, and none at all in four years (1960, 1962, 1986, 1993; see the homepage of the ethnological archive for the list of themes: http://www.nba.fi/fi/tietopalvelut/arkistot/kansatiede/kyselyaiheet). The questionnaire activity seemed to be well received, and by the end of 1958, there had been 1,250 respondents. The media and various organizations were used to boost the circulation of the booklets (Korhonen and Räsänen 1992, 152).

Although the first questionnaire (entitled “Do you remember the old farmhouse living room?”) focused its forty-three sub-themes primarily on the material culture of the old farmsteads, it also contained items about the social hierarchies and conditions on the farm. The questions concerned sleeping arrangements—who slept in a bed, who on the floor or on a bench, for example—and the seating around the table. The last theme concerned life in the farmhouse living room. The informants were asked to write freely but to focus on the facts. As a consequence, the museum archived 82,563 sheets of “good factual knowledge,” the perceived aim being to gather “information on essential aspects of a disappearing way of life” (Seurasaari Foundation: Board meeting November 13, 1958).

These comments, recorded by the organizers, provide insight into the type of knowledge the questionnaires were designed to disseminate. First of all, good knowledge was factual, and second, there were aspects of life that were more relevant than others. Furthermore, the focus was explicitly on aspects that were considered to be on the verge of disappearing. Factuality could be interpreted as objectivity, and essentiality as part of representativeness, both of which were focal research ideals in the early stages of questionnaire activity in the Swedish context, for example (Lilja 1996, 85–86). Defining the results as “good” or “authentic” is also familiar from other archives. Good material for an archive collecting traditional culture could be something that complemented not only the collections but also the image of the supposed past reality. The goodness of an account could also be evaluated by the way it reflected the traditional and vernacular culture in the choice of wording or estimated authenticity, for example (Lilja 1996, 85–86; Mikkola 2009, 104–10; Peltonen 2004, 202). Assessed on this basis, it is clear that the questionnaires were carefully structured with detailed and multiple questions that also demarcated options for the “right” descriptions (Lilja 1996, 115).

Furthermore, the informants were not responding to the questionnaire purely for their own amusement: there was also a competitive element in that they were
evaluated on the extent of their knowledge and how they formulated their responses. The prize for the “best” responses was a small amount of money or a silver spoon. A club for active collectors was established as early as 1958 so that the prizes would not always go to the same informants. In the first year, fourteen people joined this special group. Later, a special medal was designed, resembling the Rusko tankard (kousa in Finnish) from 1542, to reward informants whose responses were considered particularly valuable and relevant to the research (Seurasaari 2/1957, 4, 6–8; Seurasaari 1/1958, 7; Seurasaari 1963, 2–3, 5). The Rusko tankard was thought to be a suitable reward because it represented a Finnish craft that required both patience and skill. The products were both beautiful and presentable as was the tankard, which, because of its age and significance, was considered a valued memento of the old times (Seurasaari 1964).

Figure 2. The Rusko tankard symbolized the work done by the most active respondents: patience and skill were behind both the craftwork as well as the descriptions of traditional Finnish culture. The gold and silver medals entitled the respondent to free admission to the National Museum and to the Seurasaari open-air museum (see, e.g., Museoviraston kyselylehti 1975, 3).

Evaluating some descriptions as better than others served to inform the respondents of expectations. The question from one respondent about making mistakes, quoted at the beginning of this article, was not far-fetched. The “ideal record”
conceptualized by Agneta Lilja (1996, 235–36) was created when the archive and the respondent were unanimous about how both the form and the contents of the description should be expressed.

After five years of questionnaire distribution, the number of informants had risen to 1,746, and the number of pages totaled 144,328. It was suggested that this was a big enough number to provide trustworthy descriptions of the issues concerned and to cover the whole country. Again, this assessment refers to one of the general ideas behind the research of the time: the need to make generalizations based on the collections. All in all, objectivity, representativeness, and generality all reflect the holistic view of ethnographic research that was prevalent at the time: the phenomenon in question was to be analyzed as comprehensively as possible. As Lilja (1996, 86) points out, the objects in the archive were like pieces of a puzzle that—when completed—would give an all-inclusive overall picture. This is also why it was important to follow up the way the information cumulated in both the number of informants and the areas they represented. In 1966, for example, after ten years of questionnaire activity, the archive had 296,635 pages of information from 2,257 informants representing 511 parishes or towns (see also Herzfeld 2005, 23–24 on the holistic idea; Seurasaari 1961, 1; Seurasaari 1966).

The reasons for partaking in this kind of activity are many and varied. Some people may connect it with enlightenment and the transfer of knowledge, and for others it may have a pedagogical function. When contextualized as part of cultural heritage, it could also be interpreted as a way both to affect and to reflect on one’s cultural and social identity. Alternatively, the motivation could lie in both the writing process and the results, in other words the public documentation of one’s past (Latvala 2005, 100; Lillbroönda-Annala 2014, 23; Stark 2006, 59–60). All in all, the motives reflect both personal reasons and the ways in which the activity may have emphasized different kinds of information. In some cases, the different motives are intertwined and not easily recognizable from the responses. Furthermore, motives understood as collective could also be personally experienced. (See Mikkola 2009, 111–19 for more about the motives of the early respondents in the Finnish Literature Society network.)

The popularity of some of the questionnaires reflects the general interest the topics aroused in society at the time, but by the beginning of the 1980s the number of respondents each year had stabilized at between 900 and 1,000. Two of the most popular surveys were those dealing with women’s lives in 1985 and in 1988. The
Status of a Woman attracted over 1,000 responses, and the questionnaire dealing with women’s wartime experiences more than 2,500. By comparison, there were 663 responses to the third questionnaire, which was distributed in 1957 and covered seven separate themes (Seurasaari 1/1958; Museoviraston kyselylehti 1981, 3). What should be noted, however, is that questionnaires may not only reflect but also arouse interest in the topics in question (Westergren 2003, 18–19).

The activity was built on a network of informants, which in time ensured a reasonable number of responses to each questionnaire. Being a regular informant was like a hobby for some people. This kind of loyalty is visible in statistics published in 1986. The archive was in its thirtieth year of operation: twenty-six of the people who responded to the first questionnaire in 1956 were also involved then, and seven of them had returned every one. By 1983, the total number of respondents was 2,639, including 1,566 women and 1,073 men. The number of Swedish-speaking respondents was low at only 122. Most informants were between 53 and 83 years of age, the biggest group being the 63- to 73-year-olds. Many of them were farmers’ wives (483) and farmers (424), housewives (306) and teachers (290) (Heikinmäki 1984, 4–5; Heikinmäki 1987, 2, 4–5; see also Sjöholm 1999, 190–91; Mikkola 2009, 97). Lars-Eric Jönsson (2014, 334) points out that to have a right to cultural heritage is to win recognition. The statistics picturing the respondents give another clue to the intended outcome of the questionnaire activity, and to the question of whose heritage comprised the heritage of the Finnish people. The network of respondents guaranteed a certain response rate, but also—even as an open and living nexus—demarcated the group of people sharing their knowledge about the essential phenomena considered part of traditional culture, the prototype being an elderly rural woman.

**Rescue Work and Areal Specifics**

The aim in the very first questionnaire about the farmhouse living room, published in 1956, was “to collect as old reminiscences” about the furnishings as possible. Changes in the interior were also of interest, but the first priority was to obtain information from as far back in time as was feasible and that might not be available for much longer (Kansatieteellisen osaston osaston kysely 1 1956, 1). The hunt for the oldest possible information could be seen as the continuation of work done by different heritage organizations and student unions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when old was associated with authenticity (Korkiakangas 2010, 76).
The above-mentioned aim reflects the general idea that was embedded in the first questionnaires: a specific emphasis on phenomena that were likely to disappear. Obtaining information in this way was considered rescue work. The informants seemed to be inspired by the desire to capture these disappearing ways of life for “posterity” (Seurasaari 1/1958, 3–4). This note of urgency is explicitly apparent in the third questionnaire booklet in the context of Karelia and Karelian evacuees.

Later on in the 1950s, the issue of the Karelian culture, which seemed to be in danger of vanishing after the war, was identified as the trigger of the renewed questionnaire activity. Having been driven from their traditional environment, the Karelian evacuees would soon lose their cultural knowledge, and thus the questionnaires covered all the “main categories” of material culture. Eventually it was realized that the themes devised for these respondents also applied in other parts of Finland. The hidden emphasis on Karelia is not evident in the responses, however. Among the 611 responses to the first questionnaire were 38 descriptions from areas lost to the Soviet Union (Valonen 1977, 3–4). The fact that Karelian culture helped to inspire the questionnaire activity after the Second World War is understandable because of its historical role in the formation of the national cultural heritage (Willman 2006, 143–45).

The 1957 questionnaire was published in a booklet entitled Seurasaari. The purpose was not only to issue questionnaires, but also to make contact with people and associations that valued the nurturing of the Finnish folk tradition (Seurasaari 1/1957). However, much of the content comprised different thematic questionnaires, including the following: at the meadow cabin; the fishermen’s sauna and other remote dwellings; on linen; and weaving, felting, and the use of friezes. This and the subsequent editions also gave feedback on the results of previous questionnaires:

[The first] collection produced a wonderful result. As we thought, there are people in various parts of the country who understand the significance of this kind of work, making notes and archiving the lives of the elderly. Images of the Finnish tupra and pirtti were obtained from perhaps the last generation to live in these rooms. On the shelves of our archive their value will increase more than those who produced them could ever have imagined. It will not be very long before this kind of picture can only be drawn from fading memories. (Seurasaari 1/1957)
The second edition of *Seurasaari* also expressed gratitude to the informants for their memories and interest in the past: again the results were good. The female respondents were especially thanked for their contributions on the topic of friezes (and a year later for their responses concerning the making of knitted mittens). All the informants were praised for continuing the work started in the nineteenth century. Taking part in this mission gave continuity to the work of Elias Lönnrot, M. A. Castren, and other researchers, which was considered one of the most important national duties at their time (*Seurasaari* 2/1957, 6; *Seurasaari* 1/1958, 4). All in all, in line with Michael Herzfeld (2005, 147–83), I see the rescuing of the reminiscences as a form of structural nostalgia, in other words, a “collective of an edenic order” or as a “time before time” with a balanced perfection of social relations. In the context of the early questionnaire activity, the rhetorical longing—even as a form of material culture—was directed to the rural land-owning peasantry.

The rural context reflects the very traditional focus of Finnish European ethnology: the countryside and its land-owning farmers on which the image of Finnishness was built. In this sense the beginning of the questionnaire activity reflected the search for a Finnish identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which is also explicitly reflected in the references to names like Lönnrot and Castren. Simultaneously, this activity contributed to the construction of the countryside as an idyllic, humane, and communal environment that was familiar from other forms of ethnological research in Finland. The rural past was considered the basis of the cultural identity, and the role of the ethnologist was to strengthen it by preserving and recording these aspects of the past (Korkiakangas 2010, 75–78).

The preservation role assumed special importance in the 1950s as the changes in the rural environment became more substantial. On the societal level, this was a question not only of mechanization and industrialization, but of the juxtaposition between rural and urban ideals against which the traditional rural culture had to defend itself. The way in which traditional rural life was valued in society was also changing, as more critical viewpoints were aired (Korkiakangas 2010, 83). In this context the questionnaires dealing with rural life are more like apologies for a way of life that had been at the core of ethnological activity for so long. The booklets describe the “rescue work” as a competition in which the opponent is a rapidly changing society.

According to the introduction in the booklet for the 1966 questionnaire, the position of those engaged in this rescue work was good: there had been many
processes of change, but the concept of culture had become more complex because of the notes from the informants (Seurasaari 1966, 1). Once the respondents had been recognized for their work in the 1960s, it was considered possible to distinguish between the *new times* and the *old times*:

Seven years ago the National Museum and the Seurasaari Foundation set a demanding goal for the friends of the Finnish folk tradition: the great collection of old traditions from all areas. We—those asking and those answering—were very aware that much had already disappeared for good. But we knew that a lot of valuable and unique material was still there to be retrieved. It was also interesting to record when and how the new times came to replace the old. (Seurasaari 1963)

Although the changes clearly motivated the collecting activity from the very beginning, the accelerating speed of change made it even more important during the following decades. Temporary cultural phenomena were replacing the "very old traditions." Niilo Valonen, professor of European ethnology and one of the activators of the questionnaire work, emphasized the dual objective of the work: “It is important to preserve the old reminiscences. But it is also important to show the phases through which our new culture was born” (Seurasaari 1970, 3). This all reflects the general process of cultural heritage, one of the functions of which is to create continuity at the same time as highlighting originality. The social changes and modernization that took place after the Second World War created the need to defend the cultural intactness, which became concrete in the different processes, such as questionnaire activity (Lillbroända-Annala 2014, 26; Anshelm 1993, 9). The process of modernization also prepared the ground for nostalgia, the sense that something had been lost forever, which again could be seen as an inspiration for engaging in rescue work such as responding to a questionnaire (see Lilja 1996, 36–37; Korkiakangas 2010).

Another general aspect that is visible in the first questionnaires, and was familiar to ethnological researchers at the time, is the view of culture as a geographically based phenomenon. In the case of Karelia, for example, the questions were designed specifically to allow the Karelian culture to be depicted from the responses. The general idea was “to get a more specific view of our cultural areas.” The interest was almost entirely in life within the Finnish borders—in both Finnish
and Swedish—the only exception being the Ingrians, whose questionnaire activity was investigated in 1958 (Seurasaari 2/1957, 7; Seurasaari 1/1958, 1; Seurasaari 2/1958, 50). It is not much of an exaggeration to suggest that the only deviation from the homogenized image of Finnishness in the questionnaires was the areal diversity. The differences between the possible majority and minorities were not recognized in this cultural-heritage process (see Jönsson 2014, 334).

Even in the 1970s, Finnish ethnological research leaned heavily on the historic-geographic method in the study and display of cultural loans and their movement, the geographical diffusion, and the changes in cultural phenomena in the different cultural areas. Drawing ethnographical maps representing both material culture and customs was a common European trend as early as in the 1920s. The main emphasis in the Finnish maps was upon the division into two cultural areas—eastern and western—as part of the European context. This mapping was later criticized because, among other things, experience and knowledge about a certain area affected the way the map was drawn: it could never capture the multi-faceted reality (Ruotsala 2009, 172–75, 178). However, the mapping of culture became familiar to readers of the questionnaire booklets when the results of previous surveys were given. The 1966 booklet, for example, showed the various ways of making sauna whisks in different areas. The example was considered important to the network of informants as it “showed how a full picture, based on the responses could be constructed of a phenomenon that was previously unknown. This is why every bit of information is important” (Seurasaari 1966, 2–4). Ethnological research and the study of cultural areas in particular were now open to totally new possibilities. Thus the aim was not only to record the various aspects, but also to construct a general picture of a certain cultural phenomenon in the broad context of Finnish culture. Given this aim, it is not surprising that the phenomena that attracted attention may sometimes—at least in retrospect—seem somewhat trivial. The idea behind the maps, however, was to facilitate the distinguishing of border zones between the cultural areas (Ruotsala 2009, 179). Awareness of these differences was awakened and strengthened through the questionnaire booklets.

Changing Objectives?

After the 1950s, Finnish ethnological interest began to extend beyond rural traditions to include urban issues and the working population. These trends gradually became visible in the questionnaire activity, too. An explicit step from the rural to the
Figure 3. “The results obtained from the scientific informants” in 1961: the different ways of making sauna whisks in different areas. “The most important thing is, however, that the right information about Finnish cultural heritage is now recorded for present and future generations.” (Valonen 1966, 2–4)
urban was taken in 1965, when towns and their market places, urban homes, and the relationship between urban and rural people were the main themes. Nevertheless, it was members of the rural population who were asked to reminisce about urban matters, as the questions dealt with trips to town from the countryside. The focus in 1994, however, was explicitly on the urban experiences of city dwellers, the main theme being the post-Second World War city-housing program (Seurasaari 1965; Museoviraston kyselylehti 1994, 5).

The extension of the scope is also reflected in the details of the questionnaires. A photography competition was organized in 1965 in order to obtain information on all kinds of Finnish homes. The focus was on chairs, which of all items of furniture were considered best to reflect the changing trends. The idea was to collect photographs of chairs from all kinds of dwellings—rural and urban, small farms, the homes of the working class, professionals and office workers, and from houses, manors, and vicarages (Seurasaari 1965, 17). The chair had also been featured nine years earlier when the questionnaire focused upon the old farmhouse living room as a representation of the ideal past. In the case of the chair, the dichotomy of stability and change in the objectives of the questionnaire work is crystallized in a very concrete way and on a small scale.

However, it was not only the ethnological research that affected the questionnaire activity but also the principles inherent in museum work—in as far as the two can be separated. The lay collectors were encouraged and thanked for “creating a valuable archive of traditions alongside the material collections in the National Museum” (Cardberg 1984, 2–3; Seurasaari 1961, 1). It was the modern museum that was not content with merely collecting artifacts: an artifact without information about its use was only a “dead thing.” Thus the activity moved more and more to the field. Attracting popular interest in this work was crucial, however, as the museum had only limited resources. From this perspective, the primary aim was not—at least in the first few years—to obtain written information from informants in their own words, but to use lay collectors in place of museum professionals to record cultural phenomena. On the other hand, the concepts "modern museum" and "field" say something about the changes in the museums and in research on European ethnology.

The questionnaire booklets of the 1980s emphasized the immediate past: the interest was in how people acted, worked, and experienced things in different periods of history. In other words, the oldest possible knowledge was no longer the only or most relevant piece of information. Changes in the phenomena of interest
and in the historical perspective are perhaps most visible in the 1981 questionnaire, in which the first theme covers holiday trips abroad—described later as a “national movement of recent decades” (Museoviraston kyselylehti 1981, 4, 10; Museoviraston kyselylehti 1982, 2). Here the present perceptibly takes the place of the past, and in this the questionnaire activity followed the changes in the objectives of museum work. The first political program for museums in Finland from 1981 emphasized the need to record phenomena typifying contemporary society, which would entail using more illustrative and literary methods of recording. The disciplinary differences in research traditions between history and the social sciences seemed to be disappearing, and the study and documentation of contemporary themes were emphasized in discussions about museum work (Ala-Pöllänen 2013, 201, 204–205). Questionnaire activity had all the means to fulfill these objectives; it was just the substance of the themes that needed to be redirected.

The change in interest was also visible in the way the responses were to be constructed: the viewpoint was no longer only “scientific”:

> The questions here cover many themes that are open to reminiscence, and they are based on long-term research. We believe that the new perspective will attract as much interest as the earlier appeals for scientific informants. (Seurasaari 1965, 1)

The 1967 booklet was said to herald a new era in questionnaire activity, although what this meant is not specified (Seurasaari 1967, 1, 4). Perhaps it was merely a reference to the beginning of the second decade of the work. There was, however, a reference to a new response focus in the introduction to the first theme dealing with kinship relations and the profound changes they were going through. Although the questions emphasized the need for information about how these relations worked in the old days, the respondents were encouraged to give examples from their own experience: this would be a bonus (Seurasaari 1967, 6). The first time the informants were asked to base their responses on their own experiences was in the introduction to the 1963 questionnaire: they should restrict their answers to questions on which they had some experience or were otherwise well informed about (Seurasaari 1963, 7). Later on, this change was referred to even more explicitly in the cover text:

2 The Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society treated “reminiscences” (including memoirs and reminiscences about personal life) as a separate genre from 1975 onwards (Latvala 2005, 26; see also Mikkola 2009, 108).
It is the duty of a researcher in folk life to follow the different phenomena from the earliest times up to the present. This time we have chosen to focus on the big changes that have happened in recent decades. We hope to receive information about the different periods and the lives of individual persons, among other things, reflected against the general cultural-historical background. [. . .] The information we are after lies in the memories of younger people as well. (Seurasaari 1968, 1)

One of the main themes in this questionnaire concerned young people leaving home to make a living elsewhere. The informants were still encouraged to tell life histories, which were believed to shed light on everyday living (Seurasaari 1968, 6). The concept of a life history gives a clue to the new perspective. The approach became more visible in Finnish ethnology in the 1970s and 1980s, when the focus of the research moved to the lifestyle of industrial workers and their occupational histories. At first the life history was a secondary objective, used mainly to date other cultural phenomena (see Snellman 2005, 9; 2012, 440). Responses based on life histories featured particularly strongly in the questionnaires of the 1980s that dealt with women’s lives.

The allusion to a time of rapid change still prevailed in the 1980 questionnaire dealing with changes in the rural environment. What is noteworthy here is the new emphasis on the experiences of the respondents, which are connected to the changes happening at the time of the writing. I see this as another major change in the idea behind the questionnaire activity (see also Olsson 2011, 42). It was not only the past but also the present that was of interest.

The aim in the questionnaire about the evolution of a village, its different features and phases, is to find out how people experience the big changes in their environment that are taking place in our time. These changes are regulated by big companies and firms, political decision-makers, planners, and building authorities. The ordinary inhabitant of a municipality experiences them in his or her everyday life but does not have much influence on them. It is important to record the history and development of one’s own village, which is easier with the help of a detailed questionnaire. Thus we preserve knowledge worth remembering for future generations. (Museoviraston kyselylehti 1980, 6)
The text is written in the present tense, and to underline the fact that contemporary time is also valuable, the present is seen as the future past.

One theme in the same questionnaire booklet rests on only one prompt, introduced by the old saying: “Necessity is the mother of invention.” The two-line prompt asks the informants to write about a situation in their lives when the saying proved its relevance (Museoviraston kyselylehti 1980, 22). This is an example of minimalism in the compilation of questionnaires. Reference to coverage and detailed information is conspicuous by its absence: all that is left is a personal experience in a very specific situation. This kind of questionnaire formulation represents the antithesis of the precisely detailed surveys with multiple questions and sub-questions, such as the very first one in 1956.

This was perhaps the biggest change in questionnaire activity during the four decades covered in this article. The informants were no longer necessarily seen as masters of “traditional” folk life, speaking on behalf of a larger cultural area; they were individuals speaking about their own lives. This was not always the case, however. Some questionnaires in the 1980s still emphasized the need for general knowledge rather than personal experiences.

This focus on personal experiences was becoming more common generally in questionnaire activity, and was not restricted to the work of the National Museum. The change was gradual, however, the transformation period continuing until the 1990s (Pöysä 2006, 226). The feedback given to those responding to the 1987 questionnaire, which was one of the most popular ones and dealt with women’s lives, still stressed the number of responses as well as the geographical coverage as special merits, for example (Heikinmäki 1987, 2). These criteria continued to carry weight, although inspiration came not so much from areal specifics as from personal and situational experiences with their emotional undertones.

**Conclusion**

The tradition initially archived in the collections of the National Museum was mainly that of the Finnish rural population, and especially of farmers and their wives. This reflects the focus among ethnologists at the time on a Finnish culture based on rural traditions (see Snellman 1997, 26–27). To create a cultural heritage is to give symbolic value to some sections of the culture. The questionnaire activity has created this value by deeming some cultural aspects worth reminiscing about and recording. As individual themes, they may sometimes appear as mere bagatelles and
thereby irrelevant. Within the overall picture of societal and disciplinary change, however, these pinpointed cultural symbols reflect the ways in which cultural objects assume significance and meaning.

In the context of Finnish society and European ethnology, the cultural knowledge accumulated in the questionnaires reflects the way rural culture was still seen as the basis of the national cultural identity after the Second World War. This clinging onto a homogenized and idealized rural culture was understandable during the decades of urbanization, industrialization, and reconstruction. The fact that these themes also attracted the attention of the respondents is also indicative of their meaningfulness. Although the change to a more versatile view of culture began during the four decades in focus here, the rural emphasis was visible for a long time. The cultural change eventually became interesting in itself, redirecting the focus of the activity. This, in particular, led to the redefinition of cultural symbols in the 1980s, also reflecting the changing cultural identity. The homogenized image nevertheless remained on the level of the questionnaire booklets throughout the period in focus here. Diversification came through the change towards more personal accounts explicitly requested in the calls for participation.

What constituted a “good answer,” in other words a good description of the tradition, was also defined in the booklets produced for potential informants: the factuality of the response as well as the age of the described phenomenon. The ennobling of culture is visible in the feedback and acknowledgements given to the respondents (see Bendix 2009, 255). Work for the archive was equated to the work of researchers valued as inventors of Finnish culture.

Another aspect—which is not dealt with here—concerns the ways of responding to these calls for information: whether people followed the guidelines laid down by the collector or took liberties in their understanding of the past (Mikkola 2009, 126–34). The informants were asked to write about essential aspects of life that were determined from above according to the disciplinary ideas at the time. The practice of rewarding the respondents served not only to motivate them but also to guide them in certain directions in their recollections. However, as arrogant as it may seem from the viewpoint of the twenty-first-century research emphasis, informants were not considered as capable of formulating their responses and emphasizing the factors they themselves considered important.

Denis Byrne argues that “most of the heritage that means most to us in the frame of our individual lives will never be the subject of heritage recording or
conservation” and that most of us would not even want to “live in a world where all commemoration was public, none private” (Byrne 2009, 236). Even with its limitations, I believe the questionnaire activity comes quite close to the questionable ideal of individual lives becoming objects of recorded cultural heritage. From the perspective of the discourse on heritage, I see it both as official heritage production and as a form of counter-heritage (Byrne 2009, 230). The booklets give us an idea of the conscious efforts that were made to rescue and record the traditions considered cultural heritage. However, only by acquainting oneself with the actual responses does one gain the ability to see the abundance of individuality that is found behind the heritage considered as shared. Thus, rather than seeing questionnaire activity as the production of knowledge “from below” or “from above,” it should be understood as a process of interaction. It is this interactive process that will allow all involved parties to pursue the generation of knowledge labeled “tradition.”
ARCHIVE SOURCES
National Board of Antiquities
   Incoming letters 1956–57.
Seurasaari Foundation (in the possession of the Foundation)
   Minutes of the meetings.

DIGITAL SOURCES
Ethnological Archives, National Board of Antiquities: http://www.nba.fi/fi/tietopalvelut/arkistot/kansatiede/kyselyaiheet

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Why is Aino not Described as a Black Maiden?
Reflections on the Textual Presentations by Elias Lönnrot in the Kalevala and the Kanteletar

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Abstract
What kind of tradition is selected to represent the oral tradition of Finland, to whom is this tradition presented, and what process led to its selection? This article discusses the process of textualization for Kalevala-meter oral tradition in nineteenth-century Finland by using one lyric song and its variants as documented and represented by Elias Lönnrot. Emphasizing both the practical and ideological choices within the editorial process, I elucidate different possibilities, selections, and combinations in the production of national publications like the Kalevala and the Kanteletar.

Introduction
Textualization is the process whereby oral tradition is transformed into written text and disseminated to a much wider audience. This process of reconstruction and modification through collecting, editing, and publishing is elucidated here with some textual examples from Elias Lönnrot (1802–84), the author of the Kalevala, the national epic of Finland, the longest version of which was published in 1849.

Lönnrot collected a diverse and significant body of folk-poetry material over eleven journeys around Finland and Russian Karelia between 1828 and 1844. His primary purpose was to record as many oral folk songs as possible; among these, epic poems were considered the most representative of the oral tradition. Lönnrot also recorded a large collection of lyric songs, which he regarded as representing
the charming side of folk poetry. The collected material\(^1\) is preserved primarily in the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society (FLS; in Finnish, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, SKS).\(^2\) Lönnrot published various folk-poetry collections based on this material, as well as on the recordings of other collectors. The poems and verses selected were considered to represent authentically and comprehensively the Finnish oral folk-poetry tradition, as found in the *Kalevala*.

Lönnrot’s textualization work is characterized as situated between the oral and written traditions. Unlike the *runo*-singers, Lönnrot, an educated man of his time, read, wrote, and rewrote *runo*-verses, and thereby created many possible versions in his textualization work on the epic. This process, in fact, is generally known as the *Kalevala* process. Lauri Honko compared Lönnrot to the *runo*-singers, calling him a singing scribe and the *Kalevala* a tradition-oriented epic that has its roots in the oral-poetry tradition but that is reconstructed in a written form (Honko 2002, 18). Honko claimed that it was possible to define the *Kalevala* as close to an oral performance because Lönnrot’s editing methods, which involved the selecting, adding, and cutting of oral poetic materials, were similar to the *runo*-singer’s singing methods (ibid. 14).

This article builds upon Honko’s idea of the *Kalevala* as oral tradition, but I aim to combine this notion of orality with Lönnrot’s ideological purposes in the formation of epic. Textualization is viewed here as reflecting national and ideological objectives, in the course of which oral tradition obtains a written form. Textualization is seen as a process of (re)construction by an editor for the purpose of making an oral text available and comprehensible to its reading audience. This process involves the selective allocation of folk-poetry material to particular contexts within an overall construction. Lönnrot’s objectives in this textualization process are related to an ideal of Finland as a collective unit that has a national past and language. What kind of tradition, then, is selected and considered to represent the oral tradition and history of the Finns? How are textualization methods realized at the textual level, and how do they relate to the present image of oral tradition in Finland?

I will articulate some problems of textualization through an examination of one lyric folk poem, “En ole musta luonnon musta” (I am not black by nature),

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1 Lna collection 1–30. The Lönnrotiana collection consists of all the written documents of Elias Lönnrot.

2 A major part of the manuscript poetic material was published in the volumes of *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* [The ancient poems of the Finnish People], 1908–97.
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within Lönnrot’s publications. Lönnrot used and interpreted this poem in his two important folk-poetry works, the *Old Kalevala* (1835) and the *Kanteletar* (1840). Even though he recorded many different versions of the poem and its motifs during his collecting trips, he did not place the poem in all the Kalevala versions, nor did he publish versions of it elsewhere. Why did he not make more use of the poem? How did he represent it in his publications? How does this poem and its placement (or non-placement) illuminate the textual politics and representations of oral folk tradition in general?

**Contextualization of Folk-Poetry Materials**

Textualization is regarded as a process by which an oral text is transferred into a written context and redefined in this context (Bauman and Briggs 2003; Kaartinen 2011). Different textualizations, such as the *Kalevala* or the fairy-tale anthologies by the Brothers Grimm, called for the same kind of editing strategies: the oral text became more logical, more voluminous, supposedly more archaic and morally colored. As an analytical and methodological tool, textualization consists not only of transferring or editing oral materials at a textual level into a written form, but also of realizing the conscious objectives and intentions relating to the process of making folk poems into literary products (Bauman and Briggs 2003). The interventions amend and introduce foreign elements into the oral tradition, and they thereby create a discrepancy between the oral and written representations (ibid.; also Hämäläinen 2012, 2013).

One essential intervention relates to context. In order to reach its intended audience, the editor has to modify an oral text into a special form that it is readable and understandable to these readers. Textualization has to bear an intertextual fidelity to the oral tradition of which it is a representation. Intertextual fidelity denotes a potential comprehension between an oral singer (here an editor) and an audience, who together share a knowledge of the tradition and of its metonymic, allusive language. On the other hand, textualization also responds to the expectations of the readers. Readers’ capacity to understand and read a textualized representation is a

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3 I will here talk about textualization mainly as a text-editing process, not textualization occurring within a living oral performance. See Bauman and Briggs (1990; 2003), who also use the term in reference to an oral textualization process.

4 On textual editing, see also Marques 2010; Foley 2000; Bauman and Briggs 2003.
determining factor at this point (Foley 1995, 45–46, 49–53).  

Lönnrot’s textualization work can thus be characterized in relation to his bourgeois readers, whose limited knowledge of oral tradition he attempted to complement. In Finland, where both Finnish and Swedish were spoken, collecting and editing practices were strongly influenced by the aim of constructing national unity (see Hautala 1954, 136; Anttonen 2012, 334–38). Swedish was the official language (until 1892) and used by the intelligentsia, while Finnish was widely spoken among the common people. Thus textualization practices, and the collecting, editing, and depositing of the products of oral tradition in archives and collections, were intended to represent a Finnish tradition that could be shared by all the people of Finland.  

Lönnrot collected, published, and redefined oral poetry in his textual productions and discussed it with his contemporaries. He lived on the boundary between two worlds, belonging primarily to the Swedish-speaking urbane culture. However, because by birth he was a Finnish speaker, the son of a tailor, he grew up in modest circumstances. He gathered, edited, and defined oral tradition by publishing various literary collections of poetry for a cultured readership. Additionally, he wrote enlightening tales for the common folk and took part in contemporary discussions of the role of marriage and the family (Karkama 2001, 88–100).  

While other presentations and discussions of oral song tradition existed, Lönnrot’s continuing work on, and publication of, the oral tradition, along with his writings on education and other social matters of contemporary concern, gave Lönnrot a respected status in Finland. But it was not until the publication of the Kalevala that he truly excelled as a creator of the history of the Finns. As Irma-Riitta Järvinen puts it in her Kalevala Guide, “With the Kalevala Elias Lönnrot sought to paint a picture of Finland, in which the era of heroes, shamans and magic is coming to an end and the new Christian era is beginning” (2010, 11). Besides his master work, the Kalevala in its different versions, Lönnrot presented folk-poetry elsewhere, in the Kantele Leaflets (1829–31) and the Kanteletar (1840, 1841), an an-  

5 On traditional referentiality and register, see Foley 1995.  
6 On the use of oral tradition in constructing the Finnish nation, see further Hautala 1954; Anttonen 2012; Siikala 2012.  
8 Lemminkäinen, Väinämöinen and Wedding Songs 1833, the Proto-Kalevala 1833, the Old Kalevala 1835, the New Kalevala 1849, and the Kalevala, the abridged version (the School Kalevala) 1862.
thology of lyric folk poetry. He aimed to present in a widely available written form a diverse spectrum of folk poetry. The Kalevala has usually been regarded as an epic story about male heroes and their deeds, and the Kanteletar as a feminine collection of folk-lyrical poetry. Both of the publications have been presented as specifically Finnish folk poetry, history, language, and manners, even though the oral-poetry material was also collected widely outside of Finland, in Russian Karelia and Ingria.

Lönnrot edited and published these folk poems at a specific moment of historical and social development, and this context is reflected in all his editorial work (see Karkama 2001, 321−22). The written representations of folk poems came to be not only through a technical, editorial process, but were made in ways that were appropriate and suitable for a reading public for whom Lönnrot aimed to provide the desired image of a national past. In his textualization work with oral poems, he defended his editing methods to his readers and colleagues, and explained that he was following the singers’ examples. Lönnrot also emphasized that folk poetry is not made by individuals but collectively (VT 5; Borenius and Krohn 1892, 5) and, in his forewords, stressed the collective authorship of oral tradition. As he worked on the new Kalevala edition (after 1835), he stated that the purpose of the edition was as follows:

There is also the consideration of arrangement: to present images of the Finns’ traditional life and customs as accurately and multifariously as, through the use of poems, it has proved possible to do. (Borenius and Krohn 1895, 4, translated by Clive Tolley)

Living and communicating on the boundary between two worlds was also relevant to the purposes of textualization. Lönnrot did not present his collections to the Finnish-speaking common people but to a bourgeois audience whose knowledge of Finnish was poor and who had difficulties in understanding the old, trochaic Kalevala-meter poetry and its metonymic language. The question of how to textualize oral texts in new situations for varied, foreign audiences is a matter of how to make language and the knowledge of oral tradition significant in a modern context (see Kaartinen 2011, 4). The textual strategies that Lönnrot pursued in order to bring both the archaic language and the world of the epic closer to his nineteenth-century bourgeois audience are of specific interest in this respect.
LÖNNROT’S LYRIC POEM IN 1832

In Finland, Karelia, and Ingria, lyrical poems were sung by both women and men, although lyric songs are considered to have been more popular among female singers. The difference is noticeable in the poems’ themes: women sang more often of heavily emotional experiences while men sang about their own habits or themselves as singers (Timonen 2004, 56–60; Nenola 2002, 18–20). It has been noted that in rural culture, a woman’s life was structured around a short childhood, the wait for marriage, her hard and ambivalent position as a daughter-in-law and the early loss of youth, and the burden of carrying out the tasks of family life (Apo 1989, 161–62). As scholars have observed, women’s lyric songs reflect their hard lives and the heavy emotions related to its demands, although there are also positive emotional songs of joy and happiness (Timonen 2004).

In a Herderian sense, Lönnrot considered oral lyrical poetry to be the oldest language that expressed people’s inner feelings. He claimed that:

> From the very beginning all nations in the world have loved playing, singing and poetry. Music and singing are in a way another, more sacred language that can express the wishes and effects of one’s mind. (Kanteletar 1840, 1; VT 5, 319, translation by Clive Tolley)

Lönnrot perceived lyric poetry as pure and beautiful. Bearing the special language of people’s senses and emotions, folk lyric in the nineteenth century was seen as contrasting with art songs and was exalted as more valuable (Hautala 1954, 64–66). Lönnrot constantly repeated that the beauty of folk lyric arises from the lyrical material itself, which is a powerful expression of sorrow and loneliness (Anttila 1931, 334). In addition, lyric poetry portrayed many other emotions and themes, often aggressive, sexual, agonizing, and grotesque, that were not included in anthologies and textual representations, or that were even rejected in recording.9 Aesthetic criteria guided Lönnrot and his contemporaries in their textualization ideals (Timonen 2004, 308). Printing and presenting folk songs to wider audience with a limited knowledge of Finnish were strongly connected with an ideal of a beautiful and authentic song (Kurkela 2012, 358–59). Songs of sorrow and worry particularly

9 See SKVR, vol. XV (1997), which includes some of aggressive and sexual motifs collected by Lönnrot. Those poems were not considered a true and authentic Finnish folk-poetic tradition and were thus excluded from the early volumes. However, sexual and aggressive songs were recorded, but they were often kept in private manuscripts by collectors.
were considered the most representative and beautiful part of the Finnish oral tradition that the editors wanted to include in the published collections (Timonen 2004, 307–308; also Hämäläinen 2012, 25–27). According to Tarkka (2005, 70), it is well known that in the *Kalevala* Lönnrot used lines and sequences from other poems and other genres than the epic. Conversely, the *Kanteletar* is not purely an anthology of lyric poetry. In the oral-poetry tradition, it was not rare for epic songs to have lyrical lines or vice versa. Usually, other genres occurred in dialogues or in episodes where the story was evaluated at some point. In this respect, Lönnrot followed the example of folk poems and singers.

Lönnrot gradually inserted oral lyrical poems in the *Kalevala*. This increased noticeably in the 1840s, at which time Lönnrot published the lyric anthology the *Kanteletar* and articulated the value and essence of oral lyric in his writings. Lönnrot’s idea of lyrical poems as a part of epic can be clearly seen in his notes on the *Old Kalevala*. For his seventh collecting trip in 1836–37, he made an interleaved version of the *Old Kalevala*, where he wrote notes, lines, and thoughts on the poems he’d obtained on the trip (Lna 37; Borenius and Krohn 1895).

On his third collecting trip in 1832 in Finnish and Russian Karelia, Lönnrot wrote down many different folk poems; 329 lyrical poems were collected on this trip. One of note formed part of a lyric song of worry. The poem represents the motif “En ole musta” (*I am not black*) that portrays changes in a worried person’s physical appearance. Generally, the poem or its motifs are combined with other lyric poems.10 In folk-lyric poetry, emotions are often symbolized by colors. Sorrow and worry are dark or black, whereas joy is described as white or light. It is also common for the one who is worried and sad to change physically. One’s habitus becomes black at the same time as the surrounding nature darkens. An unattractive appearance is signified by paleness and thinness (Relander 1894, 160, 231).11 The weight of worry makes one unattractive: black, pale, and lean. The poem about a worried singer who describes herself as black was well known in Finland, Karelia, and Russia, and, according to Matti Kuusi, is one of the representative songs of worry (Kuusi 1963, 262–64).

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10 For example *SKVR* I, 800, I, 1366, VII, 1946, 1768, 2260.

11 Sometimes black has a positive connotation in lyric folk poetry, but then it does not necessarily describe sorrow (*SKVR* XIII, 2369). Positive black might also be related to a male figure. See, for example, “young man, black brow and showy” (*SKVR* VII, 2411). Relander 1894, 231. In some songs by male singers black is associated with a woman’s temper. Black as an adjective characterizes a nasty temper. (Timonen 2004, 56)
Lönnrot’s note about a worried singer made on the collecting trip in 1832 in Finnish Karelia ends with the lines of the motif “I was not black before.” The worried singer wishes she were a cuckoo, but many worries have made her sorrowful. The singer asks birds to carry the weight of the sorrow to the fish in the water. In the end, she compares herself to other girls, of whom she has not been the worst, and then she identifies her feelings with the pale fish in the water:

Käkönen kukahteloo,   The cuckoo calls,
Kulta suusta kumpahuu,   Gold wells from its mouth,
Vaski leualta valluu   Copper pours from its chin
Kultasehen kuppisehen,   Into a golden cup,
Vaskisehen vakkasehen.   Into a copper basket.
Kuin minä käkenä oisin,   If only I were a cuckoo,
Kukkuisin jokahik kuusen,   I would cuckoo in every spruce,
Joka lehto leikin löisi.[!]
Mulla on usempi huoli,   As many cares are mine
Kuin on k[usuessa] k[äpyjä],   As cones on a spruce,
Petäjässä pienösiä.   As little ones on a pine tree.
Kanna, korppi, h[uoliani],   Carry, oh raven, my cares,
Murehtani, m[usta] l[intu],   My sorrows, black bird,
Lampiin kalattomaan,   To a fishless pond,
Aivan a[hetenom]aan.   To one quite perchless.
Kuin k[annat] k[alalliseen],   If you take them to one with fish,
Siitä kalat h[uellest]uu,   The fish will grow anxious from them,
A[heten] alas män[öö].   The perch will dive down.
En minääk ennen ollut   I was not before
Mustin muita neitosia,   The blackest of other maidens,
Kalpeampi vein kalooja,   Paler than water fishes;
Tulun muita musteäksi,   I became blacker than others
Kalpeämäksi kalooja.   Paler than the fishes.12

(ŠKVR VII, 1946)

12 Unless otherwise indicated, poems in this article have been translated by Clive Tolley.
Lönnrot placed the last five lines of the song in the *Old Kalevala* (1835, poem 31). This tells the story of a young girl whose brother, Joukahainen, promised in marriage to an old man, Väinämöinen, against her will. The girl reacts by weeping in her sadness. The lines where she describes her physical appearance (black, pale) are placed at the point in the story where she is confronted by her mother’s reaction. The mother does not understand her daughter’s anxiety, and instead of consoling her daughter, the mother asks her to prepare herself to become a bride. The girl weeps at the windowsill of a storehouse and compares her sorrow to times past when she was more beautiful and less dark. As the lines of the *Kalevala* indicate, Lönnrot followed exactly the version of the folk poem; only two declensional changes were made in the published *Kalevala* (indicated in bold).

\begin{verbatim}
En minää ennen ollut,    I was not before
Mustin muita neitosisa,   The blackest of other maidens,
Kalpeampi ween kaloja,    Paler than water fishes;
Tulin muita mustemmaksi,  I became blacker than others
Kalpeammaksi kaloja.     Paler than the fishes.
\end{verbatim}

*(Old Kalevala 31: 103–107)*

**Other Variants of the Song**

It seems that Lönnrot made no notes on this song before 1832. There are many unpublished recordings in the manuscript that is called “Old Songs” (*Wanhoja Lauluja*, Lna 29a), but these notes are believed to have been reworked later and it is difficult to date or place them because of uneven handwriting, corrections, and additional lines (Perttunen 1976, 139). The manuscript has been dated to around 1834, just after Lönnrot signed the foreword to the *Old Kalevala* (Kaukonen 1984, 7, 9).13

However, Lönnrot’s first folk-poetry anthology, the *Kantele Leaflets*, published in four volumes, includes some lines with this same motif. In the second volume (1829), Lönnrot published many lyrical poems of worry. Already here, in this first work that he edited, he combined different motifs and sequences together in order to make a longer, more complete presentation. One of the longest parts contains the following lines:

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13 The foreword of the *Old Kalevala* (first published version) is dated February 28, 1835. The *Old Kalevala* was published in two volumes, the later appearing in March 1836 (Anttila 1931, 236).
Others become black
Because of the worries of lean me,
My black sorrow.

(Kantele II: 67)

The lines describe how the feeling of sorrow has sunk so deep inside the worried one that it affects other people as well. Unlike in the *Old Kalevala*, here the emphasis lies between the me and others who become black because of my sorrow.

After the *Old Kalevala*, Lönnrot continued recording folk poems to supplement his collections, and he added further lyric poems to the *Kalevala*. He found more examples of the same motif during the collecting trip of 1837. In 1838, he again noted an example of the motif in “Mustuin mustalla tulella” (I grew black at the black fire). In this poem, fire and smoke are strongly combined with the idea of sorrow. The worried one is physically burned up by the feeling of pain and sorrow:

En minäk’ oisi ollut   I would not have been before
Mustin muita neitosia,   The blackest of other maidens,
Kalvakin kylän kanoja,   Paler than the village’s hens;
Mustuin mustalla tulella,   I grew black at the black fire,
Savustuin savumajoilla,   Smoky at the smoke huts,
Keryin keittovalkioilla.   Grew up at the cooking fire.

(SKVR VII, 2057)

While gathering lyric material, Lönnrot also published some of the lyric songs in periodicals in order to explain folk songs to readers who often had limited knowledge of oral song culture and of the Kalevala-meter language. These publications were often combined with Lönnrot’s comments as well as his translations of strange words. The next few verses dealing with the troubled person’s physical changes were published in the periodical *Mehiläinen* in 1837 with some other lyric songs of worry (*VT* 2, 211). In contrast to the *Old Kalevala’s* lines, this version of the song starts with a positive allusion: I used to have a different, beautiful appearance. The contrast with the past is prominent. The words *muoto* (appearance) and *kasvot* (face) explicitly indicate the message of the song, the physical changes consequent upon sorrow.

14  SKVR XIII, 2036, 2369, 2560; XIII, 3128.
Why is Aino Not Described as a Black Maiden?

Oli mulla muoto muinen,  I had another appearance,
kaswot kaunihinnäköset;  I had a beautiful-looking face;
nyt on kaswot kaiennehet,  Now my face has become lean,
muoto muualle ruwennut,  My appearance has another shape,
murhe tuonut mustan muowon,  Worry has brought on a black look,
huoli kaswon kaintanna.  Sorrow made a lean face.

(Mehiläinen 1837 February; VT 2, 211)

Lönnrot explained the song this way: “A little song that I have occasionally heard worried women singing. Sorrow is otherwise described by a proverb, ‘sorrow brings a black look, worry grey hair’” (VT 2, 214). Lönnrot’s original manuscript (Lna 29a) shows that he removed one comment from the published text in the Mehiläinen. The manuscript “Old Songs” gives Lönnrot’s explanation of this song, with his allusion to a proverb (Lna 29a, 131): “Pieni runonen, jota toisinaan naisten huolissaan olen laulelevan kuullut. Muuten sanotaan sananlaskun tavoini ‘murhe tuopi mustan muovon, huoli harmajan hapenen’ joka tosi onki” (A little song that I have occasionally heard worried women singing. Sorrow is otherwise described by a proverb, “sorrow brings a black look, worry grey hair,” which is indeed true). Lönnrot did not regard it as necessary to comment on the physical changes caused by sorrow.

Still, Lönnrot did not use the poem “En ole musta luonnon musta” any further in the different versions of the Kalevala. Instead, he presented some poetic variants and various adaptations of the poem or of lines from it in different lyric variants in the Kanteletar (Kanteletar I: 56; II: 113, 221). The poem “Hoikka, kaita, musta” (Lean, slim, black) belongs to a group of poems that describe sorrow in general (“Huolissa yhteisesti”). The singer wonders whether the black habitus comes from her birth or from her background (from the mother). The answer is clear: black looks arise from the great sorrow that the singer has been living through:

16 Underline by the author.
Mintähen olenki musta –
Oonko musta luonnon musta,
Vai musta emon tekemä? –
En oo musta luonnon musta,
En musta emon tekemä;
Mie oon musta mureitani,
Musta suuria mureita.
Huoli hoikaksi vetävi,
Kaiho muita kaiemmaksi;
Mure muista mustemmaksi.

(\textit{Kanteletar} I: 56)$^{18}$

Another poem, called “Nokeuisien nuotiolla” (Growing sooty at the fire), begins a group of poems under the title “Köyhänä ja vähäväkisenä” (Poor and underprivileged). The lines tell how a singer would not have had these worries at her childhood home, but yet again the experience of life has brought on a sorrowful mind and habitus:

En minäki oisi ollut, 
Isän koissa ollessani, 
Mustin muita neitosia, 
Kalvakin kylän kanoja. 
Vaan ma mustuin mustikoilla. 
Painuin marjoilla pahoilla, 
Muutuin mustilla tulilla, 
Nokeuhin nuotioilla, 
Keryin keittovalkioilla, 
Savustuin savumajoilla; 
Kun söin lassa mustikoita, 
Paljo marjoja pahoja. 
Nukuin nuotiotulilla, 
Makasin savumajoilla.

(\textit{Kanteletar} II: 113)

$^{18}$ The poetic example Lönnrot followed was his own note: \textit{SKVR} XIII, 2036.

$^{19}$ “Blueberry” is mustikka in Finnish, based on musta, “black.”
According to Väinö Kaukonen, the references Lönnrot followed are from Juhana Fredrik Cajan’s poem from Viena Karelia in 1836 (SKVR I₃ 1366) and the same recording Lönnrot used for the Old Kalevala (SKVR VII₂ 1946) (Kaukonen 1984, 423). Here again Lönnrot selected only some parts and lines, following his own editorial principles, but kept all the remaining lines for further possible uses.

**Unpublished Versions of the Kanteletar**

Besides his work on the Kalevala and its versions, Lönnrot constantly added to the lyric song material with the aim of publishing an anthology as long as “a half of the Kalevala or even more” (Anttila 1931, 334). The first version of the lyric anthology was ready in the summer of 1838, but because of additional recordings and field journeys, it remained unpublished until 1929, long after Lönnrot’s death. This manuscript material was published by Oskar Relander (1929a).

This manuscript, called later the Proto-Kanteletar, includes the motif “I was not black before” and starts with the same line as in Mehiläinen in 1837, “I had another appearance,” which sets a great distance from the speaker’s present black appearance. The verse also includes changes in alliteration and extra verbs in present participle: “tullut” (has become/gone) / “on tuonut” (has brought), which explain in Finnish (not necessarily in English) the physical changes more directly. Changes compared to the 1837 version are indicated in bold.

Oli mulla muoto muinen,  
I had another appearance,
Kasvot kaunihin näköset;  
I had a beautiful-looking face;
Nyt on kasvot kalvennehet,  
Now my face has become pale,
**Tullut** muoto mustemmaksi.  
My appearance has gone blacker.
Mure **on** tuonut mustan muon,  
Worry has brought on a black look,
Huoli kasvot kaintanna.  
Sorrow made a lean face.

*(Proto-Kanteletar II, poem 49, 39)*

Oli mulla muoto muinen,  
I had another appearance,
kaswot kaunihinnäköset;  
I had a beautiful-looking face;
nyt on kaswot kainenhet,  
Now my face has become lean,
muoto muuale ruwennut,  
My appearance has another shape,
murhe tuonut mustan muowon,  
Worry has brought on a black look,
huoli kaswon kaintanna.  
Sorrow made a lean face.

*(Mehiläinen 1837 February; VT 2, 211)*
Lönnrot’s edits to the lyric song verses, as he added extra lines and deleted or changed words, can be seen in an extant manuscript showing all the changes he made to the Proto-Kanteletar. The song developed a longer and more wordy form through the changes. Six early verses have been extended with nine additional, parallel verses. Italic indicates additional lines to the Proto-Kanteletar from Lönnrot’s corrections and additions (Relander 1929b).

\[\text{Olipa minulla ennen,} \]
\[\text{Oli muoto muihen rinnoin} \]
\[\text{An appearance like others,} \]
\[\text{I had another appearance,} \]

\[\text{Oli mulla muoto muinen,} \]
\[\text{Kasvot kaunihin näköset;} \]
\[\text{I had a beautiful-looking face;} \]
\[\text{When younger and supple,} \]

\[\text{Kun ma notkuin nuorempana,} \]
\[\text{Kasvoin heinän karvallisna,} \]
\[\text{I grew like the hay,} \]
\[\text{Many a man looked at my appearance} \]
\[\text{Gazed at my body,} \]

\[\text{Moni katso muotohoni,} \]
\[\text{Varteheni Valkuttei,} \]
\[\text{As I grew up like a hen,} \]
\[\text{Shot up like young hay,} \]

\[\text{Kasvaessani kananen,} \]
\[\text{Nostaessani nuori heinä,} \]
\[\text{Nyt on kasvot kalvennehet,} \]
\[\text{Now my face has become pale,} \]
\[\text{Now my face has become lean,} \]

\[\text{Nyt on kasvot kaiennehet,} \]
\[\text{Muoto muualle ruvennut,} \]
\[\text{My appearance gone another way,} \]
\[\text{My appearance has gone blacker.} \]

\[\text{Tullut muoto mustemmaksi.} \]
\[\text{Mure on tuonut mustan muo’on,} \]
\[\text{Worry has brought on a black look,} \]
\[\text{Sorrow made a lean face.} \]

The extended version of the song, which again follows parts of Cajan’s poem (SKVR I 3 1366), has the same content as in other examples: I used to have a beautiful appearance, but now sorrow has brought a black, unattractive look. The difference is found in a dense parallelism combined with explanatory lines. Here Lönnrot decodes the symbolic and obscure Kalevala-meter language with parallel verses. Other words, clear and direct, are given for many of the poetic words and expressions: muinen > ennen (before) / notkuin > kasvoin (grew up) / katsoa > valkutella (look) / muoto > varsı (appearance). Lönnrot also developed diverse expressions and verses in several ways in his notes. A notable change in his manuscript corrections is

\[20 \text{ Alku-Kantelettaren korjaukset ja lisäykset ("Corrections and additions to the Proto-Kanteletar") was also published in 1929 by Oskar Relander (Relander 1929b).} \]
the verb *katsoa* (look) that refers to a male gaze (“moni katso muotoani,” many gazed at my appearance) and the word *kalvennehet* in the line “Nyt on kasvot kalvennehet.” The pale face (“kasvot kalvennehet”) is given an alternative expression, lean face (“kasvot kaiennehet”), that connotes more a physical change in the worried person’s look. According to Lönnrot’s notes, he also had recordings of young maidens’ songs where they present their tempting, desirable appearance in the eyes of men. The poetic manner in which the poem has been constructed is the same as in the poem “En ole musta luonnon musta.” Lönnrot presented the song “I had another appearance” in the prologue of the *Kanteletar* among other lyric songs of worry in order to show the beauty of the songs. This song describes physical changes, which are related to poetic changes occurring in lyrical songs with the passage of time. Lönnrot noted: “It may, frighteningly, have happened with many songs over the course of time as with the girl who in her older days recalled herself, saying:

Oli mulla muoto muinen,  
Oli muoto mien rinnan,  
Kun ma notkuin nuorempana,  
Hersyn heinän karvallisma.  
Olin ennen, kun olinki,  
Olin armas aikoinani,  
Kuun kasvinpäivänä;  
Olin kun omenakukka,  
Tahi tuores tuomenkukka,  
Tahi mansikka mäellä,  
Puola poltтокankahalla.”

(*VT* 5, 347)

A few years later, the *Kanteletar* was released in three volumes (1840, 1841). The pre-version of it remained unfinished and unpublished, yet the *Proto-Kanteletar* and its corrections acted as a great source of lyric material to Lönnrot when creating new collections of folk songs. Since its publication, the *Kanteletar* has earned a valued status as an anthology of oral lyric poetry. However, Lönnrot also planned to publish a new version (or versions) of the published *Kanteletar* in the late years of his life. 

21 See “Olinpa minä ennen” and “Moni katso muotohoni” (Lönnrot’s recordings in 1837 and 1838, *SKFR* XIII, 2372, 2627; VII, 1977, 2493, 2495).
life. As the manuscript material indicates, Lönnrot’s editorial methods were similar to those for the Kalevala and its versions. He constantly re-created and improved his publications of lyric songs as well.²²

Lönnrot’s unpublished material shows a version of the same motif (“I am not black”) receiving a wholly new form as compared to the published Kanteletar even though the content and emotional tenor of the song remained the same. Below, verses that have no highlights are from the original version of the Kanteletar, “Tullut muoto mustemmaksi” (The appearance has gone blacker) (Kanteletar 1840, II: 221). The italic lines are from Lönnrot’s additional notes to the manuscript for this song (Lna 47: 226). As the photograph of the Kanteletar notes shows, in the same manner as when working on the Kalevala versions, Lönnrot here too indicated with a vertical line over the additions if he had adopted the additional lines and comments. His transcribing method also included abbreviations (“p. k.”, “muoto m.”) and half words (“vesi mut”).²³

Enkän minä ennen ollut
Nor was I before,
En ollut risuinen aita
I was not a brushwood fence
Jaloin päällä käytävänä
A path to be trodden on,
Enk’ ollut vesi mutainen
Nor was I muddy water,
Inhotellen juotavana
Horrid to drink,
Olin neihto naitaessani
I was a maiden fit to marry,
Katsos nyt minä katala
Look now, I am wretched
Olen kuin risuinen aita
As a brushwood fence,
Jaloin p. k.
. . . trodden on
Helmin hersuteltavana
brushed by hems,
Tähi kuin vesi mut.
Or like mud. water,

²² Lna 46−67, 312, 353, 367. Manuscripts on the different versions of the Kanteletar have been available in the Literary Archives, but they have remained unstudied and largely forgotten (except O. Relander, who published works of the Proto-Kanteletar [1929a, 1929b=Lna 49−51; also Krohn 1920]). Väinö Kaukonen, who has traced all the referential lines Lönnrot used for the Kanteletar, did not refer to the manuscript material (Kaukonen 1984). On Lönnrot’s last work of folk poems, see Anttila 1935, 308–11. I am grateful to Raija Majamaa for adding to my understanding of these manuscripts.

²³ Only Lönnrot himself knew what was behind his abbreviations and the words he cut. It is possible to open his notes according to a context of the poem notes, but the interpretation can cause mistakes and mislead further analysis. For example, does muoto m. -> imply “muoto mutainen” (muddy look) or “muoto musta” (black look) or “muoto muinen” (old look / another look)?
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Figure 1. *The Kanteletar*, the first edition with Elias Lönnrot’s annotations and corrections. Second booklet KIA SKS (Lna 47).
Inhotellen juotavana
Horrid to drink.
Olin pa minäi ennen,
I was before,
Olin kun omenakukka,
I was like an apple blossom,
Olin marja maatessani,
I was a berry as I lay,
Lehti liikutellessani,
A leaf as I moved,
Istuessani ihana,
Gorgeous as I sat,
Armas astuellesani;
Beloved as I stepped;
Moni katso muotohoni,
Many a man looked at my appearance,
Warteheni wolkotteli.
Gazed at my body.

/ Wartehen valkutelti

Nyt on muoto muunne saanut,
Now my appearance has suffered change,
Kaswo kaunis wanchantunut,
My fair face aged,
Tullut muoto mustemaksi,
My looks grown blacker,
Kaswo kaiaksi ruwennut.
My face grown narrow.
/ My face gone all pale.

Miks on mulla muoto m.
Why has my appearance [changed?],
Mure tuonut mustan muowon,
Worry brought on a black appearance,
Suru särkenyt syämen
Sorrow broken my heart
Kun mun kuoli kumpanini
When my companion died,
Waipui vaippani alani
The one under my cloak sank away,
Kuoli nuorella ijällä
Died at a young age,
Wihanna varreltansa
His body perishing in his prime,
Heitti mulle pienet lapset
Leaving me with little children,
Lapset pienet pikkaraiset
Little, tiny children.
Huoli kaswon kaientanna;
Care has made my face lean;
/ Sik’ on muoto mustettunut
/ So my appearance has grown black

Hoikk’ on huolewa wewon
Slender is a care-worn horse,
Murehtiwa waimo musta.24
Black a sorrowing woman.

24 See SKVR VII, 2165 Polén as one possible example Lönnrot followed in his editorial work. There are even some longer versions of the song by Lönnrot in the manuscript Lna 57, but as the space is limited, I have not used them in the analysis. However, the song Lna 57, 936 also indicates that a black habitus is related to a bad reputation. The song tells how sorrow has arisen from a meeting with a stranger in a forest. The meeting makes the sorrowful one dirty and black, and she is blamed by other girls over her reputation.
Parallel new lines not only emphasize the feeling of sorrow, but explain in detail where the great grief has come from: the life lived—the husband has died, leaving me alone with the children—has made me black, worried. Here the contrast between the physical appearances is even more revealing than in the early versions. The sorrowful one used to be “an apple flower/blossom” (omenakukka), “a berry” (marja), “sweet/gorgeous and beloved” (ihana, armas), where armas (“beloved”) connotes love and love-making. Sorrow has made her appearance old, black, and lean, but also has made her unloved and lonely.

Using the greatest possible number of variants ensured the fidelity of the publication to oral sources and created a relationship with readers. As Lönnrot stated in the foreword to the Kanteletar:

This great number of variants may free us from the impression that we have added something strange and external. [. . .] Those who have adapted to see the beauty and character of folk song could also discern if there is something external which does not belong to the folk song itself.

(Kanteletar 1840; VT 5: 353, translated by the author)

The song examples Lönnrot employed in the different editions of lyric poems exemplify not only the diverse development of the lyric motif “I was not black before” but also his augmentative method of adding parallel lines, dense repetitions, and explanations of the content and language of the song within the frame of the poem. Lönnrot developed his own versions in reference to the cycle of women’s life in rural culture: the sorrowful emotions and unattractive physical changes arise from the hard life experiences. Satu Apo observes that in the female lyric song tradition corporal and sexual themes (such as in the poem “I am not black by nature”) were presented more openly than in early art poetry (Apo 1989, 167–68). My question is hence, why, while aiming at presenting the Kalevala as similar to oral tradition, did Lönnrot not continue to modify this particular lyrical poem in the textualization process of the Kalevala?

**THE MAIDEN OF THE KALEVALA**

Despite the fact that the young girl (who was later given the name Aino in the New Kalevala) was described as a worried, black girl in the Old Kalevala, Lönnrot decided to keep silent about blackness or any indicators of her physical appearance in the
later versions of the *Kalevala*. However, Aino’s sorrow was illustrated in the *New Kalevala* and the *School Kalevala* by many other sorrowful motifs (see Hämäläinen 2012, 133–35), for example: “mieli ei tervoa parempi, / syän ei syttä valkeampi” (My mood no better than tar, / my heart no whiter than coal) (*New Kalevala*, poem 4: 215–16; *School Kalevala*). Lönnrot also commented on this verse in the margin: “Katkerä kun terva, musta kun sysi” (Bitter as tar, black as charcoal) and explained the sorrowful mind (Lna 121, 4: 211–14). However, Lönnrot did not explicitly depict Aino’s sorrow as black any longer, but rather described her as gloomy and unhappy.

There is no mention of a female figure Aino as such in folk poetry. Lönnrot created the maiden Aino himself, even though the basis of the verses and poems was found in folk-poetry material that presents the theme of a meeting with a stranger as suitor. A major change has been observed to occur at the time when Lönnrot was working more intensely on lyrical poems, though the *Kanteletar* greatly influenced Lönnrot’s textual development of the poem of Aino (Kaukonen 1984, 36).

Lönnrot constructed the figure of Aino over the four versions of the *Kalevala*. Aino is a young maiden who has a tragic destiny. After her brother’s pact with Väinämöinen and her mother’s unwise reaction to her daughter’s grief, and after refusing to marry Väinämöinen, Aino drowns herself. The poem shows the mother’s deep grief: her crying makes streams, rivers, and lakes fruitful. Later on, Väinämöinen, while fishing, catches Aino, now transformed into a fish that starts mocking the old man. Primal plot sequences and acts were already present in the first version of the epic (1833) and remained throughout the different versions: the singing match and Joukahainen’s promise of his sister Aino to Väinämöinen; the mourning of Aino as well as her mother’s (and other family members’) unwise reaction; Aino’s death and the transformed Aino’s mocking of Väinämöinen.

The figure of Aino in the *Kalevala* has been interpreted according to many universal themes: the poem tells of youth, innocence, and the desire for freedom and death (Piela 1999, 118; see also Kupiainen 2004). In the reception history of the *Kalevala*, Aino has been regarded as the most beautiful and vulnerable female

25 Folk-poetry models for Aino: Kilpalaullanta (the Singing Match), Hirrtäytynyt neito (the Hanged Maid), Vedenkantaja Anni (the Water-Carrier), and Vellamon neidon onginta (the Suitors from the Sea).

26 The *Proto-Kalevala*, poem 15, the *Old Kalevala*, poem 31, the *New Kalevala*, poems 3–5, the *School Kalevala*, poems 3–5.
figure of the epic. The image also comes over strongly in visual art, especially in some romantic works of the nationally respected artist Akseli Gallen-Kallela, who gave a visual habitus to Aino in the 1890s (Järvinen 2010, 101−102; Piela 1999, 123−26).

Aino has also been portrayed by literary scholars and folklorists as a passive young maiden who lives under the sway of her emotions (Tarkiainen 1911, 23). Her tragic image combines the contradiction between her inner feelings of freedom and an external source of distress brought about by other people (Kaukonen 1987, 187). Aino bears a radiant appearance and a coal-black heart, as Julius Krohn (1908, 124), one of the male interpreters, defines her. Significantly, the interpreters have defined Aino as representative of the true image of the Finnish maiden, and later her habitus was seen in relation to the image of Finland as a nation (cf. Piela 1999).

Viljo Tarkiainen, one of the early researchers of Aino, starts his book Aino ja muut Kalevalan naiset (Aino and other women of the Kalevala) by asking what Aino in the Kalevala is really like: dark or blonde? Beautiful or ugly? Lively or quiet? (Tarkiainen 1911, 19). What is interesting, and even surprising, at this point is that Lönnrot did not portray Aino with any concrete description. Aino is not described as pretty or with any physically positive characteristics.

However, worries give Aino a different look. But compared to what? Changes in her physical appearance are indicated indirectly in the words of her mother in the New Kalevala. The mother asks Aino to stop weeping and to eat and to dress to make herself more beautiful than other maidens. The verses indicate Aino’s potential physical attractiveness. She used to be pretty, but now overbearing worries have changed her habitus.

Syö vuosi suloa voita: One year eat melted butter:  
tulet muita vuolahampi;  
you’ll grow plumper than others;  
toinen syö sianlihoa:  
the next year you eat pork:  
tulet muita sirkeāmpi;  
you’ll grow sleeker than others;  
kolmas kuorekokkaraita:  
a third year eat cream pancakes:  
tulet muita kaunihimpi.  
you’ll grow fairer than others.

(New Kalevala, poem 4: 121–26)  
(Kalevala 1849, 42, translated by Keith Bosley)

27 On the visual representation of the Kalevala and “the Kalevalaic people,” see Fewster 2008.
On the other hand, Aino is once described as beautiful, but not until she has passed away. Only death can make Aino (again) beautiful. Lönnrot describes in detail Aino’s wandering along the lake, her undressing and sliding into the water. Even her death is not truly suicide, by drowning, Lönnrot himself thought, but rather the water spirits tempt Aino to come to them (Lna 121). The narrator of the Kalevala notes the death of Aino as follows: “se oli surma nuoren neien, / loppu kaunihin kanasen.” The attribute *kaunihin kanasen* is literally “beautiful hen” in English. In his translation, Keith Bosley’s interpretation is intriguingly more focused on the physical look of Aino: “Such the death of the young maid / the end of the fair little hen” (*New Kalevala* 1849, 4: 371–72). Besides its meaning as graceful, the word *fair* can point to blondness, paleness, or even purity.

The death of Aino is very different between the folk poems and the Kalevala (see DuBois 1995, 263–73). The Hanged Maid folk poem recorded widely in Karelia and Ingria consists of the narration of a girl who goes to the forest to fetch sauna whisks and meets there a strange, mythical wooer. The girl becomes scared and runs back home. Later she hangs herself because nobody at home understands, nor believes her (Kuusi, Bosley, and Branch 1977, 567). The poem then describes the great sorrow of the mother. It does not describe the girl’s looks, nor her emotions.

As many scholars have pointed out, Lönnrot used romantic images in creating the Aino poem of the Kalevala, especially her suffering, followed by her death (Kaukonen 1984; DuBois 1995; Piela 1999; Apo 2002; Kupiainen 2004). The image of a dying maiden was similar to other depictions elsewhere in the Kalevala, its poem 35, in which the sister of Kullervo drowns herself after an incestuous relationship with her brother, and many comparable images are found in the romantic literature of the time (Launis 2005, 198–99). With this interpretation, Lönnrot engaged the understanding of his readers, who, at the same time, were reading more widely in literature about young beautiful, ethereal girls suffering and longing for death, such as Ophelia in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*.

**THE AMBIVALENT IMAGE OF THE YOUNG BRIDE**

While Lönnrot did not explicitly describe Aino’s physical appearance, he indicated her habitus as pure and pristine by using allusions and references to the status of the bride and to wedding songs. Instead of describing her physical appearance, the narrator of the New Kalevala describes Aino with an established epithet: “young Joukahainen’s sister.” The word *young* characterizes both Aino of the Kalevala and
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the girl of the Hanged Maid poem. However, in the Kalevala, Aino’s youth is further stressed because her opponent, Väinämöinen, is nothing more than an old (unattractive) man to her, and this is her primary reason for declining the proposal. The image of the young maiden is combined by Lönnrot with the ideals of the bride. This is emphasized by combining two different poems: the Singing Match and the Hanged Maid. In the Kalevala, the status of the bride is present from the beginning: Aino has been promised in marriage to Väinämöinen. When she hears this, she cries. Lönnrot also implied Aino’s habitus as ambivalent by means of other attributes. This is emphasized in the passage where Aino meets Väinämöinen while walking along the forest trail: “He saw the maid in the grove / the fine-hemmed in the grasses” (New Kalevala, poem 4: 12–13). Fine-hemmed, in Finnish hienohelma, can denote a maiden’s decent reputation, but in the Karelian language it also connotes either someone flashy or a whore (KKS). In this context, Aino is represented not necessarily as a whore but at least as a flighty girl who is, by her reputation or appearance, available to a strange man. Väinämöinen proposes to her and makes an allusion to Aino’s physical appearance:

“Eläpä muille, neiti nuori,  
Kuin minunlle, neiti nuori,  
Kanna kaulanhelmilöitä,  
Rinnanristiä rakena, 
Pane pääätä palmikolle, 
Sio silkilä hivusta!”

(New Kalevala, poem 4: 15–20)

Riisti ristit rinnaltansa,  
sormukset on sormestansa,  
helmet kaulasta karisti,  
punalangat päänsä päältä,

(New Kalevala, poem 4: 31–34)

She wrenches the cross from her breast  
and the rings from her finger  
the beads she shook from her neck  
and the red threads off her head

(Kalevala 1849, 39–40, translated by Keith Bosley)

Aino removes her jewelry and headscarf and runs back home in panic. In the folk-poetry tradition, hair symbolizes sexuality, and both clothes and jewelry represent a girl’s suitability for marriage. The discarding of clothes and jewelry also alludes to the loss of virginity (Siikala 2012, 300). In the Hanged Maid poem, the girl takes
off her jewelry and clothes at the same time as she meets her suitor, and later she drowns with her clothes and jewelry on. However, the folk poem does not describe the wooer asking the maiden to adorn herself with jewelry for him; this is only stated by Lönnrot (Piela 1999, 119).

On the other hand, Aino (or a narrator) characterizes herself as a long-tailed duck (alli) or as a hen (kana) in Lönnrot’s version; these are common designations of young maidens, but in the oral folk-poetry tradition they can also indicate a nubile girl (Kuusi 1963, 260−72). In the agrarian world, the aim of young girls was to get married. An unmarried state was not an option, and it could cause social and economic distress to young women (Nenola 2002, 18). Young girls prepared for the role of bride early in life, and their mothers sang songs of guidance to prepare their daughters for the role and the choice of the right groom (Timonen 2004, 46). Hence it is possible to see the folk poem, and the Kalevala, as carrying messages of youth and beauty: a bride-to-be bemoaning her destiny. The ambivalence in Aino’s habitus is also present in the context of rural culture and its demands for a young maiden whose decent life as an adult woman depended on a good marriage. Moreover, the separation from the childhood home is described in wedding songs as an emotional departure from the caring home of parents to the strange, new home of the husband (Nenola 2002, 19−20; Timonen 2004, 47−51).

Lönnrot here uses wedding songs to create an image of the bride (Kaukonen 1984, 187). The mother asks why Aino is weeping; after all, she is getting a splendid husband. Aino reveals the reason by means of a wedding poem.28 The song by its nature was sung at a wedding ritual when the bride was leaving her childhood home and stepping out (concretely over the threshold) to another house and family.

Oi emoni kantajani  
Itkenpä minä jotaki,  
Itken kassan kauneutta,  
Tukan nuoren tuuheutta,  
Hivuksien hienoutta,  
Jos ne piennä peitetähän,  
Katetahan kasvavana.  

(Oi emoni kantajani,  
Itkenpä minä jotaki,  
Itken kassan kauneutta,  
Tukan nuoren tuuheutta,  
Hivuksien hienoutta,  
Jos ne piennä peitetähän,  
Katetahan kasvavana.  
(New Kalevala, 1849, poem 3: 551−57)  
(Kalevala 1849, poem 3, 37,  
translated by Keith Bosley)

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28 The wedding poem, “What are you weeping for, maid?”; see SKVR XIII, 3753, 3754.
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Figure 2. Jyväälähti, Okahvi, photographer I. K. Inha 1894 (Inha 123, KRA SKS).
On the basis of the folk-poetry models, Lönnrot emphasizes the early life of Aino. Lines such as “the beauty of my tresses” or “the fineness of my hair” mark a loss of youth through marriage. On the other hand, the lines could be read as describing her physical beauty as well because the image of youth, especially the idea of a young maiden, carried positive connotations. This aspect was emphasized by Lönnrot in the *Kalevala*. The main difference between the *Kalevala* and the wedding song is the change of speaker. The wedding song’s “What are you weeping for, maiden?” was sung to the bride by friends or family members, while in the *Kalevala*, Aino sings the song to her mother, whom Lönnrot makes the most important member of the family to Aino. Again, in view of earlier observations, the weeping can also be interpreted as Aino’s lament for her lost maidenhead, not only for a loss of youth. This is realized in folk-poetic models of the Hanged Maid, where the forest, the place far away from home, is an erotic area: the maiden meets a strange, mythical wooer in a forest that connotes an action of suspicious relationship, even sexual abuse.

Lönnrot emphasized Aino’s role as a bride by her weeping, such as is found too in folk songs of worry. Tears, often concretely and physically flowing, symbolize enormous sorrow or a change taking place in the one suffering (Timonen 2004, 331). In the *Kalevala*, too, crying indicates Aino’s great sorrow, as well as the notion of separation. Aino is weeping for the loss of her youth, but also of her childhood home. The separation is double: Aino is parting (as a bride) from her home and from her care-free life as a child.

On the other hand, she is also parting from her parents and their values, especially from her mother, who does not understand her grief (see Hämäläinen 2012, 170–78). A notable aspect in the description of crying in the *Kalevala* is that Aino weeps with no tears and her crying is presented by a narrator (*New Kalevala*, poem 3: 541–52; poem 4: 37–38). Crying with no tears is in contrast to the crying of a mother, whose tears make new life spring up (*New Kalevala*, poem 4: 447–88). Tears as well as water are also symbols of purity in the *Kalevala*. As a young maiden Aino is potentially a virgin, pure and untouched. By presenting Aino as meeting a strange old man in a forest, the *Kalevala* indicates that something unconventional has happened, and Aino has changed. In this sense, Aino has lost her purity and her availability as a bride, and become sorrowful, black, which can denote dirty or bad-mannered as well (*KKSK*). In his Finnish-Swedish dictionary, Lönnrot defines the word *black*,

29 The forest as a place of action can be seen as signifying the erotic (Tarkka 2005, 282).
“svart, mörk, oren,” where *oren* means dirty and impure, contaminated (Lönnrot 1880, 1095).  

**Conceptions of Beauty**

Lönnrot filled out the image of Aino by alluding to her looks, emotions, ambivalent habitus and sexuality, but, after the publication of the *Old Kalevala*, he avoids any references to her black appearance. Matti Kuusi states that the lyric song “I am not black by nature” relates to ideals of beauty in Scandinavian tradition, particularly its tragic aspect, in which the singer claims that the black appearance comes from nature (Kuusi 1963, 264). In the Kalevala-meter oral tradition, black, lean, and pale are common negative expressions, whereas blonde, fresh, tall, and buxom are positive attributes. For example, a good wife, strong and tall, was a synonym for a horse. Although beauty, *kauneus*, as an explicit term was not emphasized in oral tradition, it has guided meanings as a cognitive category. A proverb such as “Kaunis katsoo karvaansa, ruma työn tekee” (the fair one looks to her hair, the ugly one does the work) describes the ideals of a good person in rural culture, where hard work was considered to be a more valuable feature than appearance. (Apo 1995, 55−59, Hakamies 1998, 221−22; Kuusi 1954)

While the ideals of rural culture emphasized blondness and tallness as beautiful, the intelligentsia, to which Elias Lönnrot belonged, had other opinions. Lean, dark, and pale was a common appearance of an aristocratic, urbane nineteenth-century woman. Physical strength was associated with masculinity, whereas weakness and passivity were seen as representing both women’s physical and mental purity (Helén 1997, 93–97; Launis 2005, 198–99). As a medical doctor, Lönnrot made observations on the “good life” of rural people in his educational writings. He emphasized control of the body and the avoidance of all extreme feelings, while he criticized, for instance, the consumption of alcohol by common people as well as their strong religious habits (pietism) (Lönnrot 1839, 15; see also *VT* 2, 207). In his guide book of *Suomalaisen Talonpojan Koti-Lääkäri* (The Finnish peasant’s home doctor) (1839), Lönnrot argued that *diligence* and *moderation* are the two best doctors for a good life. “Even though the gentry support their health better, the peasants always live more healthily, strongly, and soberly because of their diligence and moderation in indulgence” (*VT* 4, 132, translated by Clive Tolley).

30 This motif of “black sorrow” as also implying impurity was developed by Lönnrot in his additions to the lyric anthology (*Lna* 57).
While Lönnrot guided the folk to control extreme emotions, and instead to work hard and thereby to keep healthy, that is to keep one’s physical strength, he expressed himself differently to his bourgeois readers. In the *Kalevala*, Lönnrot presented Aino’s appearance with allusions to physical and mental purity, but combined her image with vulnerable, sorrowful emotions that explained her tragic life. In the full version of the epic, Lönnrot alluded to Aino’s pure and beautiful looks but explained the word *black* as only denoting Aino’s internal sorrow: her emotions (heart) were as black as charcoal (Lna 121). The sorrow made Aino beautiful. It was something that characterized Aino’s habitus and action, but by no means in a negative way. Rather, the sorrowful emotions were considered to embellish Aino as an attractive young maiden. Julius Krohn described Aino as follows: she has a radiant appearance with a coal-black heart; the maiden whose mental blackness makes her choleric but beautiful (Krohn 1908, 124). This was quite the opposite of the ideals in oral tradition, where sorrow was regarded as unattractive and dirty.

Figure 3. Patching the seine-net in Akonlahti, photographer I. K. Inha 1894 (Inha 31, KRA SKS).
Why did this poem of worry not fit the *Kalevala*?

However, the figure of Aino could have gained greater depth by developing her emotions as embodiments of change and experience. The motif “I am not black by nature” does still characterize the textualization process of the Aino poem. This lyrical poem crystallizes Aino’s destiny as a young nubile maiden by enhancing the sorrow as well as the experience and feeling of otherness. These themes Lönnrot included and developed through further lyrical verses in the later *Kalevala* versions (1849, 1862).³¹

Yet Aino, a gloomy and pretty young maiden, could still have been depicted in a different way, as black, with dark hair, even a girl from Lapland, as Viljo Tarkiainen points out. Joukahainen, her brother, is also known by the epithet “laiha poika lappalainen” (thin boy from Lapland) in the folk-poetry tradition, and on this basis Aino could have been portrayed as a Lapp maiden (see Tarkiainen 1911, 19).³² Lönnrot himself later explained that calling Joukahainen “the boy from Lapland” (*lappalainen*) did not actually mean exactly the geographic area of northern Finland, Lapland, but instead denoted generally somebody who lives on the border (Lna 121, 3: 22).

Why did the song not fit Lönnrot’s textualization strategies for the *Kalevala*? Did Lönnrot not find the song a kind of lyric that could describe particularly well a young maiden’s sorrow? Did he forget the song while collecting many other lyric songs and motifs that he wanted to add to the *Kalevala*? Maybe this particular motif described too concretely or obviously the feeling of sorrow and the changes in one’s habitus? Was the song of black sorrow connected to a female character of the *Kalevala* not suitable for Lönnrot’s textual purposes, or the aesthetic ideals of the nineteenth century?

What then was Lönnrot’s contribution to the image of the young maiden who bemoans her destiny? In the folk-poetry model of the Aino poem (the Singing Match), the young girl’s destiny is uninteresting; the poem focuses rather on the idea of magical bargaining between men and the mother’s happiness after hearing of her future son-in-law, Väinämöinen (Kuusi, Bosley, and Branch 1977, 525). Lönnrot could have created an Aino based on the models of the great singers, such as Arhippa Perttunen or Martiska Karjalainen.³³ Then the poem of Aino could have focused,

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31 On the textualization of lyrical poems in the *Kalevala*, see further Hämäläinen 2012, 2013.
32 People from Lapland often have dark hair and eyes.
33 See SKVR I, 170, 184, 185a, 189.
other than on bargaining, on the mother and her son, Joukahainen, instead of a young maiden. This kind of composition was already familiar to Lönnrot from his creation of Lemminkäinen, one of the main male heroes of the *Kalevala*, and his relationship with his mother (see Timonen 2002). 34

However, Lönnrot had other ambitions with Aino. He had other folk-poetry models; the Hanged Maid was crucial on this point. The folk-poem model is filled with themes of sexuality, innocence, and mythical wooing (Kuusi, Bosley, and Branch 1977, 567). Runo-singers did not further explain the poem, nor the reactions or sorrow of the maiden. Instead, the folk poems Lönnrot used in the *Kalevala* told of a mythical wooing that is connected to a traumatic sexual act that takes place in the forest (Kupiainen 2004, 237). 35 Lönnrot proceeded from the themes of the folk poems and made a connection between the mythical suitor (Väinämöinen) and the sexual innocence of the young girl (bride), using lyrical verses to combine them. By constructing an analogy to the wedding ritual and gradually adding lyric songs that are filled with weeping and anxiety, Lönnrot was able to maintain the traditional setting and emotional themes alluded to in the poem, but also enabled his readers to comprehend and respond to the poem’s messages (Hämäläinen 2012, 177–78).

In Lönnrot’s interpretation, Aino of the *Kalevala* is presented as a young, suffering, potentially beautiful, and pure maiden, whose life comes to an end by drowning in purifying water. Perhaps Lönnrot chose not to improve the song of black sorrow in the context of the *Kalevala* because of the ideals of female appearance prevalent in his time. At the same time, he did not portray the figure of Aino precisely in the *Kalevala*. One might also consider that he did not avoid the motif of black sorrow either, but left the figure of the young maiden open to diverse interpretations. Eventually the different interpretations of the epic placed Aino within the gaze of nineteenth-century bourgeois romanticism: she is gloomy, pretty, blonde, sensual, eternal, fragile, passive, sick (see DuBois 1995, 262–63).

**What Tradition and for Whom?**

How does the lyric song of black sorrow and its placement (or non-placement) illum-inate textual politics and representations of oral folk tradition? Within this frame we could ask, like Ruth Finnegan (1991, 109), what tradition and for whom? While

34 The role of the mother and the mother–son relationship are constantly portrayed and emphasized by Lönnrot in the *Kalevala* (see also Sawin 1990; Apo 1995; Hämäläinen 2012, 2013). 35 On traumatized and seductive courtship, see further Tarkka 2005, 282–85.
the Kalevala was widely accepted and considered as a great Finnish epic the moment it was published, it was also strongly criticized by readers. Many of the critiques argued that the Kalevala utilized a faulty oral-poetic tradition. It consisted of the wrong type of genres (lyrics and charms), and plot sequences were incorrect when compared to the oral material (see Anttila 1935, 74–78). At the same time, textualized collections such as the Kalevala were seen as being founded with great fidelity on oral sources. More precisely, textual publications were assessed as directly reflecting their oral sources (Bauman and Briggs 2003, 213; Anttonen 2012).

Both the Kalevala and the Kanteletar were not precisely, as we know, complete nor authentic (“word for word”) presentations of oral song tradition. Rather, they represented oral tradition as an emotional concept that spoke for certain historical purposes and audiences (see Finnegan 1991, 109–10). Thus the orality of the Kalevala that Lauri Honko argued should be observed while studying Lönnrot’s editorial work was also bound up with an ideological notion of the usefulness of tradition for wider audiences. As observed in the development of one lyric song in his works, Lönnrot followed oral song examples, their poetic expressions, language, and allusions in order to present his collections along the lines of oral tradition. The difference lay in the use of tradition. A selective and relatively narrow part of the oral tradition and of its varied lyric songs was elevated to represent the ideals and understanding of the bourgeois readers of the Kalevala.

Before the Kantele Leaflets and the Kanteletar were published, folk poems, especially lyric poems, were represented in various anthologies, merged in among other genres. The main selection criteria for these anthologies were the age of the folk poems and the difference between folk poetry (“nature poetry”) and art poetry, the folk poetry being regarded as more natural and beautiful (Hautala 1954, 64–65). These were also the guidelines for Lönnrot, but, besides this, his textualization ambitions had strong moral aspects. Presenting folk poems as authentically and beautifully as possible, he aimed, too, to offer them in a morally correct way, which alluded to the conventional emotions as represented in lyrical folk poems.

However, Lönnrot’s purposes in the Kantele Leaflets and Kanteletar were different from his purposes in the Kalevala. In these publications, Lönnrot’s ambition was mainly to present oral folk-poetry tradition as widely as possible. Unlike in the Kalevala, Lönnrot did not link together themes and poems to create a narrative entity. The poem of black worry in the Kanteletar is presented in several variants, reflecting a diversity of lyric folk poems. Instead, Lönnrot’s textualization principles
in the *Kalevala* were based more on narrative concerns, aimed at depicting heroes and their deeds as representatives of the Finnish people and their history. He did not use sexual or corporal lyric poems nor humorous lyrical themes in the *Kalevala*, though some of them were included and developed in the *Kanteletar*. Thus the selection, adding, and cutting of lyrical verses in the editing process were dependent on the context, not only of the epic narrative, but also of the expectations of nineteenth-century readers.

Nonetheless, editing oral folk poems was an augmentative, but selective, process: while Lönnrot presented and variously explained the lyric song “I am not black by nature” and its different poetic variants in other anthologies, he did not proceed with the theme in the *Kalevala*. Especially in the *Kalevala*, which was created for nation-building purposes, only conventional, beautiful, emotionally touched lyrical verses were accepted as part of the great epic as a way of lending character to its protagonists. A young country maiden made to look unattractive by great sorrow, as she was described in the folk lyric song “I am not black by nature,” was not a conventional female image for the readers of the *Kalevala*. With the upper class subscribing to the ideals of a pale and thin female figure at the time, it could not consider the folk image in the same frame. However, the members of the upper class wished to see the folk songs as exhibiting suffering, emotion and vulnerability, while coloring them with conventional images. The worried maiden was depicted as beautiful and attractive as a result of her great suffering, unlike in folk songs, where sorrow explicitly caused a physically unattractive appearance. The worried maiden who has become black, unattractive, even impure was not a feasible allusion in nineteenth-century Finland, where the collecting and presentation of oral folk tradition was linked to the requirements of the nationalist history of the folk.36

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36 See also Blomster and Mikkola in this volume. The idea of a national character as black is still considered awkward. See discussion of the new film on a black Mannerheim, the Finnish fieldmarshal, www.suomenmarsalkka.fi.
Why is Aino Not Described as a Black Maiden?

ABBREVIATIONS

KIA Kirjallisuusarkisto (The Literary Archives)
KKS K Karjalan kielen sanakirja (Karelian-Finnish Dictionary)
KRA Kansanrunousarkisto (The Folklore Archives)
Lna Lännrotiana-kokoelma (Lännrotiana collection)
SKS Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura (Finnish Literature Society)
SKVR Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot (Ancient Poems of the Finnish People)
VT Valitut teokset (Selected Works of Elias Lönnrot)

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Partly Sunny: A Critical Edition of Kivi’s Greatest Play

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The Structure of the Book
If according to Dostoevsky the great Russian writers of the nineteenth century all came out from under Gogol’s “Overcoat,” the great Finnish writers of the twentieth century are all descendants of Kivi’s Seven Brothers and Heath Cobblers—even though at the end of that latter play Esko decides never to marry, and so can be imagined to have died childless. Kivi too—or Alexis Stenvall (1834–72), who wrote under the pseudonym Aleksis Kivi—died unmarried and childless, but the fecundity of his verbal imagination has continued to spawn literary progeny right up until the present, and is likely to continue doing so for the foreseeable future. Nummisuutarit (1864), which I translated in 1993 as Heath Cobblers, is not only Finland’s greatest play, but it has consistently been its most popular and most produced play since its premiere a few years after its author’s early death. Seitsemän veljestä (1870), which has been translated twice as Seven Brothers, by Alex. Matson in 1929 and by Richard Impola in 1991—neither time satisfactorily (see Robinson 2011: 42–68 for discussion)—is Finland’s first and greatest novel; it is still enormously popular among ordinary Finnish readers, many of whom have read it numerous times.

What we learn in this new critical edition of Nummisuutarit is that the play was self-published by Kivi in December of 1864—a calculated risk, because he had
self-published his five-act Kalevalan tragedy *Kullervo* earlier the same year, and had won the publication fee back in prize money, and hoped that the same might happen again. And in fact it did, but beyond his wildest hopes: with the key support of his old teacher Fredrik Cygnaeus, he won a 2500-mark prize for best play—nearly half of his total lifetime income. Cygnaeus also wrote a long and influential three-part critical study of the play, and published it in *Helsingfors Tidningar* in the spring of 1865—and so began the play’s ride to fame and glory, which continues to this day.

This critical edition is the first volume in a new series of such editions, published by the Edith Project at the Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura (Finnish Literature Society), which has been publishing Kivi since the beginning. (Though *Nummisuutarit* was self-published, it was printed at SKS, and the first “selected works” series to appear of his work was published by SKS in 1877–78.) The editor-in-chief of this volume, Jyrki Nummi, is Professor of Finnish Literature at the University of Helsinki; his colleagues in the undertaking include two Finnish literature scholars who work in the research department at SKS/Edith, Sakari Katajamäki and Ossi Kokko, and Petri Lauerma, a researcher at the Institute for the Languages of Finland (Kotimaisten Kielten Keskus) in Helsinki.

The book is divided into three parts: a scholarly introduction (7–164); the annotated play itself, based on the first edition (165–279); and appendices (281–330). The scholarly introduction consists of six articles:

1. The play’s reception, by Jyrki Nummi (14–37)
2. The play’s publication history, by Sakari Katajamäki (38–53)
3. A long critical reading of the play itself, by Jyrki Nummi (54–120)
4. Kivi’s language as reflected in the play, by Petri Lauerma (121–28)
5. The play on stage, by Pentti Paavolainen, a theater historian at Sibelius Academy (129–55)
6. Film adaptations of the play, by Kimmo Laine, a docent in media history at the University of Turku (156–64)

Each chapter, as is traditional in volumes of this kind, strives for neutrality—“just the facts,” preferably in chronological order—and if that means that none of it makes for particularly engrossing reading, it is nevertheless an extremely valuable resource for Kivi scholars.
The text of the play is very helpfully annotated, with glosses on obsolete words and idioms, intertextual allusions, and historical references; all of this provides an excellent scholarly apparatus for studying the text closely, and far surpasses anything that was available before, for example through E. A. Saarimaa’s ([1919]/1964) useful Selityksiä Aleksis Kiven teoksiin (Glosses on Aleksis Kivi’s works) from the early twentieth century.

The appendices include:

• A guide to symbols and abbreviations used in the edition
• A list of changes made in the text of the play
• A list of the differences between the first edition and the excerpt published in Helmiwyö suomalaista runoutta (A pearl belt of Finnish poetry) by Julius Krohn in 1866
• A list of the differences between the first edition and the script used in the play’s premiere, with an introduction by Pentti Paavolainen
• A list of the editions, translations, and film adaptations of the play
• A brief bio of Kivi, by Minna Maijala, a docent in Finnish literature at the University of Turku
• A bibliography of Kivi’s works
• References
• Word index

The main thing I missed there was a name index; it would have been useful to be able to search, say, for Julius Krohn or Fredrik Cygnaeus. I would also have liked to see a “Contributors” page, with biographical information on the scholars who wrote chapters and sections of the volume, so that I wouldn’t have had to go seek that information online.

As that tabulation makes clear, the bulk of the scholarly analyses in the volume was written by the editor-in-chief, Jyrki Nummi, who wrote the twenty-three-page chapter on the play’s reception and the sixty-six-page critical study of the play itself. The only reservations I had about the book, in fact, kept cropping up while I was reading those two pieces. I’ll devote sections below to a reading of Nummi’s critical study, but let me say a few words about his opening article on the play’s reception here.
He starts off the chapter at the obvious place, with the fact that Nummisuutarit won best play of 1865, bringing Kivi a 2500-mark prize. The majority of the chapter is devoted to sections on “contemporary criticism” (during Kivi’s lifetime) and the play’s reputation after Kivi’s death. All this seems reasonable. But sandwiched between the opening page-and-a-half on the winning of the literary prize and the two main sections is a longish section on “Finnish drama before Kivi,” which seems puzzlingly out of place in a chapter on the reception of a single play. The section is useful, but shouldn’t it have gone in the critical study, where Kivi’s historical situatedness is discussed?

The other qualm this chapter stirred up in me as I read it was the frequency of repetition in it, as if Nummi had written it in haste, and didn’t have time to clean it up (I’ll use N in parenthetical citations to refer to this volume throughout):

Seuraavana vuonna näyttämöllä nähtiin Pietari Hannikaisen suositutu Silmänkääntäjä, ja vuoden 1859 kevääällä esitettiin hänet Anttonius Putronius sekä Wecksellin Två studenter på runosamling. (N 17)

The next year Pietari Hannikainen’s popular The Conjurer was staged, and in the spring of 1859 his Anttonius Putronius was performed, as was Wecksell’s Två studenter på runosamling [Two students collecting poems].

Pietari Hannikainen kirjoitti 1838 Silmänkääntäjän, joka ilmestyi viipurilaisessa Kanavassa vasta 1845. Hannikaiselta ilmestyi vielä 1859 Anttonius Putronius. (N 18)

In 1838 Pietari Hannikainen wrote The Conjurer, which did not appear in the Viipuri-based Kanava until 1845. Another Hannikainen play, Anttonius Putronius, appeared in 1859.

Draamallinen toiminta kietoutuu aina luonteeseen, tahtovaan yksilöön, joka ymmärrettiin draamallisen havainnollisuuden perustavaksi edellytykseksi. [. . .] Draaman keskipiste on luonne, tahtova yksilö, sankari. (N 22)

Dramatic action is always intertwined with character, the individual who wants something, who was understood as the founding requirement for
dramatic clarity. [. . .] The focal point of drama is character, the individual who wants something, the hero.

That last quotation comprises the first and last sentences of the same paragraph. One last point: I’m probably not the right person to point this out, being neither a professor of Finnish nor even a native speaker, but I think there’s something wrong syntactically with a sentence like “Näytelmän lopussahan ovat hänen isältään perimästään juhla-asustaan vain riekaleet jäljellä” (N 35)/“At the end of the play, after all, the dress clothes he inherited from his father are in tatters.” My understanding of Finnish syntax is that [a] “hänen isältään perimästään juhla-asustaan” should be (more traditionally) [b] “hänen isältään perimästään juhla-asusta,” or (slightly more informally) [c] “hänen isältä perimästään juhla-asusta,” but (more recently) possibly even [d] “hänen isältä perimästä juhla-asusta.” I must confess that (b) feels too formal to me, and (d) too informal—I prefer (c)—but I believe (a) is flatout wrong. This is the volume’s second revised edition; these passages can obviously be corrected for the third.

Rereading a Footnote

Full disclosure: I am cited in passing in the book, not only (N 303) the fact that I translated Nummisuutarit into English in 1993 as Heath Cobblers, but also that in my introduction to that translation I explored the play’s status as a problem comedy:


Douglas Robinson (1993, xi) believes that all of the characters in Heath Cobblers are after their own advantage (“Every central character in Heath Cobblers [. . .] has a get-rich-quick scheme”). According to Robinson
they also all fail, and for that reason he considers *Heath Cobblers* to be a Shakespearean problem comedy like *All’s Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*. Each of those two Shakespearean comedies has a problematic last act. This genre classification is better suited to *Kihlaus* [“The Betrothal”], which remains in a very different way open and “failed.” (All translations from Finnish are my own.)

While I fully realize that paraphrasing another scholar’s interpretation is fraught with difficulty, and that the scholar so paraphrased is rarely satisfied with the result, I hope you’ll indulge me if I take a few pages here to reflect on this passage. I suggest that it is representative of a defining characteristic in this critical edition, and thus will open perspectives on the book (sections below) that go far beyond any personal disgruntlement I might feel. What I want to argue, in fact, is that Nummi’s long critical analysis of *Nummisuutarit/Heath Cobblers* deviates in interesting ways from the editorial policy of strict neutrality otherwise applied systematically in the volume—interesting in the sense that, far from being overtly polemical, Nummi dresses a covertly partisan reading of the play up in the frock coat of neutrality—and that the tensions between neutrality and bias are usefully on display in his footnote paraphrasing my reading.

I find four problems in the note:

**Problem 1.** “All of the characters in *Heath Cobblers* are after their own advantage” is a misleading paraphrase of “Every central character in *Heath Cobblers* [. . .] has a get-rich-quick scheme.” Isn’t it in fact the case that *all of the central characters in every play ever produced* are after their own advantage? Isn’t this the main human driving force behind all dramatic plots—that people want things and work hard to achieve their desires? What I said specifically was that Kivi is modern (post-classical and post-medieval) in the sense of dramatizing the insecurities of a social class that has to worry about making ends meet—that is always worried about money:

[Kivi] was steeped in the conflicted pragmatism of the underclasses, the pressures and insecurities and high hopes and anxieties involved in trying to make a mark on a world that is indifferent or actively hostile to the artisan class. Every central character in *Heath Cobblers*, for example, has a get-rich-quick scheme, and so much happiness and self-esteem rides on the success of those schemes—the inheritance, the reward money—that
their disastrous failure in Act V cannot simply be laughed off. (Robinson 1993: xi; henceforth abbreviated “R”)

The Martta-Topias-Esko struggle to win the inheritance money in Acts I and II and the Sakeri-Iivari struggle to win the reward money in Acts III and IV are major forces driving the plot—and both fail. The reward money vanishes once Niko reveals himself as not the escaped convict on whose head the reward has been placed, and the inheritance money goes to the insipid Jaana and her cynical and superficial fiancé, Kristo. Jaana’s suggestion that they split the inheritance 50-50 with Esko’s family mitigates the bitter pill of failure somewhat, but that gesture, tacked as it is onto the final-act failure of both money-driven subplots in the play, makes for an extremely lame “happy ending.” Yes, a reconciliation of a sort has been achieved; yes, in his Act I exposition Kristo anticipates the splitting of the money, half to each; but neither changes the fact that the whole play has been organized around parallel subplots that both fail. More on this in the section “Critical Suppressions” below.

Problem 2. My reading of the play does not, however, trade simply on that failure of the two main subplots, as Nummi suggests; it also assumes our affective identification with those two main characters, the brothers Esko and Iivari, and thus our personal feeling of failure when their get-rich-quick schemes fail (well, Iivari’s get-rich-quick scheme, and Esko’s dream of marital bliss, which would fulfill the boys’ parents’ get-rich-quick scheme). As I say in that passage quoted above, “so much happiness and self-esteem rides on the success of those schemes—the inheritance, the reward money—that their disastrous failure in Act V cannot simply be laughed off.” Traditional comedies move toward a reconciliation based on the success of the main characters’ projects, yes, but also on audiences’ warm, good-natured, inclusive laughter at the foibles displayed by those characters along the way—their excesses, their misunderstandings, their wrong turns—precisely because by joining in that laughter, we feel included as well. What makes Heath Cobblers a problem comedy is that Kivi complicates not only the traditional comedic plot structure but the channels of audience identification: the two main characters not only fail but return home in disgrace, to face certain punishment and the wrath of the entire village, thus subjecting us too, vicariously, to the humiliations and recriminations they experience. Not only can we not easily laugh off that participatory response, but the fact that Jaana is deliriously happy to have her father home and her wedding approved only irritates us more. Iivari, the secondary hero, first pretends to be
hopelessly insane, then declares his intention to run off to sea, like Niko; Esko, the main hero, is left embittered:

Iivari lähteköön merelle, minä neuloskel täällä isän kanssa, enkä nai koskaan, en koskaan. Mitä vaimosta! Minä tunnen sen suvun nyt. Petturia ovat he. (N 279 ll. 10–13)

Iivari can go to sea, and I’ll sit at home and stitch leather boots, and never marry, never. What do I want with a wife? I know that breed now, and they’re deceivers, vile deceivers. (R 216)

Not only can the failure of the two get-rich-quick schemes not be laughed off, but Esko’s bitterness, which seems to foreclose on his future happiness, deepens and intensifies the affective dissonances in our identificatory response as well. Marriage, the social event that (at least normatively, in the history of the genre) stands at the core of every comic happy ending, does ensue at the end of *Heath Cobblers*—but it’s the other couple getting married, the ones we don’t like. As I wrote:

In more modern terms, the play is a conflicted or problem comedy, like Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* or *Twelfth Night* (a direct model for *Heath Cobblers*), in which the ancient comic values of marital happiness and familial and communal reconciliation are asserted only in order to problematize them, to ring them round with realistic constraints and qualifications. The happy ending never quite takes hold, never quite convinces the viewer or reader that this ever really happens in real life; the obstacles to happiness, which the comic plot triumphantly removes in order to engineer its conciliatory resolution, never quite go away, never stop gnawing at the viewer’s or reader’s anxieties. (R x–xi)

*Problem 3.* Note that the two Shakespeare plays I mention there are not *All’s Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*, as Nummi claims, but *Measure for Measure* and *Twelfth Night*, which later I identify as “a direct model for *Heath Cobblers.*” Why Nummi should replace *Twelfth Night* with *All’s Well That Ends Well* is a puzzle to me; in *All’s Well*, after all, the main character’s marriage intrigues are successful! Helena marries her beloved, Bertram. What makes it a problem comedy is that she accomplishes her end through trickery, and without gaining his love, which undermines
the feeling of reconciliation that the marital climax in a comedy is expected to produce, but otherwise it is a very weak parallel with *Heath Cobblers*. Structurally, *Twelfth Night* is not exactly parallel with *Heath Cobblers* either, since Kivi elevates Malvolio, the pompous buffoon who is mercilessly ridiculed and humiliated, to the status of central character, with whom the audience is most strongly encouraged to identify, but it is beyond a doubt the Shakespeare play that most clearly and powerfully foreshadows Esko’s crushing failure in *Heath Cobblers*. What makes *Twelfth Night* a problem comedy is that we are unable to feel comfortably contemptuous of Malvolio; we despise him, but also, against our better judgment, as it were, feel sorry for him, and even to some extent identify with him—he embodies all our own past failures to achieve our ends—so that we end the play profoundly uneasy with the brutal contempt we seem to be encouraged to feel toward him. What makes *Heath Cobblers* a problem comedy is not only that Malvolio=Esko, but that Esko is a far more sincere and naïve butt of the play’s humor than Malvolio—someone whose well-meaning naïveté becomes the identificatory vehicle for our own most nostalgic memories of our own younger selves—who is then mercilessly crushed. We dislike Malvolio, but think he doesn’t quite deserve the treatment he receives; we find Esko adorable, and then he still gets Malvolio’s treatment.

**Problem 4. Kihlaus (“The Betrothal”)** “remains in a different way open and ‘failed’” precisely because it is a very different kind of comedy: a classic “bromance,” in which the lasting and sustaining “marital” bond at the end proves to be not a marriage between a man and a woman but male bonding, the companionship of men. The play’s heterosexual couple, Eeva the housekeeper and Aapeli the tailor, are in fact betrothed—at Eeva’s insistence, out of the blue, in a fit of anger against her employers, the herrat “lords,” who won’t marry her—but then, as his friend Eenokki predicts in the opening minutes of the play, she changes her mind (basically has already changed her mind by the time they reach Aapeli’s house) and decides to break it off, and the play ends as it begins, proclaiming that Aapeli is far better off without her. There is a kind of trickery, as there is in *Heath Cobblers*, leading Esko and his parents to believe that Kreeta loves him, that they will live happily ever after; in a sense Eeva tricks the soft-hearted Aapeli into falling in love with her:

Aapeli. Ihminen, miksi narrasit mua hevosellani sinua kyyditsemään huoneeseeni?

Eeva. Miksi annoit itseäs narrata?
Aapeli: You, why’d you trick me into hauling you to my house with my horse?
Eeva: Why’d you let yourself be tricked?

Aapeli’s bitterness at the failure of his short-lived dreams of marital bliss is also remarkably similar to Esko’s at the failure of his own; the differences are that Eeva truly is deserving of his moral outrage, while Kreeta does not deserve Esko’s, and that, while Eenokki quickly talks Aapeli out of his bad feeling, Esko’s lasts from the opening curtain of Act II, when Esko and Mikko Vilkastus arrive at Karri’s to find Kreeta’s wedding reception in full swing, to the very end of the play (and presumably beyond, for the rest of his life). In Kihlaus, that bad feeling marks the plot’s climax (followed by the bromance denouement); in Nummisuutarit it undergirds the entire dramatic action, from the first plot point that launches the play’s rising action to the denouement. And yet, despite the strong undercurrent of suffering in both plays, both are also constantly laugh-out-loud funny. What makes Heath Cobblers such a brilliant problem comedy is precisely the fact that Kivi never lets the tension between happiness and despair go slack—never allows us the luxury of convincing ourselves that we might be already soaring to the heights or plummeting to the depths.

Interpretive Divergences
To be fair, though, what we have here is a critical disagreement. Nummi and I read the play divergently. As he reads it, “näytelmä kohoaa lopulta aitoon juhlatunnelmaan” (N 64)/“the play rises in the end to an authentic festive mood”; as I read it, there is nothing at all authentic about that mood. As I read it, the “authenticity” of that final festive mood is a sham. It is a faked reconciliation that is voiced but doesn’t actually reconcile or include. Here is Nummi’s interpretation of the ending:

In *Heath Cobblers* the circle closes in idyllic fashion: those truly in love get each other, those who were living in illusion are freed from their misconceptions, and those who were living wrongly set a new course for the future. The play’s ending is dominated by a liberatory mood, and the whole play ends in a festive mood. The main characters are liberated from the blockages and coercions that had been plaguing them: Esko from the demand that he marry, Iivari from the curse of drink, Jaana and Kristo from the ban on their marrying, Martta and Topias from selfishness and greed.

It would be difficult to imagine a reading more contrary to my own; but in fact there is ample textual evidence for Nummi’s take:


NIKO. Sen uskon. Sun silmäs katse on kärsivän serahvin.

JAANA. Mutta en toki kannella tahdo, en, sitä en tee. Onhan kaikki hyvin taas. (N 271 l. 12–20)

JAANA: I’ll tell you truly. O! are you really my father, my strength and support? Need I no longer fear a stranger’s wrath? Let my words betray my brimming heart! Long have I loved this man, night and day he has been my only thought, and it is my dearest wish to be his wife; but sorely has our marriage been prevented. O, father! I have suffered much.

NIKO: I well believe it; for your gaze is that of the suffering seraphim.

JAANA: But I do not want to complain. All is well again. (R 207–208)

And okay, yes, Jaana’s lines are painfully clichéd and sentimental, not at all the kind of writing we value Kivi for. And, yes, Jaana is generally a rather insipid peripheral character, much less interesting than the flinty-eyed and sardonic Kristo,
her fiancé, whom we see taunting Martta in Act I and conspiring with Mikko Vilkastus in Act IV. And it’s true that these two facts suck most of the life out of her words here. But this is the beginning of the reconciliation that Nummi so values, and after a few minutes of conflict and turmoil—Mikko carried in with a broken leg, Esko charged with disorderly conduct at Kreetta’s wedding and disowned by his father, Iivari pretending to lose his mind—Kivi takes us back to Jaana’s sentimental mewling:


NIKO (pyhkien kyyneliänsä). Sovinnon kihara-hiuksinen enkeli täänän vallitsee. (N 275 l. 30–276 l. 4)

JAANA: Now I may rejoice at last; this day I dreamed of long as a distant light in the valley of darkness, which never seemed to draw near. But now it is come, and I cannot believe it yet. I shy away from its gentle warmth like a babe in arms. Now at once I have won my love and found my dear father. Father, my mother as she died gave you her greetings, and I pass them on to you now! She cursed you not, but blessed you, and said, “If ever thy father returns to thee, give him my love and say, Welcome home from the distant seas!” So said she but moments before she closed her eyes in eternal sleep.

NIKO (wiping away tears): The curly-haired angel of reconciliation truly reigns today. (R 212)

Yes, one might want to say, it reigns for Niko, Jaana, and Kristo, but completely excludes Esko’s family, with whom we have been identifying throughout. But wait:

JAANA. Teitä kiinteän kohtelemisen edestä kiitän myös! Jos hempeyttä mua
kohtaan osoittaneet olisitte, mun sallineet heittäyä riettauden helmaan, niin olisinpa kentiesi nyt tyttö kurja, ylenkatsetta ansaitseva kaiklta. Mutta teitä kiitän, että näin vapaasti nyt isääni ja sulhaistani kasvoihin katsoa taidan.

MARTTA (itseks). Jumal’ avita! puheensa mieltäni lämmittää!

NIKO. Sinä päivä soma! Hyminän kuulen honkien kruunuista nummella. Saitto menneistä päivistä! - Naapurimme, huomaitkaat, että aurinko laskuulsa like- nee, siis heittäkääämme hiitteen kaikki viha ja vaino ennenkuin päivän ruhtinas kasvonsa peittää. Sovintoa tahdon!

TOPIAS. Minä myös, entinen kasvukumpanini. Tässä on käteni!

NIKO. Terve, Topias, terve!


KRISTO. Terve!

ESKO. Niin! - Entäs, livari?

IIVARI. Olkoon menneeksi! Terve, eno Sakeri! Käteläämme miehissä, niin saamme juoda kättäisiä.

SEPETEUS. Livari! Tässä on totuus käsissä.

IIVARI. Suokaat anteiksi, vaikka löin vähän leikkiä. Sovintoa tahdon todenteolla minäkin. Ennen ystävien kasvoja ympärillämme kuin vihamiesten!

TOPIAS. Martta, sinä myös sydämesi lievetä anna! Sinä oletääni. (N 277 l. 1-24)

JAANA: I thank you also for treating me harshly! For if you’d shown me nothing but loving kindness, and let me fall into the ways of depravity, I’d have been a miserable girl, deserving only of scorn. But I thank you that I can now look upon my father and husband without shame.

MARTTA (aside): God help me! The girl’s words warm my heart!

NIKO: O beautiful day! I can hear the rustling of the wind through the pines—a melody fond from days gone by! Neighbors, the sun is about to set; cast off
Partly Sunny: A Critical Edition of Kivi’s Greatest Play

your anger and hatred before the prince of the day hides his face. Let us be reconciled!

TOPIAS: So be it, Niko, friend of my childhood! Here is my hand!

NIKO: Let us shake on it, Topias!

ESKO (aside): Even my stony heart is moved—in fact, just like a stone, when you move it. (Aloud.) Let us all be reconciled! Shake, Kristo!

KRISTO: Esko, my friend!

IIVARI: What the hell: shake, Uncle Sakeri, so we can drink on it!

SEPETEUS: Iivari! This is the moment of truth!

IIVARI: Forgive my little joke. I desire reconciliation too. Better the faces of friends around us then [sic] those of enemies!

TOPIAS: Martta, come, you must unburden your heart as well! You are silent.

(R 213–14)

And then Jaana whispers in Niko’s ear that she would like to split the inheritance money with Esko’s family, and Martta finally yields, gives in to the conciliatory mood, and invites them all to a feast, not for Esko and Kreeta’s wedding but for Jaana and Kristo’s engagement. If we focus our attention on the words on pages like the ones I’ve quoted from here, and don’t look—or especially feel—further, we may well become convinced with Jyrki Nummi that Heath Cobblers is a warm, sunny, all-inclusive “festive comedy.”

Critical Suppressions

My inability to go along with him on that may just be written off as my problem: I’m not a Finn, I’m not as cheerful and light-hearted as the Finns who love this play, I’m an American, and therefore more negative, more cynical, more inclined to focus on the dark underbelly of scenes like the ones I quoted above. I’ve been corrupted by Twelfth Night, maybe: what I love about Heath Cobblers is what I love about Shakespeare’s greatest problem comedy, that both playwrights so brilliantly twist us emotionally into the complexities of real human interaction, where there is no high moral clarity, no perfect good and no perfect evil, no perfect happiness or total despair—and where no reconciliation is complete. Niko’s call to “cast off your anger
and hatred before the prince of the day hides his face” is a fine goal, and certainly one to strive for, but it never works the way it’s supposed to in storybooks. The reality is always darker. And I value Kivi more for his ability to explore those moral entanglements than I do for his ability to impose a clichéd fake reconciliation on a final act.

Here’s my problem: I take Kivi to be a brilliant folk realist, and Nummi’s assessments of the characters’ reactions don’t ring true to real life as I know it. I only lived in Finland fourteen years, and I don’t believe that “human nature” is a stable universal, unshaped by culture, so maybe it’s just me, or my cultural background. But I can’t help but feel that Nummi’s readings are unrealistic because they are predicated on key suppressions of both textual and experiential evidence. Let’s look at four cases.

Case 1. Look back at the passage that we read at the beginning of the previous section (139): “Päähenkilöt vapautuvat heitä ahdistaneista esteistä ja pakoista: Esko naimispakosta, Iivari viinan kirosta, Jaana ja Kristo avioitumiskiellosta, Martta ja Topias itsekkyystä ja ahneudesta” (N 66)/“The main characters are liberated from the blockages and coercions that had been plaguing them: Esko from the demand that he marry, Iivari from the curse of drink, Jaana and Kristo from the ban on their marrying, Martta and Topias from selfishness and greed.” Set aside the question of whether Iivari stops drinking or Martta and Topias become generous and altruistic; both seem rather unlikely to me, but that’s speculative, and not particularly germane here. Certainly Jaana and Kristo are freed from the ban on their marrying. What I want to focus on is the idea that Esko is “liberated [. . .] from the demand that he marry.”

Case 1, Suppression 1. Nummi’s reading of Esko’s character arc emerges out of the assumption that he never wanted to marry in the first place—that the whole wedding plot that launches the play’s rising action is a pakko, a coercion. His parents, driven by greed, are forcing him to marry. And certainly in one purely factual sense that’s true: the idea that he must marry Kreeta comes from his parents, and he has very little say in the matter. Emotionally, however, nothing could be further from the truth. By the time the play starts, Esko wants very much to marry. In fact he’s as thrilled by the idea as a kid is about Santa Claus coming Christmas Eve:

Kovin tunnen tällä hetkellä itseni liikutetuksi, ja sydämeni on kuin palava pikipallo ja tämä on siitä, että mieltäni polttaa Kreeta ja häät. Kreeta! pääni pyörään käy, koska muistelen, että kohta olen yhtä kanssas,
eli toisin, mina tulen sinuksi ja sinä minuksi, sanalla sanoen, Esko on Kreetta ja Kreetta Esko; ja kutsukoot meitä sitten joko Eskokreetaksi eli Kreetaeskoksi. Niin. (N 176 ll. 31–177 l. 2)

Sorely do I feel myself moved at this moment, and my heart is burning like a ball of pitch because my mind is aflame with Kreetta and the wedding. Kreetta! My head spins, for I know that soon I shall be one with you; or, in other words, I shall become you and you me—in a word, Esko is Kreetta and Kreetta is Esko and let people call us either Eskokreetta or Kreetaesko. Yes. (R 107)

Yes, Esko is naïve, and his naïveté is comical. Yes, his fantasies here are cloud castles without even the scantiest basis in adult interaction or sexual attraction. And, yes, as Aarne Kinnunen notes (and Nummi [N 68] underscores), when he arrives at Karri’s to find Kreetta marrying Jaakko, what he feels is not a broken heart but a thirst for revenge—though arguably his angry cursing of Kreetta at the end of Act II is the venting of a broken heart. (Mikko Vilkastus makes more or less Kinnunen’s case to Karri, by way of reassuring him that Esko poses no threat to the wedding feast. He’s wrong.) In any case, the prospect of marrying Kreetta is very far from a naimispakko “coercion to marry.” Marriage to Kreetta is not a prison cell from which he longs to be liberated. He wants it.

Not only that: I submit that it is essential for the play’s plot development that the viewer/reader identify with this comically naïve protagonist, want what he wants, dream his dreams. If we despise (or even patronize) him for the naïveté of his marital fantasies at this point in the play, all is lost. Kivi’s drama depends for its effect on first the building up of our generic hopes—“comedy equals marriage”—and then, in Act II, the dashing of those hopes. Our hopes: a play is never just words on the page, or in an actor’s mouth. It is also the feelings that the audience shares with the actors who are dramatizing them. As I say, Nummi’s naimispakko “marital coercion” did in a sense happen, but his implication that that was all that happened—that Esko hadn’t begun to feel his way into his future in terms of a happy married life with Kreetta, and that we weren’t cheering him on in that feeling—seems like a very odd reading of the play to me. It’s not, in other words, just that Esko’s excited anticipation of married life in Act I and withdrawal into self-protective misogyny in Act V seem to be knock-down evidence against the claim that the ending “liberates” him from “the blockages
and obsessions that had been plaguing” him. It’s also that Nummi’s reading constructs the play more as “literature”—words on the page—than as drama, more as an abstract logic than as a felt participation in embodied and situated human interaction.

Case 1, Suppression 2. For Nummi, Esko is being “coerced” into marrying, and the ending frees him from that coercion, but what is he freed from, and what he is freed into? We’ve just seen that the naimispakko “fact that he’s being forced to marry” is something that he intensely desires, but note now that it is also a “prison” that sends him out into the world, where he has complex new experiences that (at least potentially) help him to grow up. If we imagine him freed from that “coercion” before the play begins, there is no play, of course, but also there is no growth. Without that “marital compulsion” Esko would have remained a little boy in a grown-up body, living naïve and green in his parents’ house. What he experiences as a result of that “compulsion” is betrayal, violence, manipulation, inebriation, and humiliation—not pleasant, by any stretch of the imagination, but most of us would agree, I assume, that that’s life. Having experienced all that, Esko returns home to find that he has been relieved from the need to hook up with a new fiancée by Niko’s homecoming, which gives Jaana the permission she needs to marry Kristo: that part of Nummi’s interpretation is quite true. But in what does his liberation consist? In relief? In a calming or relaxing of the frantic desperation he has been feeling since Act II? No. In bitter, defensive misogyny: he curses all women as “vile deceivers” and vows never to marry. What he is “liberated” into is a state that is a far more confining prison than his romantic naïveté ever was. It is a self-imposed prison that in many ways is the dark mirror-image of his parentally imposed “prison” in the beginning—despair as the dark side of romantic fantasy, misogyny as the dark side of the idealization of the beloved—but without hope, without receptivity, without the engagement with the wide world beyond his parents’ home. Where his naïve romantic fantasies in Act I drove him out into the world, eager to experience marital bliss, his misogyny that closes Act V traps him in a self-protective flight from experience.

Compare this also with Nummi’s claim that in the Act V “reconciliation,” “those who were living in illusion are freed from misconceptions.” Would we want to say that Esko’s high opinion of women (as embodied in Kreeta) in Act I was an illusion or a misconception from which he is now, at the end of the play, thankfully freed? Isn’t it in fact true that misogyny is very much the same illusion or misconception as the mythologization of women as perfect angels—just the dark side of that illusion? Nummi’s full account of the “idyllic” ending is in fact that “[a] those
truly in love get each other, [b] those who were living in illusion are freed from their misconceptions, and [c] those who were living wrongly set a new course for the future.” To which category does Esko belong? Category (a) would obviously be Jaana and Kristo; category (c) would be Iivari (and possibly Martta and Topias, and possibly Mikko). I assume that Nummi means to include Esko in category (b), but I truly cannot think of a single illusion from which he has been freed.

Case 2. By way of making the case for the play as a “festive comedy,” Nummi describes the festive mood of Act I in detail, and then notes:

Yllättäen jo toinen näytös avautuu hääjuhlana. Tosin vähillä se muuttuu kovin riitaisaksi, niin kuin juhliissa toisinaan käy. Näytelmä kohoaa lopulta aitoon juhlatunnelmaan, vaikka ei sekään aivan sellaiseen kuin oli odotettu. Ei tullut häitä, tuli kihlajaiset. (N 63–64)

Surprisingly, the wedding celebration comes early, in the second act. True, at times it turns rather fractious, as sometimes happens at festive occasions. The play rises in the end to an authentic festive mood, although even then not to the kind that was expected. There is no wedding, only an engagement.

Case 2, Suppression 1. Yes, “surprisingly, the wedding celebration comes early, in the second act”—and it means the violent and humiliating destruction of Esko’s hopes. It suddenly and shockingly derails the wedding plot that set the play’s action in motion. It delivers a crushing blow to our hero’s self-esteem. It flips Esko’s illusions about women from the unrealistically positive to the unrealistically negative. But for Nummi none of that really matters, because, after all, we still have a wedding!

Case 2, Suppression 2. Yes, “at times [the Act II wedding feast] turns rather fractious”—because the humiliation that has been casually visited on Esko as Karri’s passing prank drives him out of his mind with rage. But never mind: sometimes celebrations get a little out of hand, and at least the wedding is otherwise festive!

Case 2, Suppression 3. As I’ve said, I would contest the claim that “the play rises in the end to an authentic festive mood”—I don’t see anything even vaguely “authentic” about the contrived and conventional “festive mood” that is cobbled together out of clichés in the final minutes of Act V—but for Nummi the only problem
is that the “authentic festive mood” is not “the kind that was expected.” Right: the wrong couple gets hitched!

*Case 2, Suppression 3, Counterargument.* Why “wrong”? Don’t Jaana and Kristo love each other? *Counter-counterargument 1:* Nummi thinks so; to my mind Jaana is a rather sentimental and rather ordinary teenaged girl who is just as much in love with love as Esko was in the beginning, and Kristo is a scalawag who is more interested in besting Esko’s family and winning the inheritance than he is in Jaana’s love. *Counter-counterargument 2:* But in fact whether they love each other is irrelevant to the play. The key dramatic fact is that we are never encouraged to identify with them. They are always the other couple. They can only win if our guy loses. The play is not about “those truly in love get[ting] each other”; it’s about our hero having to come to terms with his abject humiliation. *Counter-counterargument 3:* Any attempt to level the playing field between Esko and Jaana/Kristo, to make it seem as if the play is really about some kind of generalized true love that might be found with equal audience satisfaction by any of the characters, is a depersonalized abstraction that reduces the play to a chessboard, and completely anesthetizes its emotional appeal.

*Case 2, Suppression 4.* And then, the great bathetic anticlimax of Nummi’s litany: what is “unexpected” about the ending for him is simply that it is an engagement rather than a wedding. Never mind that we have known since Act II that the wedding of Esko to Kreeta is off; never mind that we have watched Kristo and Mikko sneer cynically about Esko’s failure in Act IV; never mind also that all the warm, fuzzy attention in Act V is on the reunion of Niko with his daughter (and her fiancé), leaving Esko and Iivari and their miserable parents (and us) to skulk about the peripheries of the “festivities” like mangy curs.

*Case 3.* “[Eskon] kaikki häätouhu paljastuu lumeeksi, mutta Eskon on suoriuduttava kosiomatkallaan monesta mutkasta, ennen kuin hänens minuutensa kaikki puolet paljastuvat” (N 64–65)/“All the fuss over [Esko’s] wedding is revealed as illusion, but on his courting trip Esko must survive many a turn before all the sides of his self are revealed.”

*Case 3, Suppressions 1 and 2.* After the glorious catastrophe that is Act II, in Act IV Mikko Vilkastus (whose surname I translated Lightfoot) tricks Esko, manipulates him, strings him along until all their travel money is used up, then gets him drunk and picks a fight with him and ditches him (but falls while running away and breaks his leg); then, in a blind drunken rage at all the evil done him on this trip, Esko picks a fight with Antres the tailor, strangles him till Antres falls unconscious, and
Esko thinks he’s murdered the poor man. These are what Nummi euphemizes as (Suppression 1) the *monta mutkaa*/*many turns* he has to survive, before—what? The great climax of Esko’s journey for Nummi is that (Suppression 2) “all the sides of his self are revealed.” What are the “sides,” and how are they “revealed”? There is absolutely no sense in which either Esko “reveals” his “sides” or the “revealing” of “all the sides of his self” constitutes a “festive” end to his character arc. Given Nummi’s determination to put a positive spin on the ending, however, he has to say *something* positive about Esko’s character arc.

*Case 4.* Nummi’s take on Esko’s bitter misogynistic vow of eternal bachelorhood:

Esko valitsee elämänuransa päätöksellään jäädä kotiin isänsä ammattia jatkamaan. Pojan naittamisesta ei vastedes tarvitse kantaa huolta, sillä hän ilmoittaa oppineensa tuntemaan naisen luonnon ja aikovansa jäädä poikamieheksi. (N 65)

Esko chooses his life’s path by deciding to stay at home and pursue his father’s profession. In the future there will be no need to worry about marrying this son off, for he declares that he has learned to know the nature of woman and intends to remain a bachelor.

*Case 4, Suppressions.* In Nummi’s account, there is no bitterness in Esko at the end, and no misogyny. What he has learned is not that women are *pettur(e)i(t)a/vile deceivers*, but that they, well, have a vague unspecified *luonto/nature*. The young man who in Act I idealizes and romanticizes Kreeta as an angel now condemns not only her but every other woman on earth as treacherously deceptive—but never mind that. Even mentioning Esko’s misogynistic spite at the end would undermine the “idyllic” quality of the ending. The suggestion that Esko is one of “those who were living in illusion [and] are [now] freed from misconceptions” is grievously undermined not only by his misogyny, but by the fact that his misogyny is based on the assumption that Kreeta was the one who treacherously deceived him. That deception, of course, was Karri’s “harmless” joke—Kreeta had nothing to do with it—but even after Karri explains this to him, Esko cannot forgive her. Fueling his unquenched anger at her, surely, is the fact that at the end of Act II, when he curses her, bitterly, violently, almost satanically, Kreeta responds with simple dismissive elegance: “Minulla ei mitään tekemistä kanssanne, te hävytön mies!” (N 217 l. 3)/*I
have nothing to say to you, you disgusting man” (R 149). That Esko remembers. Her dismissive words echo in his ears for the rest of the play, and fuel his misogyny at the end of Act V. For Nummi (N 65), though, “uuden identiteetin löytäminen on juhlakomedian viimeinen vaihe”/“finding a new identity is the final phase of the festive comedy”; never mind that Esko’s new identity is that of a bitter, crotchety, woman-hating old man. Nummi, of course, would consider that an exaggeration: Esko’s now a confirmed bachelor, sure, but at least “all the sides of his self are revealed.”

CONCLUSION

Nummi’s reading of the play would certainly seem to explain his “neglect” of the shaping influence Kivi’s immersion in Twelfth Night had on its writing: if the ending is as sunny as he believes it is, if Esko truly is as calmly and contentedly relieved not to be forced to marry anyone as Nummi thinks, then Malvolio is a completely inappropriate model for him.

My question is: what could have led Nummi to a reading so fundamentally different from mine?

The obvious answer, that Heath Cobblers is typically performed in summer theaters, where Finns go for a warm, fuzzy summer experience, surely should not work very well when applied to professors of Finnish literature. One would not expect Kivi scholars to be quite as susceptible to a summer mood in their response to the play as summer theatergoers—especially Kivi scholars charged with creating a critical edition of the play. I first saw the play at the Laukaa Summer Theater myself, in 1976, at age twenty-one, and have only seen it performed on stage twice since then, both times again at summer theaters—and, much as I have loved its humor, I have never felt the impulse to take it at face value as a light or “liberatory” juhlanäytelmä (“festive play”). But then perhaps I came to it prepped by my love of Shakespeare’s problem comedies—especially Twelfth Night?

A more likely explanation might arise from the fact that the early critics—for nearly a century, in fact, beginning with Fredrik Cygnaeus ([1865]/1931) and moving strongly up through Viljo Tarkiainen ([1915]/1950) and V. A. Koskenniemi (1932)—were divided between the few who hated it because it made Finnish peasants look uncouth and uneducated and the many who loved it because the happy ending cast a glow of Romantic ideality over the Finnish village scene. The impetus behind the early criticism, in other words, was basically nationalistic; the divide was between those who interpreted it as a negative portrayal of Finns and those who
interpreted it as a positive portrayal of Finns. Whether for covertly nationalistic reasons, or merely out of inertial respect for the critical “tradition,” I don’t know, but Nummi clearly falls into the latter category: those who are determined to idealize or romanticize the darkness in the play. It might appear that the academically respectful way to honor that tradition would have been to describe it, track it, analyze it neutrally, without embracing it polemically, but things may just seem to me that way because I’m an outsider, not a Finn, not a Finnish nationalist, not inclined to romanticize the “reconciliation” at the end. It is much harder to identify an “interested” reading and analyze it descriptively when one shares that interest, that bias; bias in favor of an established reading tends to make that reading seem like simply the way things are.

Another editorial model might have been to include some stray voices in the scholarly introduction, to anthologize some divergent readings of the play, and so to avoid the pitfall whereby the quest for neutrality is surreptitiously transformed into partisanship. This is a model often used in critical editions where I come from—a way of “teaching the conflicts,” as Gerald Graff (1992) puts it.

Be that as it may, this volume makes a significant contribution to Kivi scholarship. For surely the goal of such a work can never be to tell the simple neutral truth. There is no such truth; the belief that there is, that there should be, is incipient authoritarianism. The fact that I disagree with Jyrki Nummi, and that you may well disagree with me, is part of the scholarly dialogue that makes intellectual understanding worth pursuing.

REFERENCES


PARTLY FUNNY: ENTERS IL DOTTORE

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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING NOTICED

The Journal of Finnish Studies has published Douglas Robinson’s lengthy review of the critical edition of Aleksis Kivi’s comedy Heath Cobblers (Nummisuutarit, below NS and NS edition), published in 2010 by the Finnish Literature Society. Robinson’s manner of treating the edition, its editors, and his methods of “counter-reading” leave me no choice but to pick up the gauntlet.

The exceptional length (the manuscript is seventeen pages) of Robinson’s essay, his idiosyncratic “counter-analysis” based on a single footnote, and the heartfelt self-centeredness of the writer himself reminds me of Vladimir Nabokov’s brilliant novel Pale Fire (1960) and its protagonist Dr. Charles Kinbote, an unhappy professor in a foreign country, who purports to edit a poem by his friend John Shade in the form of a critical edition. After having noticed that the poem does not—alas!—use any of the grand ideas Kinbote has bestowed upon the poet, he decides to present his own story in the footnotes instead of commenting on the poem itself. The story is funny, but, like all of Nabokov’s stories, only partly so.

Robinson’s ill-treated story about the NS edition consists of a fragment of one-and-a-half pages on NS in a short preface to his English translation of two of Kivi’s plays: Nummisuutarit and Kullervo. He is not content with the way his critical insight is treated in a short footnote presented in the critical essay of the NS edition. Under the guise of writing a review, he spreads his discontentment over seventeen pages, thirteen of which he uses to explain what he really meant in his introductory essay and to demonstrate that Jyrki Nummi, the general editor of the edition and author of the two critical essays on NS, has not only misrepresented his ideas and missed their potential significance for Kivi’s play but more generally fails to meet Robinson’s ethical standards on the writing of critical essays.
TO REVIEW OR TO POSE

According to Robinson, a critical edition is a work that presents only facts in a “strictly neutral” way. If we are to take this at face value, it would obviously mean lists of dates, titles, authors, etc. Robinson may not be aware that a critical edition of this kind on Kivi already exists. It was published some seventy years ago by Viljo Tarkiainen and E. A. Saarimaa. The editorial group of the new edition thought that there might be demand for a more modern editorial edition seeking to fill a scholarly gap of some fifty years and to provide Kivi’s work with the fruits of new research undertaken in the intervening decades.

In a “strictly neutral” way, Robinson uses the first two pages of his “review” to describe the contents of the edition in exhaustive detail. He provides long lists of titles, subtitles, and authors responsible for the essays and editorial work. Through his long and detailed reporting, Robinson clearly wishes to convince the reader that he has done a good job in remaining “strictly neutral.”

In the 330 pages of the NS edition, Robinson finds one syntactical mistake. Additionally Robinson points to one repetitive sentence in an essay on the background of NS, a sentence in which similar but necessary information is presented in a different context. In a critical edition of this nature, it is impossible to avoid some kind of repetition. Another case of repetition, on the lexical level, is duly noted where it is only just perceptible. Robinson also suggests that one part of the introductory essay should have been placed in another essay and explains that he longed for an index of names and a biographical presentation of contributors to the edition. So far, so good.

I would not return to such remarks unless there was something symptomatic behind these corrections and the way they are presented. Firstly, a mistake is a mistake, but one wonders why Robinson devotes so much space to a trivial linguistic fault. I assume that the point is to demonstrate that he is competent in Finnish; the grandeur of the gesture reveals the intention. Secondly, why does Robinson spend one page on minor faults while devoting two-and-a-half pages in total to the detailed listing of trivial information? Editorial comments form a natural part of the act of reviewing, but if Robinson really thinks that listing names and titles, remarking upon one linguistic error, and pointing out two (supposed) repetitions in a 330-page edition counts as a review, he has failed to understand the point of scholarly reviewing.

Robinson’s intention of not reviewing the edition becomes clear as soon as we
notice that he has simply nothing to say about the new information, new discoveries, and fresh perspectives that the NS edition provides on Kivi’s play: the evaluation of earlier editions and editorial practices (Katajamäki), a presentation of theatre reception (Paavolainen), the established NS text (Kokko and Katajamäki), an introduction to Kivi’s dramatic language (Lauerma), NS in cinema (Laine), a presentation of the prompt book (or director’s book) from the first production of NS by Kaarlo Bergbom (Paavolainen, Katajamäki, and Kokko). All these contributions, each without precedent in Kivi research, comprise an essential part of the edition. To Robinson “none of it makes for particularly engrossing reading.” The following blunt statement that “the edition is nevertheless an extremely valuable resource for Kivi scholars” is not an evaluation but an escape from one.

Lost in a Footnote

Why all this indifference, and at such great length? The reason is that Robinson has an agenda, one that comes to light over the course of the following thirteen pages, constituting an independent act of demonstration and attempting to prove that NS is not a “festive comedy” but a play with “dark” undertones. I would rather not call it a review, for it does not review anything but harps on about one of the “reviewer’s” own ideas. Nor is it a review article, because it does not present a single interesting methodological or theoretical point, and it is not a critical essay, because the writer does not avail himself of any research information available on NS or drama research, but focuses solely on his own thoughts. So let us call it an essay.

The raison d’être of Robinson’s essay is the correction and elucidation of the writer’s critical ideas, as supposedly misrepresented in a footnote in the NS edition. Here is the footnote, in Robinson’s translation:

Douglas Robinson (1993, xi) believes that all of the characters in Heath Cobblers are after their own advantage (“Every central character in Heath Cobblers [. . .] has a get-rich-quick scheme”). According to Robinson they also all fail, and for that reason he considers Heath Cobblers to be a Shakespearean problem comedy like All’s Well That Ends Well and Measure for Measure. Each of those two Shakespearean comedies has a problematic last act. This genre classification is better suited to Kihlaus [“The Betrothal”], which remains in a very different way open and “failed.”
In this note (the essay contains 151 footnotes), Robinson finds four problems that lead him to make the following severe judgment:

[F]ar from being overtly polemical, Nummi dresses a covertly partisan reading of the play up in the frock coat of neutrality—and that the tensions between neutrality and bias are usefully on display in his footnote paraphrasing my reading.

I shall examine all four of these problems and the central argument in each of them. But I will not comment on the long interpretative derivations that Robinson links to his “problems.” They do not form part of the basic problem, but meet Robinson’s other needs in his essay.

Robinson’s first problem is that the Finnish paraphrase of his opening sentence is “misleading.” This problem falls flat, however, as, in keeping with the standards of good reporting, the footnote provides the original English sentence in brackets immediately after the translation. It is put there for the reader so that he can check the paraphrase and the translation. In other words, whatever the accuracy of the paraphrase or the translation, this is certainly not “covertly partisan [. . .] in the frock coat of neutrality,” as Robinson maintains.

The second problem is hard to comprehend, as is the fact that it has been made in all seriousness. According to Robinson, Nummi “suggests” that Robinson “trade[s] simply on that failure of the two main subplots,” but he [Nummi] does not mention anything about the fact that

it [the failure?] also assumes our affective identification with those two main characters, the brothers Esko and Iivari, and thus our personal feeling of failure when their get-rich-quick schemes fail.

The accusation of neglecting what Robinson’s original statement “assumes” about the ideas he now presents in his essay is, of course, mindless. In his original preface there is nothing on “affective identification” related to the quoted passage in the NS edition. Robinson’s argument of a “covertly partisan reading” melts into the air.

Robinson might also have mentioned—for the sake of honesty—that Nummi’s critical essay includes an entire sub-chapter on this get-rich-quick scheme entitled “Money and Love” (67–70). The chapter is tied to another complex theme that
Robinson simply omits in his later analysis: “Law and Justice” (70–71). Both of these *topoi* have featured as themes in comedy for the last 2,000 years.

Robinson’s third problem deals with two Shakespearean comedies, *All’s Well that Ends Well*, and *Measure for Measure*, mentioned by Nummi as examples of “problem plays.” The problem lies in that Robinson’s preferred play, *Twelfth Night*, serves, in his view, more aptly as a model for NS. If there is slight disagreement on the priority of different subtexts, it has nothing to do with “a covertly partisan reading.” Moreover, the disagreement is trivial, because these Shakespearean plays are mentioned as examples, and there are many other Shakespeare plays that could have been mentioned too. The amusing part of this issue is that, in the original footnote, no disagreement is expressed whatsoever; Nummi simply gives different emphasis to the importance of the problem play in NS.

The fourth problem is not even presented as a problem; Robinson merely repeats the same idea that Nummi briefly makes in the footnote. Robinson writes that *Kihlaus*, another comedy by Kivi, “remains in a different way open and ‘failed’[…] because it is a very different kind of comedy.” I could not agree more, because generic difference is, indeed, the reason why the original comment on Robinson’s idea of the problem comedy was made: “This genre classification is better suited to *Kihlaus* [“The Betrothal”], which remains in a very different way open and ‘failed.’” So, where do we find the “covertly partisan reading” in Nummi’s comment that features no problem, no disagreement?

Robinson’s “problems” and counter-arguments, together with all the prolonged analysis I have not touched upon here, take up four pages. However, this does not satisfy him; indeed, he seems not even to convince himself. Thus he adds a large supplementary reading to demonstrate the full potential of his critical contribution to the understanding of Aleksis Kivi’s *Nummisuutarit*. The method is to make a very small part of Nummi’s essay (about four pages out of fifty-five) the target for his “counter-reading,” a half-witted piece of misreading in which his own insights shine through. No other source of information—say, commentary and research by Kivi scholars, let alone research on drama and comedy—is mentioned or referenced. The floor is cleared for Robinson and for him alone.

**Premises for Analysis**

Instead of going through all the sub-chapters in which Robinson repeats his basic argument (“NS has no happy ending”) and the details of his reading, I shall comment
upon the methods or, rather, the manners he employs in his counter-argumentation. I will begin with the final pages of Robinson’s essay in which he lays bare the critical principles that so usefully explain his method.

Robinson’s frame is built upon the following premises. First, he emphasizes that his reading is based on his “real-life experience.” Second, he understands that a piece of drama, particularly in the genre of comedy, represents the real world and real people to such a degree that he even knows what happens to the fictitious characters after the curtain has fallen. Third, Robinson is a cultural relativist (which makes one wonder at his enthusiasm for “realism” and “experientiality” as irrefutable proof of something). Fourth, Robinson is an American, which makes him an “outsider” in the sense that all the national and cultural prejudices that obscure Finns’ judgment do not affect him—cultural relativist as he is. This extraordinary position gives him a vantage point from which to understand Finnish drama.

I must admit that these “premises” seem surprising. Not because they are particularly original or ingenious, but because one rarely encounters them in any serious research—one meets them in Pale Fire—and in such a neat ensemble! As much as I believe in the sincerity of Robinson’s principles, I suspect that they may partly be explained by the fact that they are set against Nummi’s starting points as Robinson has described them. The real-life experience is set against Nummi’s reading of the drama as “literature” and not “life” (as Robinson sees it—after all, he is a relativist!); the realist view is based on Nummi’s “abstract logic” (that is, research framework and methods); the relativist view is set against Nummi’s objectivism and nationalism. In the last premise, Robinson, as the “cynical” American, is set against Nummi, the Finn who does not understand he is a prisoner of his own nationalist and romantic delusions.

For some reason—and in contravention of all decent scholarly manners—Robinson fails to present or even comment upon the “abstract logic,” that is, the methodological framework of the critical essay he is attacking. The major parts of the framework are principally: (1) modern genre theory and analysis (which treats works as a complex network of genres through which several generic hypotheses on NS are described and analyzed); (2) intertextual theory and analysis (allusions, quotations, transformations of larger subtexts, etc.); (3) the rhetoric of drama (and an analysis of dialogue and monologue patterns); (4) established theories and analysis of dramatic characters; (5) analysis of plot structure and dramatic construction (with particular reference to research on Shakespeare from the 1950s and 1960s to date).
All these critical tools are well established in literary criticism, and they have been used in drama research since the 1960s. It is important to note that these methods have not been used in NS research before the publication of the new NS edition and that it is this significant gap, among other things, that Nummi’s critical essay seeks to address. However, if we compare the research tool-kit provided by the critical essay to Robinson’s ideas about “real-life experience” (that is, what Robinson has experienced in Finland), his bold “cultural relativism,” his “realism” (‘comedies are based on real life”), and the all-justifying observer position (being an American), all we can conclude is that Robinson should perhaps update his own aesthetics.

Still, one might have expected—given his considerable critical effort and his grave accusations regarding the scholarly integrity of his antagonist—that Robinson might have provided even a short analysis of Nummi’s critical account of the play: on its influences and stimuli (55–58); on its various generic options (58–67); its style, dramatic language, and rhetoric (71–92); its themes of money and love, law, and justice (67–71); the dramatis personae (93–104); the plot structure (108–120) as it is described and examined; and how all these parts combine in the concluding analysis of the comedy. But no, Robinson does not say a word about this “abstract logic.” Instead, he concentrates solely on four pages (63–66) from the preliminary genre analysis of NS, which he finds a suitable target and a springboard for his “counter-reading.”

“HAPPY ENDING”
Robinson’s strongest attack takes place in his supplemental reading, as mentioned above, of a few lines in the section of the essay presenting generic options. He maintains that Nummi reads the end of the play as a conventional happy ending. Robinson takes a firm stand and questions the reading which he claims to have found in Nummi’s essay: “The happy ending never quite takes hold, never quite convinces the viewer or reader that this ever really happens in real life.” He then picks sentences here and there in the genre analysis to demonstrate that Nummi’s reading of NS “as a warm, sunny, all-inclusive ‘festive comedy’” is not valid.

Let us see, then, what Robinson presents by way of a contrary discovery:

My inability to go along with him on that may just be written off as my problem: I’m not a Finn, I’m not as cheerful and light-hearted as the
Finns who love this play, I’m an American, and therefore more negative, more cynical, more inclined to focus on the dark underbelly of scenes like the ones I quoted above. I’ve been corrupted by Twelfth Night, maybe: what I love about Heath Cobblers is what I love about Shakespeare’s greatest problem comedy, that both playwrights so brilliantly twist us emotionally into the complexities of real human interaction, where there is no high moral clarity, no perfect good and no perfect evil, no perfect happiness or total despair—and where no reconciliation is complete.

Now, it must be pointed out—because Robinson does not—that he picks his target sentences (regarding the “happy ending”) from the few pages of the genre analysis (63–66) where the play is presented from the point of view of several generic options and where the new idea of the particular genre of festive comedy is presented.

It must also be pointed out—because Robinson does not—that in the final eighteen pages (102–120) of the critical essay he could have found a detailed reading of the end of NS in the light of the dramatic and thematic structures of the whole play. This reading, which Robinson seems to dismiss, is based on:

1. the elucidation of the theme of ethical choice between right and wrong, presented at the beginning of the play through the parable employed by Sepeteus in his famous monologue (108–109);
2. the intertextual analysis of the three subplots of the three travelling protagonists—Esko, Niko, and Iivari—and the moral complexities they face on their journeys (110–18);
3. opening (inside the intertextual analysis) the thematic implications of the modelling subtexts behind each subplot: the Book of Tobit and Esko’s journey (110–12), the parable of the Prodigal Son and Iivari (112–14), and the Odysseian journey behind the adventures of Niko (114–18); and
4. an examination of the psychological setting of these different male types and characters representing different sides of the male psyche (118–20). In all these transformations of the subtexts the complexity of Kivi’s concept of man is revealed.

This analysis does not, in any way, indicate that the serious moral and ethical questions in NS are something simply to be “laughed off,” as Robinson maintains. Quite the contrary, the point is to show—to use Robinson’s words—how Kivi
“brilliantly twist[s] us emotionally into the complexities of real human interaction, where there is no high moral clarity, no perfect good and no perfect evil, no perfect happiness or total despair—and where no reconciliation is complete.” In its final paragraph, the essay quotes Eino Karhu’s apt formulation that “the happy end of the comedy is joyful and light, following formal convention, but it is not a ‘happy end’—it must be understood as an expression of the characters’ moral optimism.”

To conclude: not only is Robinson’s claim a falsification of the text he is attacking; he also fails to mention anything about the chapters of the critical essay in which the serious ethical, judicial, and familial problems of NS are examined. Robinson’s method of “counter-reading” is, thus, very simple: he omits all information that does not fit his reading. Moreover, he calls such conduct a “scholarly dialogue that makes intellectual understanding worth pursuing.”

**The Ethics of Translation**

Let us take one example of Robinson’s analytical method regarding an important detail of his supplementary reading. In order to show the “dark underbelly” of NS, Robinson repeats his observation that there is no wedding in NS, and thus, no “happy ending.” His argumentation goes like this:

*Case 2, Suppression 4.* And then, the great bathetic anticlimax of Nummi’s litany: what is “unexpected” about the ending for him is simply that it is an engagement rather than a wedding.

If Robinson had read the genre chapter carefully, he would have understood that wedding and engagement are functionally the same act in festive comedy (as presented and defined by Frye, Barber, Charney, etc.). The play ends in a festive spirit, the sign of which is a wedding or an engagement, which signify the promise of a new beginning. Wedding and engagement are functionally identical in the repertoire of festive comedy. However, Robinson fails to understand that generic repertoire is a model, not a compilation of words, and thus he constructs a case against Nummi’s presentation of the end of the festive comedy, and translates the original Finnish text as follows:

Yllättäen jo toinen näytös avautuu hääjuhlanä. Tosin välillä se muutuu kovin riitaisaksi, niin kuin juhlissa toisinaan käy. Näytelmä kohoa
Surprisingly, the wedding celebration comes early, in the second act. True, at times it turns rather fractious, as sometimes happens at festive occasions. The play rises in the end to an authentic festive mood, although even then not to the kind that was expected. There is no wedding, only an engagement.

I have no pretensions to master written English as it is not my mother tongue, but it seems to me that the above translation reveals the limits of Robinson’s Finnish or, worse, his purposeful reading of the original Finnish text to serve his own ends. First of all, aito may be translated as ‘authentic’, but in the context the emphasis is not on the factual and verifiable. As per the contemporary use of aito in Finnish, aito serves here to heighten the meaning of the noun to which it is linked, “the festive mood.”

Secondly, the last sentence of the paragraph above (“There is no wedding, only an engagement”) is a clear mistranslation because it renders an engagement something less worthy than a wedding (which serves Robinson’s intentions well), whereas the Finnish phrase does not indicate anything of the sort. On the contrary, the link between the clauses is pointedly left open. A precise and “strictly neutral” translation might read: “There was no wedding; there was an engagement.” This is crucial in the supposed disagreement of how to read the end of the play: it makes a wedding and an engagement equal, and this is fatal for Robinson’s counter-reading and his criticism of Nummi’s account. More crucially, inserting the additional (!) word only to connect two equal sentences serves further to strengthen Robinson’s own argument.

**Knowing the Facts**

The information basis of Robinson’s “reading” is revealed at the end of his essay where he proceeds to draw final conclusions and ponders where and why Nummi’s analysis went awry.

My question is: what could have led Nummi to a reading so fundamentally different from mine? [. . .] The obvious answer, that *Heath Cobblers*
Partly Funny: Enters Il Dottore

is typically performed in summer theaters, where Finns go for a warm, fuzzy summer experience, surely should not work very well when applied to professors of Finnish literature. One would not expect Kivi scholars to be quite as susceptible to a summer mood in their response to the play as summer theatergoers—especially Kivi scholars charged with creating a critical edition of the play.

If Robinson had read Pentti Paavolainen’s article on the theatrical reception of NS, he would have learnt that NS is not a comedy typically performed in summer theaters, though, like nearly all Finnish literary classics, it is performed in summer theaters from time to time. This is not only because the play presents a significant challenge both for small amateur groups and professional theaters, actors in particular. First and foremost it is because NS is considered a serious play in the Finnish theatrical repertoire, and much of the attraction of the play resides in its broad humor and complex view of human life.

The fundamental misunderstanding of NS’s position in Finnish drama reflects the more general problem with Robinson’s attitude to the factual and informational basis of Kivi’s plays. His only information on Kivi research seems to be what he has read second-hand in the very edition he claims to be reviewing. This can be deduced from the fact that he does not make a single reference to research not specifically referenced in the edition. Still he presents all his information on Kivi research as if it were his own discovery. Anyone who has written reviews knows this old trick.

Let us examine a few final errors in Robinson’s account of the reception history of NS. Note that he cannot present a single argument without trying to cast the poor editor in an unfavorable light:

A more likely explanation might arise from the fact that the early critics—for nearly a century, in fact, beginning with Fredrik Cygnaeus ([1865]/1931) and moving strongly up through Viljo Tarkiainen ([1915]/1950) and V. A. Koskenniemi (1932)—were divided between the few who hated it because it made Finnish peasants look uncouth and uneducated and the many who loved it because the happy ending cast a glow of Romantic ideality over the Finnish village scene. The impetus behind the early criticism, in other words, was basically nationalistic; the divide was between those who interpreted it as a negative portrayal
of Finns and those who interpreted it as a positive portrayal of Finns. Whether for covertly nationalistic reasons, or merely out of inertial respect for the critical “tradition,” I don’t know, but Nummi clearly falls into the latter category: those who are determined to idealize or romanticize the darkness in the play.

Where did Robinson gather this information of the critical “division” regarding Kivi’s peasants? Well, he has taken it from Nummi’s essay, but, in his own none too subtle manner, he reveals his true source and his misunderstanding thereof. Amusingly enough, the years in Robinson’s references reveal his lack of familiarity with the field and the source of his “knowledge.” No researcher of Finnish literature or drama would ever mark the article by Cygnaeus (1865) with dates referring to a translation ([1865]/1931) or refer to Tarkiainen’s (1915) later (supplemented) editions (such as that of 1950), unless there were specific editorial reasons for doing so, as is the case in the NS edition. These “sources” are also important independent documents in the history of learning in literary scholarship. Moreover, it is unlikely that anyone familiar with Koskenniemi’s monograph would mistake the year of its publication as Robinson does, because the correct year (1934) marked the 100th anniversary of Kivi’s birth, and Koskenniemi explicitly expresses his wish to celebrate this date by publishing his book in that year.

The above mistakes are trivial, but they reveal the insecurity of one essentially trespassing in the research field. Much more fatal is the misrepresentation of the supposed “division” in the research tradition. Firstly, between Cygnaeus, Koskenniemi, and Tarkiainen there is no division on Kivi’s view of Finnish peasants, though the three authors disagree on other, more important critical matters regarding Kivi’s work. Division over the peasant issue does, however, exist between Cygnaeus and August Ahlqvist on Kivi’s Seven Brothers. The issue is, thus, unrelated to NS, which received very positive reviews at the time of its publication. Robinson confuses the reception of NS with the case of Seven Brothers (1870), linked as it was to a power struggle within the Finnish Literature Society and how it was reflected in various stances later taken towards Kivi. Later on, it was the Swedish-speaking critics who took a condescending stance against Kivi, because they quite rightly saw in him a canonical threat to J. L. Runeberg. But even this “division” had nothing to do with Finnish peasants or the matter of a “happy ending.”
Last but not least: there was and there is no debate on the “happy end” of the play related to the question of how Finnish peasants should be represented in Kivi’s drama. Thus, the argument is framed only in order to show that Robinson is taking a stance on an important critical issue, “because the happy ending cast a glow of Romantic ideality over the Finnish village scene.” This is entirely Robinson’s own invention.

And to conclude: To maintain that Nummi presents a “nationalistic” reading is anachronistic. Firstly, whether they were idealistic, romantic, or realistic, all readings in the nineteenth century were “nationalistic.” The goal of all serious Kivi research conducted in Finland during the last fifteen years, however, has been to set Kivi in the international European literary scene of the nineteenth century. Even Hannes Sihvo’s latest monograph on Kivi, “Life and Works,” is, above all, an attempt to place Kivi in contemporary quotidian life through which a more psychologically understandable writer can emerge. The whole idea of a dominant “Romantic nationalist reading” is based on Robinson’s ignorance of contemporary Kivi research.

“Where I Come From”

Finally, what is curious about Robinson’s essay-review is that we learn so much more about the reviewer than we do about the NS edition or Kivi’s play. Before he has said one word about the edition he is supposedly reviewing, Robinson has twice mentioned himself and his merits within the field of Kivi research. Perhaps this is considered a good opening or a suitable manner of treating scholarly issues in the academic environment “where I come from,” as Robinson so strongly underlines.

Robinson’s “whereabouts” seem somewhat mysterious, but I established that academically speaking he hails from Jyväskylä University, a university in Central Finland, where he taught and completed his studies in the 1980s. Dramatically speaking, another kind of geography seems to emerge. At the end of his essay, Robinson appears to lecture the editor of the NS edition:

> It might appear that the *academically* respectful way to honor that tradition [of Kivi research] would have been to describe it, track it, analyze it neutrally, without embracing it polemically. . . .

The statement is surely intended as well-meaning guidance to a naughty pupil, but, instead, turns out to be a grandiose bluff. Robinson does not present one single
relevant research source which has been “embraced polemically,” save one-and-a-half pages in a preface of his own. The argument of a partisan reading is something Robinson needs in order to climb on to the stage and spend some twenty pages singing his own praises. All his academic pretensions, his short temper, and impatience with those incapable of understanding his learned contributions to Kivi research, reveal an academician famous from commedia dell’arte—Il Dottore.

Alexey Golubev and Irina Takala’s *The Search for a Socialist El Dorado: Finnish Immigration to Soviet Karelia from the United States and Canada in the 1930s* provides readers with new information on the rather obscure topic of North American emigration to the Soviet Union during the Great Depression. During the Cold War Era (1945–91), the Soviet archives were closed to most Western researchers, which hindered any explorations of the topic outside of personal narratives, such as Lawrence and Sylvia Hokkanen’s book *Karelia: A Finnish-American Couple in Stalin’s Russia* (1934–41), published in 1991, which recounts the idealism of the émigrés that was shattered by the mass arrests of their friends and acquaintances. The Hokkanens survived the worst of Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin’s purges, only to return to a Finnish-American community that refused to believe their story. Mayme Sevander followed with *They Took My Father: A Story of Idealism and Betrayal* (1992), where the author recounts her childhood experiences in Stalin’s Russia. She followed that with two books, *Red Exodus: Finnish-American Emigration to Russia* (1993) and *Of Soviet Bondage* (1996), which provided additional research on the numbers of North Americans who moved to the Soviet Union and the depravations they endured at the hands of political officials. Nick Baron produced a much more comprehensive work on political repression in Karelia with *Soviet Karelia: Politics, Planning and Terror in Stalin’s Russia, 1920–1939*, which makes extensive use of Russian archival material (2007).

Whereas Baron’s work emphasizes the political relationship between Stalin in Moscow and local officials in Karelia, Golubev and Takala’s book looks exclusively at the fate of North Americans of Finnish heritage in the Soviet Union. The authors also make extensive use of new archival materials, oral histories, and other records
in order to illustrate their ideas in the nine chapters that comprise the book. The work’s origins came from two research projects that included scholars from the United States, Canada, Finland, and Russia. Their shared desire to investigate the story and the ultimate fate of a group of idealistic, yet politically naïve individuals, has led to an interesting work that appeals to both academic and general audiences.

Golubev and Takala begin the first chapter with a brief but well-known history of Finnish migration to North America and the migrants’ subsequent struggle to learn the English language and to assimilate into local society. Golubev and Takala then move on to the largely unexplored topic of Finnish migration to Eastern Karelia in Russia and later the Soviet Union. While some Finns had lived in Karelia and St. Petersburg during Czarist times, the Russian Civil War (1917–1921) and the Finnish Civil War (1918) created a situation where Marxists from both countries sought refuge in the sparsely populated region. The promise of a better life, nearer to Finland, and governed by the egalitarian ideas of socialists created a beacon for discontented Finns in North America.

The second chapter explores living conditions the Finnish migrants found in Soviet Karelia. After the Bolshevik victory in the Russian Civil War, the new country needed skilled workers to effectively exploit the natural resources, especially lumber, in area north of St. Petersburg. The authors point out that Russians have a long history of attracting skilled workers from Western Europe to support economic growth. This occurred in the 1920s and 1930s, when Soviet officials truly needed the help, and willingly offered lucrative living benefits for people moving to the region, thus creating a pull to draw in new immigrants.

In the third chapter, Golubev and Takala take the reader back to North America as they detail the living and working conditions that helped to push the recent Finnish immigrants in the direction of the Soviet Union. They cite poor economic conditions brought on by the Great Depression as one of the factors, along with the desire to create a socialist society. The North Americans were encouraged by a propaganda campaign carried out in the Finnish-language press and by individuals such as Matti Tenhunen in Wisconsin and Kalle Aronen, who helped establish the Karelian Technical Aid Committee in New York. With the push of economic hardships and the pull of a better life in Karelia, the authors provide clear evidence for why the Finnish immigrants chose the Soviet Union, a position that is supported by detailed statistics about the migrants.
The following chapter chronicles the inept handling of the immigrants once they reached Karelia. Golubev and Takala describe a great deal of confusion among Soviet officials over the import of foreign goods, manufacturing equipment, and taxes. Furthermore, the immigrants found living conditions to be much worse than those described to prospective migrants in North America. Problems such as food shortages, coupled with a lack of housing, plumbing, and electricity meant that the immigrants endured untold hardships. The situation was somewhat mitigated by the use of foreign currency to buy needed supplies.

Despite the adversity, the North Americans began to thrive as they helped to modernize the region. The fifth chapter examines their political, economic, and social contributions to Karelia. The immigrants not only helped to increase lumber production with new techniques and technologies, but also helped manufacturing with their leadership in a ski factory, while others started successful communal farms. The story of this success carries over to the sixth chapter where the authors demonstrate the North American literary, artistic, and cultural contributions to the emerging Soviet society.

By the mid-1930s, the North American immigrants’ success led to a growing animosity with the local Russian population who oftentimes resented the status held by foreigners. This coincided with Stalin’s growing paranoia and the onset of the show trials and purges that dominated the era of Soviet history. Chapters seven and eight provide readers with some of the first-hand accounts of what happened to the North American immigrants. Golubev and Takala make extensive use of archival material, newspapers, and personal histories to create a vivid picture of hardships endured by large numbers of immigrants. They describe how officials came at night to arrest the North Americans on dubious charges, while other people stood by idly watching the unfolding events. The accomplishments of the immigrants in effect spelled their doom at the hands of angry Russians. Mass arrests were followed by short trials and lengthy prison terms or death. The lucky few fled back to Finland or returned to the United States and Canada where people refused to believe their horror stories of living in a communist state.

For those who decided to remain in the Soviet Union, the late 1930s were a period of relative calm until the outbreak of the Second World War. Stalin ordered the invasion of Finland to help create a buffer zone between Russia and Adolf Hitler’s Nazi Germany. As a result, Karelia became an active war zone, with a Finnish-American immigrant population that posed a new threat to the Soviet government.
Stalin responded with mass deportations of foreign populations in border regions. Golubev and Takala conclude the chapter with a statistical analysis of the victims of purges.

The final chapter of the book briefly examines conditions in Karelia after Finland joined Nazi Germany in the 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union. Once again the Karelian population was caught between armies that devastated the region. With the end of combat in 1944, normality returned to Soviet Karelia, which allowed the integration of the Finnish-North American population with Soviet society. The authors point to interethnic marriage, cultural isolation, and the Soviet education system as the primary causes for integration of the Finns in Karelia.

The information concerning the fate of 6,500 North American migrants to the Soviet Union will be of special interest to the relatives of the people involved in the ordeal. Additionally, individuals who study Finnish migration or multiethnic integration will find the book useful, especially as a comparative tool. While there has been a great deal of literature on Finnish contributions to American and Canadian societies, there has been a dearth of information on Finnish influence on Russia. It is now possible to compare the integration of Finnish immigrants in both countries, which opens the door for further investigation of subsequent generations from the initial migrant groups. This could yield useful information on the integration process that may be beneficial to other migrant populations.

In all, Golubev and Takala wrote an eminently readable book that sheds light on a relatively obscure topic. Nevertheless, the research and execution of the work deserves recognition for its contribution to Finnish immigrant history.

REFERENCES


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In the first decade of the new millennium, remarkable books on Jean Sibelius and his music were released nearly every other year. In 2000, Vesa Sirén’s book *Aina poltta sikaria: Jean Sibelius aikalaisten silmin* (Always smoking a cigar: Jean Sibelius through the eyes of his contemporaries, Otava) gave new life and color to the monumental picture of the national composer. In 2003, Fabian Dahlström published his epoch-making catalogue of Sibelius’s works, *Jean Sibelius – Thematisch-bibliographisches Verzeichnis seiner Werke* (published by the German Musikverlag Breitkopf & Härtel, which had also been the composer’s central publisher during his lifetime), and in 2005 Dahlström brought Sibelius’s diary from 1909 to 1944 into daylight, studiously edited and in the original Swedish (published by Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland and Bokförlaget Atlantis). In 2007, the fiftieth commemorative year of Sibelius, two extensive books on Sibelius appeared. Andrew Barnett’s biography *Sibelius* (Yale UP), and a biographical treatise by Tomi Mäkelä, titled *Poesie in der Luft: Studien zu Leben and Werk* (Breitkopf & Härtel). Two years later, Glenda Dawn Goss completed her even more extensive biography, *Sibelius: A Composer’s Life and the Awakening of Finland*, published by the University of Chicago Press. The abundance of Sibelius literature clearly was an indication of increasing interest in, and new trends in research on, the composer’s heritage, both his biography and his production.

The Sibelius biographies by Barnett, Mäkelä, and Goss feature rather different approaches to the composer. The biography by Barnett is a traditional chronological survey of the composer’s life and works. The focus in the book lies in Sibelius’s music, and, gratifyingly, his youthful production, and other lesser-known works are treated with an appreciation that they truly deserve. As the subtitle of Mäkelä’s book, “studies on life and works,” implies, his aim seems not to have been to write a biography, a chronologically proceeding story about the composer and his works, in a traditional sense. He does use the word “biography,” but the term as a whole reads *Kritische Biographie*, a “critical biography.” Thus, the writer emphasizes the significance of historical documentation and source criticism as the starting point of his studies. To describe his approach, Mäkelä states that “a consideration of [Sibelius’s] aesthetic, social and ideological position in the context of the history of Western thought is absolutely essential for any objective approach to his art.” Against this background, Mäkelä discusses Sibelius in the context of various themes, such as
“alternatives to the avantgarde,” “the new-German dilemma of orchestral music after 1894,” and “Walter Niemann and ‘die Heimatkunst.’” As a whole, the focus of the book lies more or less in the reception of Sibelius in Germany.

Goss’s approach, again, is more traditional, yet the perspective is not less fresh than in the other two books: her aim is to make Sibelius and his music understood in the context of the history of Finland and Finnish culture for the (English-speaking) readers abroad. Thus, Mäkelä, a Finnish scholar, who has lived and worked for years as a professor of musicology in Germany, strives for making Sibelius understood as a “Western” figure, against the background of the international (more precisely: German) trends of his time, and challenges the significance of the composer’s Finnish-national roots, which traditionally have been highlighted in biographical writings. Goss, an American professor in musicology living and working in Finland since the 1980s, in turn aims to present Sibelius against the background of the Finnish nationalist ideology and movement, and claims that the productivity of the composer was in high degree based on the chapters of his home country’s history. This is an interesting yet understandable constellation as such: Mäkelä, as many Finns, wants to present the Finnish artist in the light of international trends of his time, as Sibelius himself wanted to be “more” than a Heimatkünstler, whereas Goss, as many writers from abroad, is interested in the composer’s Finnishness.

What unifies the biographical works by Mäkelä and Goss is the highly impressive range of documents researched and texts read for the literary products. Both writers used not only Sibelius’s diary and his correspondence as original sources, but also his musical manuscripts and an enormous selection of references from biographies on Sibelius’s contemporaries (both Finnish and from abroad), the history of Finland, music, art, culture, politics, ideas, and ideologies. In both books, literature, visual arts, and music are joined together in a fascinating manner. Goss’s biography itself is visually like an ornament, with generous illustration as much decorative as informative, and with both numerous florid quotations from poetry and shakingly dramatic manifestos from the fateful years in the history of Finland. Equally florid and poetical as well as dramatic are the author’s words and sentences, her narrator’s voice when she describes the composer’s life and the awakening of Finland.

**Content and Focus**

Unlike the thematically arranged “studies” in the book by Mäkelä, Goss has built for her book a more conventional chronological disposition. The first chapters are
praiseworthily thorough in painting a picture of the country, the civilization, and the culture in which Sibelius was born and grew up as a child, schoolboy, and student. As a whole, the focus in the book lies clearly in Sibelius’s life before his thirty-fifth birthday: the years before young Sibelius’s breakthrough as the composer of *Kullervo* in 1892 cover nearly one third of the whole, and the new century (the twentieth) is saluted well after the book’s halfway mark.

The point of emphasis in the biography is, of course, justified. A broad discussion about gestation and growth of the Finnish national identity, the nationalist movement during the Russian regime, and harnessing the arts—literature, visual arts, and music—among other cultural fields in the service of the “awakening of Finland” is as necessary as it is thorough in the book. However, since the results and conclusions of the process following the “awakening” in Sibelius’s life and productivity are also declared to be crucial in the very first pages of the book, another spotlight might have been directed to the turn which took place when Finland finally was “awakened” and achieved its independence in 1917. Namely, Goss has built the biography like a crime story, where the offending is mentioned on the very first page of the introduction (with the title “An Unsolved Mystery”), and the main question thereafter concerns the offender, or the motive of the “crime.” On well over half of the pages in her book Goss describes skillfully and vividly the idyllic “scene of the crime”—indeed, this is the title for the second chapter in the Introduction—and the course of the events leading to the fateful end of the story.

In the introduction—after having wound fast the film telling the story of the young, gifted composer (“In a remote corner of a faraway land . . .”) who became a world celebrated master—Goss writes the dramatically echoing sentence: “Then the music stopped.” According to Goss, this is the mystery, or enigma, that casts a shadow over the whole lifelong story of Sibelius. As she points out, there have been many explanations to this mystery, but “the strange case of composer Jean Sibelius and his lapse into silence has never been satisfactorily explained.” On the contrary, “all these [earlier] explanations leave a bad taste behind. “Thus, the reader feels eligible to read a satisfactory explanation that does not leave a bad taste behind. But before getting to the mystery and its explanation—or the crime and its motive—I would like to concentrate attention on certain details in the crime scene.

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**The “Lutheran Straitjacket”**

In the preface ("Methods and Miracles, Debts and Confessions") Goss writes: “His [Sibelius’s] story—and Finland’s—requires a human voice, a voice that does not spare hard truths, yet manages to find the humanity and levity in life’s vicissitudes whenever possible—as Finns do themselves and, contrary to his image, as Sibelius did too.” One of the hard truths, which Goss’s human voice levels with, concerns the Lutheran background of and atmosphere in the composer’s childhood home. After explaining the profound influence of “Lutheranism’s severe and unyielding teachings” in Finnish history and society, some of them clearly “beneficial,” Goss writes about the “shadow sides” of the religious thinking: “[. . .] for many the psychological and emotional consequences of the Lutheran straightjacket [sic] in combination with the endless winter darkness were depression, alcoholism, domestic violence, or suicide. Of all the Sibelius siblings, the most terrible price would be paid by Sibelius’s sister, Linda Maria, perhaps because, unlike the brothers, she had fewer opportunities to escape the oppressive home atmosphere.” The “terrible price” that Sibelius’s sister had to pay was her mental illness.

Explaining Linda Maria’s mental instability by the “Lutheran straitjacket” is highly questionable, as is the alleged oppressive atmosphere in Sibelius’s home, and as are the other “shadow sides,” depression, alcoholism, domestic violence, or self-destructiveness. It should be needless to say that there is no single common denominator for these shadow sides in an individual’s mind, and if there were, I severely doubt whether it would specifically be the “Lutheran straitjacket” (and whether they after all are specifically Finnish phenomena). The Finnish writer Minna Canth, whose words about the “religious side of the mind” of “man in the Nordic countries” (not only Finland) are quoted at the beginning of the chapter “Lutheranism and the Finns,” could have analyzed—and also did—various shadow sides of Finnish people on the basis of problems and deficiencies in the social system, sexual equality, education, and health care, to mention some. Besides, in the case of mental disorders (including depression, alcoholism, and so forth), the cause and effect may have been reverse, and often was, I suppose: psychological instability was the condition and strict religiousness rather a symptom. Today we hardly would claim that psychological disorders are a “terrible price” of a certain behavior, as little as we would think them a punishment. And as a continuation to Goss’s statement about the humorous side of Sibelius’s uncle, “despite the Lutheran straitjacket, the men of the Sibelius
family were not lacking in wit,” I must add: neither were—or are—many of the Lutheran clergymen.

**FINNISH MUSIC BEFORE SIBELIUS?**

Discussion about the Finnishness—the fresh “Finnish tone”—in Sibelius’s music and his significance as a national and international composer is hardly possible without an overview of Finnish music before Sibelius. Was there any? Goss mentions some examples. Yes, there was the German-born Fredrik (Friedrich) Pacius (1809–1891), whose long career as music teacher in the University of Helsinki (from 1835 to 1870) and revolutionary compositions (such as *Vårt land*, 1848, which became the Finnish national anthem, and the enormous popular opera, *Kung Karls Jakt*, 1852) brought him the byname “the father of Finnish music.” Yes, Pacius’s follower in the University of Helsinki—also German-born—Richard Faltin (1835–1918); Sibelius’s teacher, Martin Wegelius (1846–1906); and Sibelius’s older “brother-in-arms” in the front of young Finnish musicians and artists, Robert Kajanus (1856–1933), were composers. And yes, there were some other lesser-known names, who mainly composed entertaining piano pieces (such as Frans Hoyer’s *Helsingfors–Hämeenlinna Railway Galop*, illustrated in Goss’s book) or songs (Karl Collan, Filip von Schantz, Emil Genetz).

This is not nearly the whole truth, however. The first public orchestral concerts in Finland took place in 1773 in Turku, and the first musical society (*Musikaliska Sällskapet i Åbo*), giving orchestral concerts and having an up-to-date music library, was founded in 1790. Many composers were active in the circle of the society or contemporaries of it: Erik Tulindberg (1761–1814), composer of six string quartets and two violin concerti (one of which is lost); the five Lithander brothers (of whom at least two were prolific composers); Thomas Byström (1772–1839); and, above all, Bernhard Henrik Crusell (1775–1838), a musician and composer of international fame in his time. Of course, these composers were not Finnish by nationality, but they were born or active on the territory today known as Finland.

Along with Pacius and others, it might be justified to mention some outstanding composers and musical works from the nineteenth century, true milestones in Finnish music: the first orchestral work based on a *Kalevala* legend, Filip von Schantz’s impressive *Kullervo* Overture (1860), also as a reference point to Sibelius’s *Kullervo*, and the full-blooded romantic violin concerto in D minor (1878) by Ernst Fabritius (the predecessor of Sibelius’s concerto in the same key). So, there were
music, composers, and a vivid musical life in Finland before the Helsinki Music Institute, the Philharmonic Society Orchestra (both founded in 1882), and Sibelius—and even before Pacius.

“An Unsolved Mystery”

Let us now return to the “crime” and its possible “motive.” As mentioned, according to Goss—and many of the previous writers—Sibelius’s music “stopped” in the late 1920s. This “stop” was then followed by the so-called silence of Järvenpää, which lasted for nearly three decades. What then stopped or “killed” Sibelius’s music and his creativity? To use the words from the Kanteletar (translation by Rosa Newmarch): “what stilled the song that sounded?” Goss seems to imply that the reason was—Finland’s independence, the long-awaited result of the “awakening.” After Finland fought for its freedom, independence, a great achievement of the nation, was a loss for the artists who had dedicated their whole creative life and imaginative power to the struggle for liberation. Goss writes: “the fact is that, with the series of events that culminated in the Bolshevik Revolution, Finland’s secession from Russia, and its launch into independence, Jean Sibelius’s creativity—like that of so many of his generational compatriots—came to an end. To be sure, the end came gradually. But come it did—within a mere ten years of the country’s declaration of nationhood.”

Who might have been the generational compatriots of Sibelius who had joined the nationalist project in the “Golden Age” of Finnish art and music? Goss probably refers to the painters Axel Gallén-Kallela (born in 1865), and Eero Järnefelt (b. 1863), the writers Juhani Aho, Arvid Järnefelt (both b. 1861), and Eino Leino (b. 1878), and the composers Robert Kajanus (b. 1856) and Oskar Merikanto (b. 1868). One of the problems in Goss’s explanation lies in the fact that in the late 1920s, ten years after Finland’s declaration of independence, these men were not very young anymore, some of them not even alive (Aho died in 1921, Merikanto in 1924, and Leino in 1926). Gallén-Kallela died in 1931, Arvid Järnefelt in 1932, Kajanus (who did not compose very much after 1915) in 1933, and Eero Järnefelt—at the age of 74, as the most long-lived of these men—in 1937.

What about Sibelius, as he still lived for four decades after Finland’s declaration of independence? According to Goss, “in the decade after the People’s War [1918], the quality of his music, meant for public monuments, diminished: the works he wrote for the nation—Academic March, Hymn of the Earth, and Väinämöinen’s Song—had been quickly forgotten for the simple reason that they weren’t very good.” Thus,
the “end” for Sibelius’s music indeed “came gradually,” together with diminishing quality of his works written for the nation.

But is the comparison of Academic March, Hymn of the Earth, and Väinämöinen’s Song with earlier “works for the nation” really adequate? The first of them was rather written for the University than for the “nation,” the second for a celebration of the choir Suomen laulu, and only the third, perhaps, “for the nation”—it was premiered at a song fest of Kansanvalistusseura (“The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation”). And many of the works that Sibelius had written in the 1890s “for the nation” were quickly forgotten as well, not because of the quality of the music, but because of their purpose as ad hoc compositions written for particular events.

In my opinion, the idea of an artist who has totally dedicated his or her creativity to a single mission does not really match with Sibelius, after all. Of course, many of his symphonies and symphonic poems, for instance, could be—and have been—interpreted as “works for the nation,” but labeling Sibelius exclusively as a nationalistic composer is for me, at least, a clear overstatement. Already in his youth he had shown a wide range of interests in his selection of topics and vocal texts, and the stylistic orientation and variety of his music also confirms the image of Sibelius as a very many-sided and multifaceted composer.

Eventually, the biggest question concerns the crime itself. Was there an “end” in Sibelius’s creativity, or a “silence” in his musical imagination after the 1920s? The story of the Eighth Symphony and the hundreds of pages of sketches that Sibelius still wrote during his last three decades reveal that his creative mind was active up to his last years. True, he did not complete or bring to publicity new large-scale works after Tapiola and The Tempest (if we do not take into account the revised versions of the two previously unpublished movements from Lemminkäinen from the end of the 1930s), but there are clear pieces of evidence that he composed continuously, even though his attempts to write music became more and more laborious and restricted. It is after all hardly reasonable to think that a professional composer who had been active for more than forty years would or could switch off his or her musical imagination within a decade or even a longer time for any reason—external or internal. Perhaps we should begin to reconsider the entire conception of the “silence of Järvenpää.”

In Sibelius’s case, there may have been various reasons for his difficulties in writing music and completing his compositional plans after the beginning of the
1930s. His physical condition was undoubtedly one of the most significant. Around 1935, the aggravating tremble of his hands forced him to exclusively use pencil instead of ink and pen, and weak eyes, too, caused him trouble. Soon he could not manage his correspondence, but merely penciled his signature to the letters that he dictated to his secretary or family members. In 1939, after a break of more than a decade, he climbed up to the conductor’s podium for the last time, but the performance was safely broadcast, and no audience could witness his gestures. However, stories about this performance and Sibelius’s conducting still live among musicians.

**CONCLUSION**

The mystery storyline in Goss’s Sibelius biography would not need to be very pronounced, but since the writer opens her book with the introductory chapters titled “An Unsolved Mystery” and “The Scene of the Crime,” following this storyline is almost unavoidable. As discussed above, neither the mystery nor the scene of the crime as such are in every respect plausibly staged or convincingly solved. The many valuable pieces of information are right on their place, but the conclusions drawn from them may occasionally cause a few eyebrows to be raised. However, the abundance and accuracy of the documentation and the rich and vivid style of narration make the book for the most part very illustrative and well balanced.

The jubilee year of Sibelius’s 150th birthday in 2015 will bring about several new books on Sibelius, and presumably also new surveys on the Finnish master and his music. More than conventional biographies, we could welcome “new theories and fantasies” on Sibelius, the man and his music, and, why not, the man and his time, contemporaries, the politics, and other arts. In this respect, Goss’s book about a creative person’s life and the awakening of a nation is a remarkable achievement and opening, and must be greeted as one of the most groundbreaking and noteworthy Sibelius books of the millennium so far.

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Working Together for Better Integration is a timely collection of case studies focused on collaborative practices between police, social workers, and immigrants, in an era when migration is redrawing the demographics of much of the world, and the need for immigrant labor has become “a permanent feature of the European Union” (8). This edited work offers twenty-five different examples of these good practices, in association with a European project entitled Immigrants, Police and Social Work (IPS). Funded by the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals, between 2009 and 2011, researchers examined relationships between police and social workers in Finland, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, seeking to determine how police and social workers could collaborate more efficiently as they promote the integration of third-country nationals into their respective states.

The five chapters devoted to the aforementioned countries offer individual appraisals of how each has developed policies to further the integration of immigrants and the collaborative participation by police and social workers. Each chapter offers five specific “good practices.” Naturally these are predicated on geography and historical antecedents of each country, as well as the persistence of age-old problems— the push and pull factors of immigration and the lack of cultural competency on the part of police and social workers.

All the countries in this study have had a substantial increase in “third-country” nationals over the past decade. The authors have suggested that the experience of immigrants in their new domiciles can depend on whether or not they are coming from a former colony, as in the case of former colonial powers—the Netherlands, UK, and Spain. What’s more, these immigrants from former colonies are likely to be more successful making the transition than others, who are not as familiar with the mother country in terms of education and language, both necessary to make economic progress in a new land.

What frequently hinders the discourse between police and social workers are the differing goals and responsibilities of both professions. Police officers and social workers often have problems interacting with immigrants; likewise they have “equal problems understanding each other” (185), in no small part as a result of distinctive professional jargon and training and the cultural milieu in which they operate. While social workers are focused on the welfare of citizens, police are mostly tasked with promoting and ensuring public order and safety, utilizing a multitude of strategies ranging from community policing and traffic control to counterterrorism and
criminal investigation. While both are forced to handle social problems, only the police are uniformed. This can offer a feeling of security to some, while it might mitigate it for others, especially immigrants who fled oppressive governments where their only transactions with law enforcement have been negative. It is therefore incumbent for professionals in both fields to be familiar with the tasks and duties of the other. Perhaps this can be best achieved by recruiting more immigrants into police and social work.

The integration of immigrants into European society has increasingly reflected the geopolitical realities of the current century as nationalist attitudes, anti-immigration, racism and hostility, and Islamophobia increasingly enter the public forum leading to stricter immigration policies. Cases of honor-related violence in the Netherlands or Islamist terrorism in the United Kingdom add to the public outrage. In Finland, this topic is especially relevant, because of a rapidly aging population that needs immigrant labor. But this has been hampered by the rising popularity of nationalist attitudes and fears that immigrants intend to “abuse the Finnish social security system” (12).

The five chapters are helpfully bookended by an introduction and an epilogue of Reflections. Working Together for Better Integration is more about immigration and social work than policing. It will find an audience with anyone interested in the challenges faced by social workers, police, and immigrants in an age of globalization.

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Traditions can be invented, as well as reinvented, to meet new individual and collective needs in new contexts. A rather peculiar example of this process is the honorable St. Urho, the patron saint of Finns, who is said to have rescued the grape crop of Finns by driving poisonous grasshoppers out of Finland some time before the last Ice Age. Readers thinking of St. Patrick are on the right track. The legend of St. Urho was created by American Finns in the mid-1950s and has been part and parcel of American-Finnish folklore since. St. Urho’s Day is celebrated on March 16, a day before St. Patrick’s Day, and comes complete with green and purple colors,
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competing stories and jokes about the saint, material representations, games and frivolous behavior, greeting cards and Facebook pages. Towards the end of the 1980s, faculty and students of cultural research at the University of Turku adopted the St. Urho narrative and adapted it to their liking. What began as an experiment in the creation of traditions and tradition communities—hot topics in folklore studies of the 1980s—has since evolved into a tradition in its own right.

Pyhä Urho: Fakeloresta folkloreksi/St. Urho: From Fakelore to Folklore aims to investigate “the historical and cultural background of this remarkable phenomenon” as well as to seek “explanations [. . .] for the tradition’s longevity both in America and Finland” (12). Edited by Anne Heimo, Tuomas Hovi, and Maria Vasenkari from the University of Turku, the collection contains nine articles by authors from Finland, the United States, and Ireland as well as a complete bibliography. While the introduction is in Finnish as well as English, other chapters are either in Finnish or English and are provided with a short summary in the other language. The volume is thus accessible to speakers and readers of both Finnish and English. Moreover, though the American-Finnish St. Urho has been the subject of several articles, websites, and at least one book (Asala 2001), Pyhä Urho/St. Urho appears to be the first attempt to juxtapose the “real thing” and its spin-off in Turku. Folklore studies provide an excellent starting point for such explorations, concerned as they are with notions and processes of tradition, community, and creativity. The collection takes on some very fundamental issues in folkloristics (authenticity, the stabilization of tradition, recognizing folklore and its collectivity) but does so without alienating readers from other walks of life. Some of the essays overlap slightly, which means that they can be read independently of each other.

There is a long-standing tradition in Finnish folkloristics of studying the origins, transmission, and transformation of individual folk songs, folk tales, and other items of folklore; this disciplinary heritage can be felt in or shines through from the choices and stated goals of this volume’s editors. Anne Heimo and Tuomas Hovi explain in the introduction that the “tradition of St. Urho, both in the United States and at Turku University, is an interesting research topic, since it is possible through it to investigate an individual living form of tradition, whose birth and developments along with changes are known and fairly well documented” (13). I agree that the transmission, repetition, and renewal of tradition, or perinne, “is always a matter of active engagement” and “never devoid of value.” However, it remains unclear to me how it follows from this that “the main emphasis [for whom?] lies in the performance
of tradition, not in the outcome of the performance” (12).

Several contributions to this very collection illustrate how the two tend to be intertwined and how scholars, too, arrive at more illuminating insights by looking at performances of traditions as well as at how these performances shape specific social realities. Thinking about the potentially wide circle of readers, I wish the editors had elaborated on their rationale behind distinguishing between “tradition” and “folklore” when they argue that St. Urho celebrations “are both a collective tradition and folklore” (9, 13).

Pekka Hakamies explains in the opening essay on collectivity of folklore that the term “folklore” refers to oral tradition (suullinen perinne), but uses it later synonymously with “tradition,” which illustrates the difficulty if not unfeasibility of distinguishing between oral and other kinds of tradition (written, visual traditions, customs). According to Hakamies, folklore is not “ordinary speech” but has been legitimized by community, and its collectivity comes from repetitive performance. In the case of St. Urho, “there was a need for an expression of the sense of community, and hence a suitable narrative was developed, which a group has taken up and adopted, and begun to repeat again and again as an articulation and distinguishing mark of the community” (24). Conceptualized in this way, folklore is first and foremost a text (a narrative, proverb, song, etc.) approved and used repeatedly by community, which in turn is understood to be homogenous and bounded rather than constantly in the making and remaking. However, the subsequent chapters on Finnish America and specific manifestations of “Urhomania” on either side of the Atlantic suggest that a text-centered approach of this kind is likely to be too narrow to capture the breadth of expressive forms associated with the saint as well as the complexity of social and ethnic relations managed by means of these traditions.

Jouni Korkiasaari, for example, in his article discusses “ideological and social divisions” (39) between Finnish immigrants as well as tensions among working-class immigrants of diverse ethnic background. The chapter gives a compact historical and demographic overview of immigration from Finland to North America as well as of settlement and employment history in the US and Canada. By 1930, approximately 350,000 Finns had left for North America, followed by 47,000 from WWII to the present day. According to Korkiasaari, cultural life and voluntary associations—Finnish-language press, church, bands, choirs, temperance societies, and cooperatives—have historically played a crucial role in bridging social and political divisions between American Finns. While the popularity of temperance societies and left-wing
parties has decreased over time, churches have been more successful in recruiting members among the second and third generations.

The next two chapters explore the American-Finnish St. Urho tradition. Yvonne R. Lockwood discusses St. Urho as part of the “long, gradual and complex” (47) process whereby Finnish immigrants have come to constitute a Finnish-American ethnic group with their own distinctive culture. “Ethnicity exists only in specific contexts where one people (us) are brought into regular and intimate context with another people (them)” (48). Lockwood’s distinction between maintained traditions (little change since immigration, e.g., sauna, woodcarving, rug making), creolization (reshaping of culture and adaptation to new conditions, e.g., foodways) and invented traditions (“new folklore created out of whole cloth with no precedent in Finland” [49]) is clear and serves the purpose of demonstrating how Finnish-American culture—or any other minority culture—is being created from many sources “within the particular constraints of minority life” (48). The author claims that St. Urho’s celebration is “born completely out of the American experience” (59) and as such conforms to a particular pattern or model: “It is a public display that is controlled to project the image the ethnic group wants the public to see” (58). Lockwood discusses furthermore how the celebration has mediated differences between “red” and “white” Finns (cf. Korkiasaari) and similarly to annual FinnFest gatherings has had the effect of minimizing regional differences in Finnishness, which indicates a new stage in the ethnic process.

Hilary Joy Virtanen stresses St. Urho’s function as a facilitator of intergenerational links. Drawing on her extensive fieldwork among American Finns (the article includes numerous photographs), Virtanen claims that contemporary St. Urho’s Day gatherings may often follow a pattern characteristic of “festival behavior found in Finnish America” (69), but that the “most spectacular celebrations take on truly carnivalesque aspects,” including cross-dressing, interethnic commentary and playing with stereotypes (70). The author links these “more outlandish celebrations of the saint” to tensions between pride and self-depreciation among the Finnish American community, arguing that they are “often a method of confronting complex social constructions surrounding ethnicity in the local community, and of reaffirming social belonging both within the ethnic base, and within the wider, multiethnic community” (82). At the same time, St. Urho’s Day itself is a source of disagreements and tensions among community members who hold conflicting views on what it means to be Finnish in America. Jenny Butler’s comprehensive discussion of St.
Patrick as a patriotic symbol and universal representation of Irishness helps likewise to grasp the distinctiveness of St. Urho as a patron saint of American Finns, an ethnic group in a multi-ethnic state, rather than of Finland and the Finnish people worldwide.

The following two chapters in Finnish focus on St. Urho at the University of Turku. Hannu-Pekka Huttunen and Lassi Saressalo take a walk down memory lane, recalling the “birth of St. Urho in Finland, Turku” in the late 1980s in the midst of novel approaches to folkloristic fieldwork, the ethos of cultural relativism, and scholarly discussions about the concept of tradition. On March 16, 1987, they performed a play about St. Urho in the lobby of one of the campus buildings as a kind of experiment in the creation of a tradition. Anne Heimo, at the time a student and now a faculty member at the University of Turku, gives a richly illustrated overview of what came next or of twenty-five years of celebrating St. Urho in the departments of cultural research. Heimo discusses the gradual development of the happening put on by Huttunen and Saressalo into a ritual for initiating new students, at the center of which is a reenactment of exorcising grasshoppers from Finland. Part of departmental student culture, the St. Urho play makes claims on members of the community created and maintained with the help of this very same tradition.

The last essay, by Tuomas Hovi, is again motivated by more theoretical concerns, aiming to clarify “whether the tradition [perinne] associated with St. Urho is really tradition” (128). Hovi analyzes St. Urho as an instance of fakelore (invented tradition presented as authentic), of folklorism (folklore detached from its original context) and finally of “folklore process,” drawing on Lauri Honko’s distinction from 1990 between the first and second life of folklore, which has been influential in Finnish but also, for example, Estonian folklore studies. Though the author’s conclusion that “the celebration and customs associated with St. Urho are indeed [. . .] tradition” (142) lacks in novelty [to quote Hovi, the distinction between “good and rightful folklore or bad and bogus fakelore has no doubt become outdated in the field of folklore studies” (129)], his comments regarding the applicability and limitations of the concept of “folklore process” are relevant, and the chapter succeeds in comparing the celebration of St. Urho in the US and in Turku.

_Pyhä Urho/Saint Urho_ provides a multifaceted insight into the cultural life of American Finns and one of their most distinctive festive traditions while at the same documenting a hitherto overlooked student tradition in Finland and, moreover, reflecting upon some of the key issues in the study of folklore in Finland. Hence, this
volume is to be recommended to anybody interested in Finnish America (and looking for suggestions for further reading), in the role of folklore in building minority/immigrant/ethnic identities, in student folklore or in Finnish folkloristics. Easy to read but written in an academic style, the collection or parts of it can be used successfully in undergraduate courses.

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This is a modest book, a welcome book, a collection of letters written by a teenager who could never have foreseen that they would be published. When adolescence and emigration intersected in Varpu Lindström’s life in 1963, she poured out her thoughts and feelings in twenty-five letters from Canada to her closest friend back in Finland. Their publication forty-nine years later is ironic, brave, generous, and poignant; it is also of intrinsic and scholarly interest. Lindström became a distinguished academic historian, yet here we are simply invited to read her teenage letters, enjoy them, and take what we wish from them, but remember that they are part of a historical context and moment.

The irony is that Lindström’s last book is not the considered and leisurely memoir that readers of her history books might have wished for. Instead, we are presented with the immediate, raw reactions of an unwilling teenage immigrant whose happy life in Helsinki was radically disrupted by her father’s unilateral decision to take her and her mother to Canada. Allowing the letters to be published unedited and uncensored was brave and generous, but also a decision in keeping with contemporary academic standards: “Whereas letter publication in the past was mostly devoted to eulogistic memory, it is now more often directed to the ends of academic research; where formerly editors emended texts to enhance the image of an author’s life, they now more commonly view their task as reporting in detail the autograph document as both text and artifact” (Decker 1998, 27).

The editor of this book is Lindström’s husband, Börje Vähämäki, himself an academic, writer, and translator in the field of Finnish linguistics and literature. Lindström’s lifelong friend Kaisa Lindberg, recipient of the letters, gave her
permission for their publication. The poignancy is that Lindström’s death from brain cancer came only a few months after she held this book in her hands. Yet she had managed to do her own rough translations of the letters and to write a preface providing historical and family background and her reasons for publishing the letters.

The machinery of contextualization is beautifully and usefully handled in this volume. Besides Lindström’s preface, three further commentaries help us to read, interpret, and assess the letters. Börje Vähämäki’s foreword is both objective and sensitive to personal circumstance. Like all editors of published letters, his role is crucial, and he acquits himself with honesty and transparency. Cheryl Lemaitre, an immigration historian, writes an afterword discussing the social changes of 1960s North America and the struggles faced by any immigrant in adapting to a new culture and language, but particularly a teenage girl. Samira Saramo, Lindström’s last doctoral student, gives a comprehensive yet concise analysis of the letters, underpinned by her recent research into immigrants’ epistolary practices and patterns.

The book is fleshed out, as it were, by reproductions of personal photographs, a couple of holograph letters, and other documents, including Lindström’s student identification card bearing her middle name, “Marjatta,” which her high school principal thought more acceptable as a “real name” than “Varpu.” However, the real Varpu refers to Marjatta in the third person and says, “It took several years before I had the courage to reclaim my true Finnish identity” (141).

In her preface, Lindström assesses her own letters with a historian’s practised eye: “I realized how little authentic information there is in Canada on teenage immigration. What information we do have is usually written in hindsight or seen through the eyes of adults” (11–12.) There is perhaps no better adult memoir of teenage immigration than Lost in Translation by Eva Hoffman, who emigrated from Poland to Canada in 1959 with her family (Hoffman 1989). Hoffman’s memoir covers much of the same material as Lindström’s letters do: struggling with a new language, adapting to school, figuring out one’s place in the host culture, learning strange customs including dating patterns, indulging in nostalgia for the home country, making new friends and missing old ones, connecting with the ethnic community who have already settled in Canada—an interaction easier for Lindström with the Ontario Finns than for Hoffman with the British Columbia Poles. Yet Hoffman’s book, published thirty years after she landed in Canada, is mature and consciously literary, while Lindström’s letters are the opposite. One can easily guess which of these quotations is by Hoffman and which by Lindström:
The country of my childhood lives within me with a primacy that is a form of love. It lives within me despite my knowledge of our marginality, and its primitive, unpretty emotions. . . . It has fed me language, perceptions, sounds, the human kind. It has given me the colors and the furrows of reality, my first loves. (Hoffman 1989, 75)

What do I think of Canada? Well, ooph, ooph, ooph. [Jaa, tota noin änky(245,327),(366,361) änky.] When Canadians ask me that I say it is ‘a nice and warm country’. But to you I don’t need to be polite. I’ll try and find suitable adjectives: dirty, messy, busy, dishevelled, warm, fertile, beautiful nature, ugly cities, etc. Sometimes there are really beautiful homes and then there are terrible shacks. In Finland there is nowhere as ugly a downtown as Niagara Falls and yet it is supposed to be Canada’s second most beautiful city. [. . .] So, you can tell those who ask, ‘She says that Finland was much more beautiful and cleaner—and colder.’ (Lindström letter October 15, 1963, Letters from an Immigrant Teenager, 81).

I place these passages side by side not to praise one and devalue the other; each mode of discourse has its strengths and each writer her individuality. Hoffman’s memoir gives us maturity, subtlety, elegance of thought and expression. Lindström’s letters give us the energy and optimism of youth, intelligent yet often impulsive and prone to hyperbole, snap judgments, humor, and verbal raspberries. The adult Lindström admits that it was not easy to publish the letters uncut: “there was always the temptation to edit and to make oneself seem a better or smarter person” (12).

The result is valuable primary source material for future historians, educators, and social psychologists, for it is “truly the voice of a teenager” (12). Lindström is aware of the letters’ naïveté but refrains from analyzing her former self. She neither overstates the importance of the letters nor rejects the teenage self who was interested in beauty contests, cars, jewelry, pop stars like the Beatles and Mauno Kuusisto, television programs with handsome male leads such as Dr. Kildare in hospital white, and the young high school teacher, Mr. Novak. She confides to Kaisa about boys: “Right now I have a crush on an Italian boy. He was the top student in our class. Risto’s and my relationship is still about the same except. . . . I don’t fancy Risto” (99.) But this teenage girl is actually more interested in sports: “Today they each asked me to the school dance but I am not going to go because I have synchronized swimming practice” (99).
If the Italian boy hadn’t been smart, would Varpu have been attracted to him? Throughout the letters we see her academic keenness; she studies hard but laments her difficulties with English. Yet a little over a year after arriving in Canada, she is in the top stream at her high school. Educators will be interested in the curriculum she describes and her criticisms of it:

Well, one silly thing in our school is that over half of the students in this stream are separated to a business stream. Those who can stay (15 of the best students plus me) have to take all the math, sciences, physics, geography, English and history. All week there is only one spare. Because we have been taking instrumental music this year we have to take it again next year as an extra. This defies reason. We are not allowed to take home economics or handicrafts, not typing, etc. (117)

In the same letter she writes angrily to Kaisa: “I am annoyed at your stupid principal. He must have some screw loose in his head since he doesn’t let you go to Sweden on your school trip. . . . Why don’t you write to the newspaper or are you no longer rebellious” (117). Rationality and rashness intersect in Varpu’s letters in sharp flashes. Already we can read the defiance highlighted in her future book titles: Defiant Sisters (2003) and “I Won’t be a Slave!” (2010). As Börje Vähämäki points out, “Her stellar career as a scholar of Finnish immigrant women in Canada is not unrelated to her traumatic experience as a Finnish teenager immigrating from Finland to Canada” (7).

As a third-generation Finnish Canadian with little facility in my grandmother’s tongue, I am grateful for the editorial decision to make this book accessible to a wider audience by printing the letters on facing pages in Finnish and English. Finnish linguists will appreciate the originals and may well wish to study, for instance, Lindström’s teenage slang or seek out any evidence of deterioration in her beloved mother tongue. She is self-conscious about her Finnish and does not want it to slip away: “. . . my Finnish language is no longer pure. I hear only English and then this Finglish, nobody speaks proper Finnish. Not even me, however hard I try. I hope you don’t notice it yet from my letters because I am trying my best to hide the fact” (111).

She both fears and mocks “Finglish,” giving a hilarious example that begins, “Meidan caara runnas 100 mailia per hour” on the left page, with its “translated”
equivalent on the right: “Our caara runnas one hundred miles per hour” (111). She continues with a teenager’s indictment of the Finnish-Canadian newspaper *Vapaa Sana*, which she claims “writes just awful Finnish” (111). But her cheeky evaluation is then modified by a slightly more forgiving tone: “At first we were annoyed when we . . . noticed all kinds of mistakes, but one gets used to everything, even the beautiful Finnish language’s ugly American accent” (111). She apologizes to Kaisa in advance for the way she will talk when she returns to Finland: “I already pity your ears” (111). Such a comment is not uncommon in the letters and shows a youthful facility with language and a self-deprecating humor.

In contrast, here is Eva Hoffman’s sophisticated description of language loss at the same age:

Polish in a short time has atrophied, shrivelled from sheer uselessness. Its words don’t apply to my new experiences; they’re not coeval with any of the objects, or faces, or the very air I breathe in the daytime. In English, words have not penetrated to those layers of my psyche from which a private conversation could proceed. (Hoffman 1989, 107)

Hoffman’s memoir, while written in the grammatical present tense, is suffused with complex layers of time as the adult interprets her memories. Lindström’s letters are in the actual present; her experience is not shaped, filtered, and analyzed by the adult she later became. Both ways of rendering the past are valuable to us as readers. But the benefit of letters as a historical source, “both to the researcher and the lay reader,” is that we “cannot distance ourselves” as we can with “more impersonal materials” but rather we are “forced emotionally to live in the writer’s moment and on his or her terms” (Gerber 1999, 46)

Lindström wrote these letters to one trusted friend, not for posterity. It is unfair to set up a straw girl and then poke holes in her. Lindström’s teenage and Finnish perspectives naturally make her observations about current events partial, even quirky. For instance, she mentions United States President John F. Kennedy only once, to point out that Finnish President Urho Kekkonen gifted him with a sauna (45). Yet her letters make no reference to Kennedy’s assassination six months later, on November 22, 1963—a huge event in my teenage life in Alberta, when my chemistry teacher was in tears as he reported the news, when our school was closed early, and I arrived at home to find my mother speechless, glued to the television.
For many of us, one of the gratifications of reading these letters will be recalling details of our own teenage years, whether in North America or elsewhere. As one historian says,

The essence of the historical process is the meeting between an individual’s or a group’s life history and the historical moment. People’s responses to the historical conditions they encounter are shaped both by the point in their lives at which they encounter those conditions and by the equipment they bring with them from earlier life experiences. (Hareven 1982, 355)

Varpu Lindström’s mature historical works are part of the new social history with its interest in the experiences of ordinary people and their letters, personal documents, photographs, and ephemera. But she herself would warn us not to take these letters as the full historical or even biographical truth of two crucial years in her life. The letters pay scant attention to her parents, for instance, though she acknowledges her father’s cleverness in finding lutefisk for a Christmas meal and his generosity in giving her an old red Volkswagen for her birthday. As she is struggling with her teenage identity, she confesses:

I can’t tell my mother any more all the kinds of things like in the past. She has started to consider me an adult and wonders how little common sense I have. She doesn’t understand that not all 15-year-olds are adults like she had to be. I have been told that I am never satisfied. I was satisfied in Finland. I just somehow don’t seem to be able to locate myself here. (89)

Yet the letters do show how she found a dual identity as a Canadian high school girl and as part of a supportive Finnish immigrant community in Ontario.

I would like to suggest that Lindström’s teenage letters round out, in reverse, a life of the mind of a scholar whose first written observations are raw and honest, funny and detailed. Instead of a memoir, then, this book is a series of moments that overflow with a teenager’s energy and passion. It makes fascinating reading for those who knew her as a colleague, friend, or teacher—and for anyone interested in adolescence, social psychology, language, letters, education, or immigration history.
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Simo Muir and Hana Worthen’s anthology, Finland’s Holocaust: Silences of History, contributes to a growing body of literature examining controversial topics that have been largely ignored by mainstream historians. For instance, Michel-Rolph Trouillot published Silencing the Past: Power in the Production of History, which questions how historians choose specific topics and individuals to include in their works by investigating events surrounding the Haitian Revolution, the first successful slave rebellion in the Caribbean (Trouillot 1995). The book examines how Jean Baptiste Sans Souci, one of the leading revolutionaries, was removed from both Haitian and European historical records. Trouillot concluded that historians were influenced by political power and social forces to produce acceptable works, though incomplete
because of the material left out of the narrative. Peter Read’s *A Rape of the Soul so Profound: The Return of the Stolen Generation* takes a more controversial approach by exposing the racist ideology of Australian officials who destroyed Aboriginal families by seizing their children and forcing the innocents to attend special schools (Read 1999). Once in the Australian system, the children were not only taught to reject their own heritage, but they also endured years of physical abuse, rape, and even murder at the hands of government officials. Jacques Depelchin’s *Silences in African History: Between the Syndromes of Discovery and Abolition* delves into the issue of whether the silences in African history are the result of a deliberate process of primarily European historians or just the happenstance of events (Depelchin 2005). He writes African history from the perspective of the indigenous people, rather than colonial officials. This approach allows Depelchin to reject both the European idea of discovering the African continent that led to colonization and the work of abolitionists who claimed moral superiority for recognizing the inhumanity of slavery, even though Africans had understood the problem for centuries.

A common theme in the works is that historians have created narratives for the excluded and powerless people of Haiti, Australia, and Africa, thereby producing new ideas that often clash with the traditional historiography of a country. In Finland, Simo Muir and Hana Worthen’s book provides a voice for the Jewish minority that has largely remained silent on the issue of anti-Semitism in the country during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the introduction, the authors state that the purpose of the book is to trace the implications of anti-Semitism in Finland, while also addressing the postwar debates over the government’s collaboration with Nazi Germany and participation in the Holocaust. In so doing, the articles in the book also illuminate how Finnish academics have passively and actively constrained national debates over the issue of anti-Semitism. According to Muir and Worthen, the Holocaust is inextricably connected to the issue of whether Finland fought a separate war against the Soviet Union from 1941 to 1944 as a democratic “cobelligerent” with fascist Germany or as two ideologically aligned governments fighting a war of aggression against Jewish bolshevism in Russia.

Since the end of the Second World War, the debates over the contending theories of co-belligerency or collaboration have divided Finnish society into two distinct groups, with a majority of Finns supporting the former interpretation, which is a position widely endorsed by politicians and academics. In contrast, the authors contend that *Finland’s Holocaust: Silences of History* illustrates that Finnish collaboration
extended well beyond the purely military, to include political, cultural, and artistic endeavors between the two nations.

The book is divided into ten chapters, beginning with John Sundholm’s “Stories of National and Transnational Memory: Renegotiating the Finnish Conception of Moral Witness and National Victimhood,” which notes the historical close cooperation of Finnish historians and the national government. Sundholm argues that this relationship has led to conflict between historians who support the government’s cobelligerent stance and social theorists who also claim the right to interpret the past through the arts and literature. The author provides several examples of contemporary books and films that have contributed to the debate over Finnish wartime actions by providing alternatives to the accepted ideas of national victimhood. Simo Muir’s “Modes of Displacement: Ignoring, Understating, and Denying Anti-Semitism in Finnish Historiography” states that during the Cold War, Finnish historians purposely avoided mentioning topics related to Finland’s alliance with Nazi Germany as a means to forestall Soviet accusations of fascism during the war. The political situation created a generation of historians who felt it was their patriotic duty to minimize or thwart any discussion of collaboration, including the Holocaust. This point is illustrated with the story of Israel-Jakob Schur and his struggle with the University of Helsinki and Åbo Akademi in Turku to accept his 1937 doctoral dissertation on circumcision in the Hebrew Bible and Rabbinic literature. The author argues that anti-Semitism played a role in the initial rejection of the work and the contemporary investigation to determine the legitimacy of the paper by current academics.

Ilona Salomaa’s “I Devote Myself to the Fatherland: Finnish Folklore, Patriotic Nationalism, and Racial Ideology” marks the transition to the topic of cultural anti-Semitism in Finland. Salomaa argues that the work of nineteenth-century folklorists and composers such as Adolf Ivar Arwidsson, Elias Lönnrot, and Jean Sibelius helped to create the Finnish national identity. Their ideas created a desire for nationhood, without the constraints of Swedish or Russian aristocrats ruling over the Finnish people. According to the author, scholars from the Academic Karelia Society (AKS) and the People’s Patriotic Movement (IKL) transformed these ideas into a newer, more virulent form of nationalism that sought to exclude foreign influences in Finland, including the local Jewish population. Additionally, the AKS supported the idea of “Greater Finland,” which would incorporate territory in Soviet Karelia to unite the Finno-Ugric speaking diaspora, thereby creating a much larger
Finnish state at the expense of its Russian neighbors. The ideological similarities of anti-Semitism and territorial expansionism conformed to parallel ideas emanating from Nazi Germany. Ultimately, the German and Finnish governments united for the 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union. However, the invasion’s failure led to the downfall of the IKL and AKS in the postwar era, thereby eradicating the more blatant forms of anti-Semitism, which was replaced by a nascent strain supported by modern academics. Hana Worthen’s “Towards New Europe: Arvi Kivimaa, Kultur and the Fictions of Humanism” continues the theme by examining the life of Arvi Kivimaa, a renowned literary intellectual and director at both the Finnish National Theater and the Finnish Folk Theater. The author points out that Kivimaa embraced Nazi ideology in the 1930s, emerging as a facilitator of cultural relations between the two countries during the Second World War by publishing in both countries and accepting several positions as a cultural liaison. Worthen maintains that the Finnish government exploited Kivimaa’s ideas to enhance diplomatic relations with Nazi Germany, thereby ensuring military assistance if hostilities resumed between Finland and Russia. In the aftermath of the war, Kivimaa revised his version of events and maintained his standing in Finland’s artistic circles. Malthe Gasche and Simo Muir’s “Discrimination Against Jewish Athletes in Finland: An Unwritten Chapter” discusses the repression of Jewish athletes in the late 1930s, as the Finnish government prepared to host the 1940 Olympic Games in Helsinki. The authors focus on two anti-Semitic events prior to the Second World War. The first is the story of Abraham Takazier, an aspiring Olympic sprinter who won a 100-meter event in 1938, only to have race officials disregard photographic evidence and hand the victory to another runner. This is followed by the 1939 mass dismissal of all Jewish members of the exclusive Westend Tennis Stadium Club. The events were discussed in detail by local and regional newspapers, with many asking if Adolf Hitler’s government was pressuring Finland to remove the Jewish athletes prior to the Olympic Games.

The final four essays delve into the historiographical debates among scholars, intellectuals, and journalists who have opposed the orthodox portrayal of Finnish wartime policies, especially the topics of collaboration with Nazi Germany and participation in the Holocaust. Jouni Tilli’s “Elina Sana’s Luovutetut and the Politics of History” contends that Sana opened the door to a renewed political debate over the Finnish government’s relationship with the Third Reich (Sana 2003). Sana’s book argues that the total number of people deported for racial and political reasons stood
closer to 3000, rather than the eight recognized by Finnish academics. Her findings led the Simon Wiesenthal Center to ask President Tarja Halonen to investigate the accusations. Tilli points out that while the inquiry was proceeding, Finnish academics tried desperately to discredit the book. While the investigators found no conclusive proof that Finland had participated in the Holocaust, the discussion led younger historians to challenge the conclusions of the academic establishment. Karen Kvist Geverts’s “Negotiating a Dark Past in the Swedish-language Press in Finland and Sweden” compares the responses of Finnish and Swedish journalists who commented during 2003 to 2009 on the topic of Finnish collaboration with Nazi Germany during the Second World War. Geverts first acknowledges that Sana’s book opened the debate and then moved on to the reactions in the press to Henrik Arnstad’s books Spelaren Christian Günther: Sverige under andra världskriget [The player Christian Günther: Sweden in the Second World War] and Skyldig till skuld: En europeisk resa i Nazitysklands skugga [Guilty of guilt] (Arnstad 2006 and 2009). The author found that the Finnish press was more critical of challenges to popular interpretations of wartime activities while the Swedish newspapers embraced the new ideas. Oulu Silvennoinen’s “Beyond ‘Those Eight’: Deportations of Jews from Finland 1941–1942” states that the Finnish government deported twelve Jewish refugees to certain death in Germany, rather than the established eight from earlier works on the subject. These deportations began before the onset of the 1941–1944 Continuation War and resulted from cooperation between Finnish and German security forces. Silvennoinen argues that the Ministry of the Interior and State Police worked in conjunction to deport the refugees to Nazi officials even after a high-ranking member of the State Police witnessed the mass execution of Jews in Estonia by members of Special Action, or Einsatzgruppe A, in the summer of 1941, after the German invasion of Soviet territory. Antero Holmia’s “Soldaten wie andere auch: Finnish Waffen SS Volunteers and Finland’s Historical Imagination” examines the obfuscation and exceptionalism promoted by Finnish academics in order to mitigate the role Finnish Waffen SS members played in wartime atrocities perpetrated against Soviet civilian populations. Holmia found that while many authors continue with these familiar themes, some soldiers who served in the unit actually acknowledged their role in killing people outside the bounds of combat.

Taken as a whole, the authors clearly demonstrate a pattern of anti-Semitism in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Finland. There is no doubt that the work will be controversial, but telling the story of alienated people is the point
of examining silences in history. Even in the weeks following the release of the book, the Finnish Sports Federation first apologized to the Makkabi sports club for stripping Abraham Takazier of his 1938 win, then awarding the victory to another sprinter a few weeks later (Jewish Telegraph Agency, October 8, 2013). The story of Takazier illustrates the divisive nature of anti-Semitism, but also the willingness of Finns to acknowledge past mistakes. A historiographical interpretation of Finland’s Holocaust places the work as the antithesis to the mainstream co-belligerency or driftwood interpretation of Finland’s wartime activities. This will hopefully lead to a new synthesis that recognizes the bifurcated wartime Finnish government that contained both democratic and anti-Semitic elements.

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In Finland, the written experiences and reminiscences of its people have been collected by museums and archives using ethnological questionnaires ever since the beginning of the twentieth century. Over the years, the emphasis of the questionnaires has changed. Initially, the narrators were expected to write down their memories and knowledge of various cultural practices in their home regions. Later, the focus shifted to the narrators’ personal and private experiences and memories. The answers to these questionnaires include a variety of personal narratives and reminiscences, and they have been used as material in many ethnological studies.

This book, by the Finnish ethnologist Pia Olsson, focuses on the life of Finnish rural women from the beginning of the twentieth century until the 1980s. The delimitation of the time span is defined by the material used to study the women’s lives. The basis of the book is an inquiry *Naisen asema* [The status of a woman] carried out by the National Board of Antiquities in 1985. Olsson begins her book by saying that even after several readings she is touched by one female narrator’s story about an event in her mother’s childhood. The narrator’s mother was knitting a sock for her father but was having trouble making the heel. The mother’s own mother was watching her knitting and said, “Perhaps you’ll learn if I hold your fingers down on the bench by the stove and hit them with a hammer” (7). The narrator’s mother did as she was told but the grandmother did not carry out the “threat.” To a modern reader, the grandmother’s words may sound harsh and an ill-advised approach to childrearing. However, the event described is connected with a Finnish parenting tradition of the time: children were instructed in working and cautioned by means of various sayings, of which the aforementioned was one.1 When I interviewed rural men and women of various ages in the late 1980s and early 1990s, one woman who was born in 1922 said that she had been taught to do handiwork with the same saying. The use of sayings and proverbs to raise children was still a reality of life.

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1 Veikko Ruoppila (1907–93), Professor of Finnish at the University of Helsinki, discusses such nurturing methods (including the one mentioned in the example) in his book *Kansa lastensa kasvattajana* [The people as the educator of its children] (1954). Girls were expected to be dexterous and meticulous in their handicraft work. Even though the sayings in a way prepared the child for adult life, they also often included an element of derision of the child who was not yet adept at the work.
Olsson has constructed the framework of a twentieth-century woman’s life on the basis of *Naisen asema* [The status of a woman], focusing on the woman’s role, space, and status in the context of the daily life in Finnish rural communities. The analytical chapters (“War and gender roles,” “The predetermined roles of a woman,” “Women in the social margin,” “The domesticated woman as an ideal,” “Only the grove whores whistle,” “Family hierarchies”) tell variously of a rural woman’s life under the pressure of “predetermined” roles and expectations. Women themselves must be adaptable and adapt to the role expectations and the behavioral norms required by these. In analyzing and interpreting the material, Olsson deconstructs the common perception of the strong Finnish woman and her survival in the midst of daily troubles. As I was reading the excellently selected extracts from the memories and narratives of the women who responded to the inquiry, I could not help but think that these women were indeed strong. They adapted quietly by doing work that was often hard and took over their whole lives. In this way, they showed their resilience by surviving the heavy burden of work and their subordinate status to men.

When responding to the inquiry, women were able to express their experiences and feelings and evaluate their own lives. According to Olsson, the women’s reminiscences are often quite emancipated, even though the form and content of the questions did not actually elicit this. She states that she was surprised by the openness with which women talked about issues related to sexual behavior, even though they were not directly asked about this in the inquiry. In the upbringing of girls, sexuality was a taboo. They were raised to be chaste, and straying from the path of righteousness stigmatized a woman in the community. The women’s narratives show that marital intercourse was dictated by men, and a woman was not supposed to enjoy it but to surrender to the man’s will. What Olsson also found surprising was that women wrote very little about their positive feelings. She interprets this partly as a result of the fact that thanking and praising have not been a part of Finnish communicative culture. It may also be that the women did not really have the skills to express their positive feelings. Another prominent characteristic of the narratives noticed by Olsson is the lack of humor, which she thinks stems from the goal and
motivation for the writing: to relate one’s life as it has been experienced. Olsson also engages in an excellent discussion on the nature of inquiries and questionnaires and the material they produce as the object of the researcher’s interpretations, especially in her analysis of the cultural and social status of the rural Finnish woman.

Olsson studies women’s reminiscences from a feminist viewpoint. In Finland, the women’s movement was already agitating for political, economic, and social equality in the 1800s. The ideas and aspirations of the so-called second wave of feminism started to take root in Finland in the 1970s. Olsson considers whether the women who answered the inquiry in 1985 were more aware of feminist discourse and gender issues than those of earlier decades. She asks, “Are these responses feminist in nature, and do they criticize the gender system? Or is the possible criticism really in the interpreter’s mind? [. . .] [I]s it wrong to read them from a feminist perspective if the narrators themselves do not consider themselves feminist?” (21). These are important and essential questions. One could assume that the female narrators had become aware of the contemporary discussions about gender equality, for example, by reading newspapers. However, researchers are always at the mercy of the material when making interpretations. They do not have the equipment to fully penetrate—in this case—the women’s thoughts and their “hidden” nooks. One would also assume that in writing about their own lives and experiences, the women were in fact inspired by the inquiry, feeling that they were being listened to for once. In any case, Olsson is successful in reading the inquiry material. She follows the reminiscences observantly and makes apt analyses of them. Well-chosen excerpts from the women’s narratives help the reader to understand the bases and starting points of both the analyses and the interpretations.

The book offers an excellent description of the inherent inequality between girls and boys in the Finnish rural environment. This was manifested in the limitations and requirements set for girls’ behavior in both work and play. Girls and boys were talked about differently: a boy was seen as more valuable for the parents, and a boy was expected to carry on the upkeep of the farm. It was said of girls, “It’s like feeding someone else’s calf” (88). Women’s status generally remained subordinate to that of men after they grew up and got married as well. However, even though the women were permanently tied to farm work, a number of the narratives also showed some feelings of joy and happiness. Motherhood and raising children to be “good citizens” especially provided gratification for the women, even though they still had to manage the heavy drudgery as mothers of small children. The significance
of motherhood is not even contested, although in a way it also means surrendering to traditional family values and roles for women.

The women who wrote for Naisen asema [The status of a woman] inquiry form a fairly homogeneous group: they were mainly rural women, farmers' wives. About half of the writers were born in the 1920s, one third in the 1930s, and a few in the early 1900s or in the 1950s. Most of them were in their adulthood and started a family during or shortly after the Second World War. Despite some social changes that affected women's (mothers’) lives in Finnish society (e.g., the establishment of municipal maternity centers in 1944 and child benefits in 1948), most women on small farms were still economically subordinate to their husbands. In fact, women only felt liberated and possibly more equal with their spouses after they (the women) reached retirement age. One decisive reason for the improvement in women’s status was their eligibility for a pension: perhaps for the first time in her life a woman had her own money and personally managed her own bank account.

Limiting the subjects of the study to women from small farms has influenced the whole content of the book and the picture it paints of the status of women from the early 1900s to the 1980s. The delimitation is understandable, and it lends coherence to the study. However, if it had included other women who responded to the inquiry, such as teachers, nurses, cleaners, etc., who had held salaried jobs, the picture of the status of the Finnish woman would have been more diverse. Even so, although the questions Olsson brings up in the study about the status of Finnish women are to some extent familiar to anyone who has read similar material, the book is thought-provoking. Olsson discusses the topic with wide-ranging deliberations. Her analyses are appropriate, and she writes skillfully and in a way that reflects her own ethical and methodological competence as a researcher.

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My grandmother—residing in Ishpeming, Michigan, in the 1960s—would on occasion “out” locals who were “passing” as Swedes but were, in fact, what were then
typically referred to as Swede Finns (as opposed to the Finland-Swede term favored by Mika Roinila). Thus, as a child I recall her telling family members sitting around her kitchen table, drinking coffee and eating cinnamon rolls, that Mrs. Peterson thinks she’s pretty good; she’s a member of Bethany Lutheran (the Augustana Synod Swedish church) rather than Bethel (the Suomi Synod church). The implication was that Mrs. Peterson had chosen to deny her Finnishness, instead using her Swedish name to gain entrée to the local Swedish community, which in the community’s ethnic pecking order placed her in a higher status category than if she admitted her Finnish roots.

The salient point here is that members of Finland’s Swedish-language community had in the migratory context an ethnic option that was unavailable to their Finnish-speaking counterparts. And to the extent that they exercised this option, in the North American context, they became simply Swedes on their way to becoming full-fledged Swedish Americans. If subsequent generations were not informed of this decision, they took for granted that the flag decal they should display on their car was blue and yellow. Thus, it was not surprising that Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch’s dissertation research found instances in which retirees had turned to genealogy to delve into their Swedish roots only to discover that their grandparents had originated in a village in Ostrobothnia.

Though constituting perhaps as much as 20 percent of the Finnish immigrant population, this sector has not received the scholarly attention it deserves. It is for this reason that we can thank Mika Roinila and the “Discovering the Peoples of Michigan” series of Michigan State University Press. This is a short book, one intended not simply for scholars, but for a wider audience. And, of course, it looks at Finland-Swedes in only one state rather than offering a more panoramic account.

The book begins with an overview of the locales in Finland where most Finland-Swedes resided and an account of the primary reasons for migration. It is clear that this subset of Finnish immigrants followed the group as a whole in taking up residency in the Upper Midwest, with smaller concentrations on the East Coast and in the Pacific Northwest. Making use of census data from both 1910 and 1920, but with a more detailed analysis of 1930, Roinila examines the distribution of Finland-Swedes in Michigan by county. One thing is clear from his data: the majority resided in counties located in the Upper Peninsula. But even then, it is clear that migration to the Lower Peninsula, particularly to the Detroit area, was underway. He offers more detailed descriptions of counties with the largest Finland-Swedish settlements,
which does not include Marquette County, where my grandmother’s kitchen table was located.

The following chapter turns to the institutional presence of Finland-Swedes. Roinila discusses the role of mutual aid and temperance societies, paying particular attention to the Order of Runeberg. He also examines church life, which was chiefly Lutheran, but also included such denominations as Baptists and Congregationalists. In examining the economic circumstances of Finland-Swedes, a short overview of their place in the American economy is presented. This section stresses the importance of the lumber and mining industries, but also points to various forms of seasonal employment, such as fishing, as well as self-employment.

Roinila rounds out the book with two appendices: one deals with Finland-Swedish recipes, and the other looks at famous Michigan Finland-Swedes—names with which, I confess, I was unfamiliar. In short, the book accomplishes what it set out to do, which is to provide an overview of one of Michigan’s many ethnic groups, doing so in a style that will appeal to both scholars and the general public.

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