

JOUTSEN  SVANEN  
2016

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Kotimaisen kirjallisuudentutkimuksen vuosikirja  
Årsbok för forskning i finländsk litteratur  
Yearbook of Finnish Literary Research

Toimittaja/Redaktör/Editor:  
Harri Veivo

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JYRKI NUMMI

## Foreword

When the project of publishing *Joutsen / Svanen*, an electronic journal of Finnish literary studies, began four years ago, the goal was clear enough: to prepare three volumes in three languages commonly used in the field, namely Finnish, Swedish and English. In addition to the three different channels, there was, of course, another substantial goal: to present the diverse fields of interest in Finnish literary studies, wherever it is conducted.

As the idea of publishing an entire volume in English took shape in the electronic Finnish Classics Library (Suomalainen klassikkokirjasto), we sharpened the focus so as to produce a volume featuring only those scholars working outside Finnish universities. We also thought that it would be a good idea to have an editor who works at a non-Finnish university and whose career is long enough to have both a sufficient network and the necessary distance to Finnish academic life. The editor's job was taken by Harri Veivo, who has worked in France for many years, first in Paris and currently in Caen. The harvest of academics was collected, and researchers from the US, Germany and Sweden contributed articles on diverse topics as well as reports on education and research conducted through the Finnish programmes at German, Polish and Czech universities.

To conduct research in different languages inevitably leads to different approaches. Researchers writing in Finnish and Swedish usually work within two partly separate traditions, which also means they face different problems and use different data within the field of Finnish literature, though these researchers largely share the same semiosphere. The most important characteristic of research written in English is that it is specifically addressed to non-Finnish and non-Swedish speakers, and the exploration of the problems, the data and tradition has to be presented on a different level and often from a different angle to that seen in papers or books written in Finnish or Swedish. Harri Veivo presents some of these characteristic problems in his introduction below.

Finnish studies programmes abroad are, naturally, foreign-language programmes, and research interests outside Finnish academia are at least partly determined by their domestic contexts. The most striking example, perhaps, is the exceptional status *Kalevala* receives in the Finnish Studies programmes at American universities, whereas at Finnish universities *Kalevala* may well find its way on to a reading list of obligatory classics, but is hardly taught as a separate course in literary programmes.

Prestige is a decisive factor driving the visibility of a language in the global literary market. While the valuable assets of a given literary tradition may be internationally successful bestsellers, the real diamonds are a language's universally recognised classics. This explains, for instance, the high status of French literature, but it also provides an explanation for the fact that Scandinavian literatures are, internationally speaking,

more valuable research objects than Finnish literature. Norwegian, Swedish and Danish each have at least one larger than life classic author (Ibsen, Strindberg and Kierkegaard respectively), names powerful enough to provide research fields of their own. *Kalevala*, the only genuinely international success story of Finnish literary culture, is acknowledged in folklore studies, but the epic does not take us very far in the field of literary studies, which is characteristically author-centric: who is Elias Lönnrot? Edith Södergran may be the brightest star of Modernist Finnish literature, but her reputation outside Finland lies within the purview of Nordic interests. Given the international mobility of our researchers, the years to come may witness a change in the overall scene. The work of Sofi Oksanen and Monika Fagerholm – to mention but two of our internationally successful authors – may yet produce much long-standing research interest due to the international themes that their works explore.

The present volume presents the work of researchers who have a lively connection to Finnish literary studies. They remind us that even a small number of enthusiastic researchers working abroad can make a valuable contribution to the field.

## Author

*Jyrki Nummi*  
*Editor-in-Chief*



HARRIVEIVO

## Introduction

The third volume of *Joutsen / Svanen* gathers articles on Finland's literature by foreign scholars: Andrew Nestingen discusses Miika Nousiainen's novels as post-national literature, Gunilla Hermansson analyses Hagar Olsson's medial awareness and modernist aesthetics, Anne Heith looks at the situation of Sámi and Tornedalian literature from a post-colonial and transnational perspective and Hanna Dymel-Trzebiatowska focuses on double address and philosophical intertexts in Tove Janssons Moomin-books. The research articles are followed by reports on research and education in Finnish studies in Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic. The review section includes contributions from Finland and abroad.

The scope of the current volume is thus international and Finnish at the same. The driving idea behind this is not a simple strategy of internationalisation (research in Finland is already highly internationalised), but rather a set of questions: do Finnish literary studies exist at an international level? Is there a body of research on Finland's literature produced abroad? Are there non-Finnish literary scholars and Finnish scholars residing permanently abroad bound together by a frame of references, an education or a set of questions that is sufficiently focused and stable so as to support the sense of a shared discipline, of a scientific community? If the answers to these questions are affirmative, one may further ask what the specific character of this body of work or this community is. What language does it speak? How does it imagine its place in academia and in society?

The articles in this volume do not address these questions directly. They are research contributions in their own right, stemming from specific questions and arguing for specific ways to understand the authors and works upon which they focus. The reports offer views on national traditions and institutional contexts and the challenges and discussions that are pertinent within these frames, showcasing the vitality and richness of the work done in the three countries in question. Brought together, the texts offer examples of the kind of research and discussion the volume as a whole calls forth and questions at the same time.

Research on Finland's literature has traditionally been carried out in two scientific contexts: Finno-Ugric studies and Scandinavian studies. These institutional frames have distinct disciplinary traditions as well as different sets of priorities in research and education. For students speaking an Indo-European language as their mother tongue, studying Finnish means a lot of hard work simply to acquire the basic linguistic competencies. The institutional context of their education is often shaped by scholarly traditions in linguistics, Finnish being traditionally taught and researched in the same departments as its linguistic relatives, principally Hungarian and Estonian. Students of Finland's other national

language often have easier access to the basic competencies due to the proximity of Swedish with many European languages. This research is often conducted in departments of Scandinavia studies, which brings in a specific set of historical and cultural information and connections.

This situation is wrought with tensions that one might even call paradoxes. For students of Swedish, the Swedish literature of Finland – and the existence of the Swedish-speaking population of the country – may be a small detail in a larger picture dominated by Ibsen, Strindberg, the Vikings and the Sagas. The modernism of the 1910s and '20s seems to be the only movement that attracts larger attention. This is certainly due in part to the quality of the literature itself, but also to the fact that this specific movement was canonised early in Sweden and has retained its position ever since. The road from Finland to Scandinavian studies goes via Stockholm. On the other hand, the connections between Finland, Estonia, Hungary and the linguistically related populations of Russia, studied in the academic tradition of Finno-Ugric studies, are relevant for a limited set of research questions only and may overshadow more important cultural and historical links with the countries of the Baltic Sea region and Western Europe, Estonia being perhaps the only case that is relevant for a number of reasons (see Cornelius Hasselblatt's review article in this volume). The very idea of, let's say, the history of Finno-Ugric literature sounds odd, as it would impose on Finnish literature a grid of interpretation that would not match the understanding most Finnish scholars have of their field (which is not, of course, to say that such a thing would be uninteresting and impossible).

The academic traditions in Scandinavian and Finno-Ugric traditions define their research object in their own ways. In this process, connections and interpretations that scholars in Finland take for granted are disregarded and new ones proposed instead. The same holds when the situation is observed the other way round. Literary research in Finland is today internationalised to the point where knowledge of sophisticated theoretical and methodological discussions in the English-speaking world is often strictly necessary simply in order to understand what is done and why. Students in Finnish departments abroad not only have to struggle to acquire the language they are studying, but they also have to read difficult works in other foreign languages too, striving at the same time to learn to work within three traditions of scholarly discourse (the domestic, the Finnish – including Finland-Swedish – and the English). This is not only time-consuming, but also stands at odds with the basic intellectual curiosity that motivates their work, foreign students usually being interested in Finland and not that much in the discursive networks that connect Finland with the wider world (which, however, are constitutive of Finland). It also imposes difficult choices. A PhD student has to decide in some way or other whether a thesis should be more connected to the Finnish research tradition or to the domestic one, whether it seeks to contribute to the former or the latter. In most cases, the first option may seem more reasonable, given that more publications and expertise often exist in Finland. But in career terms, the second option may be better, the domestic research tradition

being in most of the cases the determining factor when positions are filled. Finnish studies, if such a thing existed as an international tradition and academic community, could provide a mediating field bridging Finland and the different national contexts.

The question of the perception of Finland's literature is complex within comparative literature too. *Kalevala* stands alone as the uncontested Finnish contribution to the international canon; other works do not seem to make their way into students' reading curricula. The recent interest in 'world literature' has hardly changed the situation. Paradoxically, Finland is too peripheral and exotic to play a role in traditional Western-centred research and too European and not exotic enough to gain in importance when the paradigm is changed in favour of a global approach. It may also be that the new global perspective is less anti-hegemonic than sometimes is pretended. 'World literature' certainly questions the leading role of the Western canon and the economic and political structures upon which it is based. The alternative readings and evaluations it has proposed have however been unevenly distributed this far, promoting either the literature of new political and economic powers such as China and India or of the formerly (and in some cases still) colonial peoples. Finland falls into the limbo between the earlier dominant perception and its challenger.

All this may seem perplexing: Finland's literature dissipates and re-emerges in new forms when inserted into different academic traditions abroad. The many characteristics – and critical questionings – which researchers in Finland take for granted are simply not pertinent when seen from another institutional setting. It would be tempting to put Finland and the Finnish research community at the centre of this image. However, to do so would be short-sighted and inimical to the opportunities of learning offered by foreign contacts. Instead of adhering to a discourse of truth and authenticity where only Finnish scholars have access to a deeper understanding of the subject, we should rather see the perplexing multiplicity as an opportunity, the variety of perceptions and traditions opening up a space for dialogue that can be extremely interesting and rewarding. Literature is, after all, a linguistically mediated encounter between the self and the other. It reveals something of both at the same time, but not of one without the other.

## Author

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## ARTICLES ARTIKKELIT

ANDREW NESTINGEN

### Contradictory Lives: Miika Nousiainen's Novels as Postnational

Miika Nousiainen's three novels – *Vadelmavenepakolainen* (Gummy Boat Refugee,<sup>1</sup> 2007, = VVP), *Maaninkavaara* (The Danger of the Long Distance Runner, 2009, = MV), and *Metsäjätti* (Forest Giant, 2011, = MJ) – have received popular and critical attention for their combination of humor and for their thoughtful engagement with topical issues. In VVP, the Finn Mikko Virtanen goes to fantastic, obsessive lengths to pass as a Swede, assimilating what he views as a superior Swedish identity. In MV, a normal adolescent Heidi Huttunen seeks to become an elite middle-distance runner, to please her father and help him recuperate from the suicide of her brother. Finally, in MJ Pasi Kauppi becomes a businessman, seeking to leave his working-class childhood identity behind. In these novels, characters adopt new lives to become new people, and yet in doing so they encounter contradictions between identities that reflect on contemporary Finland and Europe. This article focuses on MV, but touches on VVP and MJ as well.

The themes relevant to my analysis of Nousiainen's novels are made evident in an episode in VVP when the archetypically named Mikko Virtanen, having transitioned into a new, Swedish identity as Mikael Andersson, marries his Swedish partner, Maria Gustafsson. After a sentimental wedding, Mikael gets a shock from a guest in the receiving line: "Ihmiset asettuvat onnittelujonoon. Silloin iskee sokki. Näen jonossa suomalaisen naapurini, puolittutun, mutta naapurin kuitenkin" (VVP: 205). [People step into the receiving line. Then I get a helluva' shock. Among them is an old neighbor, barely familiar, but nevertheless a neighbor from my old building.] In this scenario, Virtanen's years of effort to transform himself into a Swede are endangered, and at the same time the stage is a slapstick scene of contradictory identities. The wedding party sees "Mikael Andersson", while the Finnish neighbor – who happens to be the new boyfriend of one of the guests – sees "Mikko Virtanen". Mikko Virtanen's obsession is so deep that it has split him in two, creating two

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<sup>1</sup> All translations of titles and passages are by the author.

lives, an old Finnish life, and a new Swedish life. As in Nousiainen's other novels, this scene is marked by humor that arises from exaggeration of stereotypes: the jealous and envious Finn, the intolerant Finn, the violent Finn, the heavy drinker, the boorish Finn, the bacchanalian celebration. One could use any of these stories to narrate the wedding reception. These Finnish stereotypes play against equally pervasive stereotypes of Swedishness: mannerist Sweden, repressed Sweden, polite Sweden, avoidant Sweden, dumb Sweden, intolerant Sweden, which could also be used to tell the story. Yet Nousiainen does two other things here, which are key to his project and relevant to this article's argument. First, his exaggeration and parody create an ironic depiction of the national narratives, from which the stereotypes arise. The contradictions he creates between stereotypes of identities are so exaggerated that the contradictions themselves become humorous. The humor is further accentuated by the first-person narrator's voice, shaped by the character's delusions and obsessions. Although national difference is the topos of this scene, nation is not associated with reassurance, stability, or goodness. The reader is encouraged to look down on Virtanen – not least by the scene's conclusion, in which Virtanen murders the Finnish interloper. Exaggeration and dark humor separate the national identities from the moral goodness that is typically associated with them. This is the second point in the passage. It narrates the collision of two lives, the life of Mikko Virtanen and Mikael Andersson. This is the larger narrative setup in VVP, as well as in Nousiainen's other novels. His protagonist is living one life, but is forced to leave that life, and begin a new one, adopting a new identity and engaging with a new worldview. As we see in this passage, Nousiainen's novels humorously juxtapose the dual lives of his protagonist, using the contradictions generated to engage topical issues critically.

Nousiainen's combination of the popular comic novel with the more weighty identity concerns of literary fiction has attracted the attention of critics and scholars alike. The scholars have rightly placed emphasis on identity as the central theme in Nousiainen's writing. In a 2009 article on VVP, literary scholar Lena Gottelier argues that the novel is a parody of the "national self description" (*kansankuvaus*) tradition, as that tradition has been elaborated recently by such scholars as Pirjo Lyytikäinen and Leena Kirstinä. (Gottelier 2009: 47; Lyytikäinen 1999: 140; Kirstinä 2013). Lyytikäinen's argument shows the extent to which the neo-Hegelian origins of Finnish literary culture, in the philosophy of J.V. Snellman, continued to figure in literary representations of Finnishness into the late twentieth century. Through the national self-description tradition, literary culture exteriorizes a collective self-understanding, making it possible for the nation to recognize itself as itself. In this narrative of progress, the stages of literary history, each negating and transcending an earlier form of literary culture, bring out new facets of national and literary expression, allowing the nation to see itself more fully as a nation. Placing Nousiainen in relation to such an account, Leena Kirstinä also argues that his novels repeat and reimagine earlier notions of Finnishness, for example Adolf Ivar Arwidsson's 1819 edict, "Svenskar

äro vi icke längre, ryssar vilja vi icke bli, låt oss alltså bli finnar” [We are no longer Swedes; we do not wish to become Russians; Let us be Finns], by construing nation as “shaped and maintained consciously and unconsciously through images and narratives, which constitute nation and nationality”, the argument is that Nousiainen inserts his novels into those narratives by repeating them once again (Kirstinä 2013: 47). This is to suggest that Nousiainen’s novels give voice to a “reassuring sort of narrative in which [they] are seen as the appropriate next stage of the story” (Danto 1998a: 4). In contrast, this article’s contention is that Nousiainen’s novels’ conflicts show the afterlife of those stories, and the ways their fragments encumber his characters. Jussi Ojajärvi makes an analogous point in a discussion of *MJ*, Nousiainen’s third novel, as a representation of the “glocal” logic of capital under globalization, as the self-understanding of the classes on the national level is redirected against itself to serve the interests of globalized capital (forthcoming). In other words, the local workers and managers are encouraged to work harder to survive on the global playing field, only to make them more valuable to the machinations of investors and multinationals. Implicit in Ojajärvi’s analysis is the notion that the master narratives of nation and class that pertain on the local level no longer represent the actual conditions under which local lives are made meaningful.

It is possible to build on the arguments about Nousiainen’s novels put forward by scholars so far by analyzing the way Nousiainen constructs multiple, contradictory identities and lives for his protagonists, and uses them to engage topical issues. The central topical issue is the contradictions of identity in times of global capitalism. That is to say, Nousiainen’s novels represent a moment in which the story of a nation’s dialectical development—and the development of its component gender, class, and sexual identities—in collective moral terms no longer works effectively to narrate individual lives. In this sense, Nousiainen’s novels are productively read as postnational. This does not mean that there are no nations, or that the category no longer means anything. On the contrary, nation continues to leverage tremendous force, as the novels demonstrate. Yet it is one contingent identity among others. Postnational designates nation as an instance of Lyotard’s grand narrative, or analogous to art in Arthur Danto’s “after the end of art” argument. To adapt Danto, nation no longer constitutes a “reassuring sort of narrative in which [phases of national development are] seen as the appropriate next stage of the story. What [has] come to an end is the narrative but not the subject of the narrative” (Danto 1995: 4). The nation persists as a narrative that can be told and understood in reference to the nation and its subjects, but it is come to be a contested narrative, as other narratives and discourses about past, present, and the subjects of the narrative come to offer alternative accounts. Nation is one part of a variety of stories and fragments, sometimes contradictory, which may not unite groups and individuals in shared understanding (Danto 1998: 128). Nousiainen’s novels situate fragments of these national stories in relationship to one another, showing what happens when the persistent legacy of nation comes into conflict with individual stories and



experiences, in which nation has been emptied of its previous moral and cultural meaning.

The article's suggestion in relationship to previous scholarship is that we can see a new dimension in Nousiainen's texts, as well as some of his contemporaries, when we frame the texts and the characters in postnational terms. Yet, such a suggestion raises other questions for further research – such as how does one periodize the postnational? Ironic depictions of nation are nothing new, dating at least to the novels of Joel Lehtonen, and more recently present in the writing of such novelists as Arto Paasilinna, Kari Hotakainen, and Johanna Sinisalo, among others, but also in films as diverse as the Uuno Turhapuro films and those of Aki Kaurismäki (Nesting 2013). Such depictions are also strongly present in the media culture, not only in popular humor that range from television skits to Twitter feeds, but as themes in the work of such artists as Karoliina Korhonen, for instance her *Finnish Nightmares* (*Suomalaisten painajaiset*, 2016), to the television and authorial work of Roman Schatz.

## Stories of Identity

As this article's argument is about the construction of identities in Nousiainen's novels, it is necessary to sketch a definition of identity with the help of some touchstone theorists, Charles Taylor and Stuart Hall being especially helpful. In writing about Danto's end-of-art argument as relevant to thinking about the concept of "postnational," the argument was that the nation is defined by the way its subjects, and others, tell their story as a national story. This notion of identity is called "dialogical" by Charles Taylor (1994: 32-3) and dates to Enlightenment thinking, as Stuart Hall notes (1996: 598). Taylor writes, "we become fully human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human language [...] People do not acquire the languages needed for self-definition on their own. Rather, we are introduced to them through interaction with others who matter to us" (Taylor 1994: 32). By language here, he not only means a language, like Finnish or Swedish, but also cultures, "the way we do things here" (Taylor 1994: 63), that is, the differentiations by which we distinguish good and bad, valuable and indifferent in private and public institutions and practices. Hall describes Taylor's view in terms of the identity of the Enlightenment subject, which for Hall is a historical phase that has been displaced by what he calls postmodern identity. The Enlightenment subject is a "a fully centered, unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness, and action, whose 'center' consist[s] of an inner core which first emerged when the subject was born, and unfolded with it, while remaining essentially the same – continuous or 'identical' with itself – throughout the individual's existence" (Hall 1996: 597). Summarizing these views, identity means language that gives expression to oneself about how and who one is in relation to 'the way we do things', in which that 'we' also includes others using the same language to give voice to their notions of who they are and how they do things.

Language thus differentiates self from other, but always in dialogue with that other.

In Nousiainen's novels, as in the example from VVP, these languages of identity are often at odds with other languages: Mikko Virtanen seeks to impose his language of Swedishness upon the language of Finnishness, to use it to displace one identity with another. Virtanen adopts new points of reference, learns a new repertoire of social cues, adopts new expectations – humorously so, because Virtanen seeks to embody and bring to life a stereotype of the ordinary Swedish man. The humor also lies in the exclusivity Virtanen attributes to national identities. Finnish and Swedish are incompatible, in Mikko Virtanen's view. One must displace the other. In depicting identity in this way, Nousiainen stages comically what Taylor argues is a fundamental challenge of identities in late modernity. "All societies are becoming increasingly multicultural, while at the same time becoming more porous. Indeed, these two developments go together. Their porousness means they are more open to multinational migration; more of their members live the life of diaspora, whose center is elsewhere" (Taylor 1994: 63). Put another way, the language of 'who we are' and 'how we do things' changes, for as new subjects enter the nation, "who we are" begins to refer to different norms, different expectations, indeed diverse languages. Hall calls this the postmodern identity, writing that this subject is "formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us. It is historically, not biologically, defined. The subject assumes different identities at different times, identities, which are not unified around a coherent 'self'" (Hall 1996: 598). This is where Nousiainen's novels' humor lies. They continually stage conflicts between the rigidity of the stereotypes held by some of his characters and the porousness and "postmodern identity" (to use Hall's terminology) the characters encounter in their dialogue with cultural systems. The resultant contrasts keep notions of 'who we are' and 'how we do things', as well as 'who they are' and 'how they do things' in the foreground. As Taylor writes, "in these circumstances, there is something awkward about [saying] simply, 'This is how we do things here'" (Taylor 1994: 63). Furthermore, changing notions and norms concerning gender identity, sexuality, and ethnicity, and their relevance to nation, are all raised in the novel. These combinations, their intersectionality, complicates the weave of 'how we do things here' and 'how they do things,' as the 'we', 'they' and 'how' come to mean many things, sometimes contradictory. Singularity, unity, and identity cannot be taken for granted, even as, to be sure, the 'taken for granted', the old norms and stereotypes, persist in both practices, expectations, and worldviews. We can call this situation postnational, for there is no "reassuring sort of narrative in which [phases of national development are] seen as the appropriate next stage of the story", on an individual or national basis, even as citizens and nations stick to the norms and stereotypes, as Mikko Virtanen does. "What [has] come to an end is the narrative but not the subject of the narrative" (Danto 1995: 4).



## Allegories of Nation

Sitä harjoitellaan lapsena kunnallisesta päiväkodista saadussa vatsataudissa. Se on henkilökohtainen saavutus, mutta äänekkydessään sosiaalista. Parhaimmillaan se sitoo perheet yhteen. Se on alkoholikäytön ainoa positiivinen puoli [...] Varsinkin suomalaiset tekevät näin. Olemme kansa, joka osaa oksentaa (MV: 242).

We start practicing in municipal daycare as children, victims of stomach flu. It's a personal achievement, but social in its audibility. At its richest, it binds families together. It's the only positive aspect of drinking. Finns in particular do it. We're a nation that knows how to vomit.

In these words Martti Huttunen finds meaning in Finnish runners' competitive exertion to the point of vomiting as of a piece with a national story. Martti lines up a series of archetypical instances, which he interprets as national, because of their association with national institutions. 'This is the way we do it here', he implies, and 'the way we do it makes us who we are'. In this way, Huttunen equates nausea with nation and moral goodness. Huttunen is an obsessively allegorical thinker, finding meaning in quotidian events, such as getting sick at preschool, at a party, or after a running race, by understanding them as part of a story about the nation. He redescribes the stories of daily life as stories of nation.

Huttunen's national story is a tale of masochism and morality: the Finn must experience pain and suffering for the Finn to overcome. Through overcoming, he realizes his identity as an individual and as a national subject. In the overcoming, he recognizes what matters, and what is morally good. Huttunen is not alone, of course, for this masochistic allegory is a recurrent national trope, from Johan Ludvig Runeberg to Väinö Linna, and on (Nummi 1993). Huttunen is so convinced of this story that he becomes a sadist, seeking to impose physical suffering on his son and daughter through running, as a means of helping them develop self worth and moral goodness. The problem with Martti's masochistic allegory, however, is that his son Jarkko and daughter Heidi cannot use such thinking to make sense of their lives. Heidi, at least, seems to have what Hall called the postmodern identity.

MV has two protagonists, the father Martti and his daughter Heidi. The novel is narrated in alternating first-person chapters. Sirkka, Martti's wife and Heidi's mother, is a third character, present through dialogue recounted by Martti and Heidi. Martti works as the maintenance man (*vahtimestari*) at Heidi's school, and he has one friend, Risto. Martti, like Mikko Virtanen in VVP, builds his world view around a story: for Virtanen, it is the story of the Swedish welfare state, while for Martti it is the story of Finnish long-distance runners in their training and competition, and Olympic success. Martti emulates these runners' training methods, and trains his son Jarkko with their methods. Martti's worldview is challenged by Jarkko's apparent suicide. The implication, is that Martti drove his

son to his death. Allegory cannot give Jarkko's death meaning. Martti struggles. Heidi seeks to rescue her father by asking Martti to coach her. He reverts to his allegorical worldview, and Heidi must adopt a new life and identity. Down comes the poster of Britney Spears, up goes a painting of Kaarlo Maaninka. Soon Heidi finds herself split, living two lives, the life of an adolescent, and the life of an elite runner, narrowly focused on achieving top condition, which Martti explains with his allegorical interpretations. Martti's training methods become increasingly delusional, and also sadistic, forcing a reckoning with Heidi and Sirkka.

A specially important part of this allegory is its gendered dimensions, for Martti in effect seeks to masculinize Heidi to make her fit the national allegory that obsesses him. Martti's pantheon of Finnish heroes are men, and the qualities he finds in their masochistic suffering correlates in his mind with a national identity coded male. By contrast, Heidi's interest in popular culture, romantic love, and other adolescent pursuits are repeatedly coded 'soft' and 'feminine' by Martti. As feminist scholars such as Anu Koivunen (2004) and Tuula Gordon, Kirsti Lempiäinen, and Katri Komulainen (2002) have shown in key studies, such gendered differentiation is part of a long history of equating nation with masculine identities. These gendered dimensions work to heighten the stereotypes in the text, but also make evident the extent to which the rigidity of the stereotypes Martti holds rules out a more fluid and inclusive identity dialogue. When Heidi takes up running, she and her mother see Martti's allegorical, obsessive view in a new light. It cannot accommodate alternatives. This was Martti and Jarkko's conflict, and it becomes Heidi and her father's. "Sen ainoa into oli Jarkon valmentamiseen. Ei sillä ole mitään mihin palata. Meillä on helpompaa. Usko pois. Meillä on muutakin elämää" (MV: 59). [His only passion was coaching Jarkko. He's got nothing to come back to. It's easier for you and me. Believe me. We've got another life. Well, at least a little.] Heidi contrasts her father's thinking with her mother's and her own. Sirkka thinks Martti's obsessive and exclusive way of thinking was what plagued Jarkko. He was having second thoughts about his running career. "Joskus tuntuu, että Jarkko olisi halunnut viettää normaalin nuoruuden" ["Sometimes it seemed like Jarkko just wanted to be a normal kid"] (MV: 60). Martti, too, recognizes his obsessive, sadomasochistic, view. When Heidi proposes taking up running, Martti replies, "Oletko nyt ihan varma? Se on aika raakaa hommaa" ["Are you sure? It's brutal work"]. The narration flips to Martti, who typically allegorize Heidi's request. "Tuttu tilanne tämä on. Samaa painia tämä on kuin Lasse Virénin ja Rolf Haikkolan tapauksessa. Lasse oli Heidi, se joka ehdotti valmennussuhdetta. Rolf minun paikalla, mieltii, onko poika tosissaan." ["A familiar situation, the same tension as between Lasse Virén and Rolf Haikkola. Lasse was Heidi, who suggested the coaching arrangement. Rolf was in my place, asking himself, was the boy serious"] (MV: 63).

Another way to see the wedge between Heidi's life as a teenager and her life as a track-and-field runner is to see it as a contest between competing moral frameworks and notions of happiness. Heidi's two lives represent contemporary Finland as split by competing notions of

pleasure and happiness, which are coded not only in gendered terms, but also in generational and historical terms. Martti and his sadomasochistic, allegorical worldview belong to the deprivation of Finland's interwar and postwar periods, which fostered a stoic notion equating happiness with the satisfaction of having endured and overcome suffering. In contrast, Heidi belongs to the consumerist age of globalization, in which happiness is consumerist, equated with pleasure attained through access and intimate relationships. In recalling Jarkko's wish for a normal life, Sirkka suggested he wanted a little pleasure, but all Martti gave him was physical suffering to overcome.

Martti and Heidi discuss this contrast during a training camp in northeastern Finland, at Maaninkavaara, the Olympic champion's home village.

-Sinulla on Heidi hyvin asiat kun saat juosta.

-Niin kai.

-Sinä saat tulla tänne juoksemaan. Olet etuoikeutettu likka, onnentyttö. Toista se oli Kaarlon aikaan. Harjoittelu tehtiin töiden jälkeen. Niin tekivät myös Nurmi, Kolehmainen, Ritola ja Vainio. Sinä olet onnentyttö [...]

Lähden juoksemaan takaisin. Olisin onnentyttö, jos istuisin kahvilassa käsi kädessä Saken kanssa. Nauttisin, jos olisin elokuvissa katsomassa jotain romanttista. Tai jos makaisin sohvalla ja lukisin lehteä. Mitään en halua niin paljon kuin olla kuten muut ikäiseni tytöt. (MV: 220).

"You've got it good when you get to run, Heidi."

"I guess."

"You got to come here to run. You're a privileged girl, a lucky lady. It was different in Kaarlo's day. They trained after work. That's what they all did: Nurmi, Kolehmainen, Ritola, and Vainio. You're a lucky lady [...]"

I start running home. Damn right I'd be a lucky lady, if I were sitting in a café, hand in hand with Sakke. I'd be enjoying myself, if I were at the movies, watching something romantic. Or even lying on the sofa, reading the paper. All I want is to be like other girls my age.

Heidi and her father are separated by different ideas of happiness: for Martti, it's a reflective state, dependent upon work. For Heidi, it is immediate, affective experience.

The contest between Martti and Heidi also concerns pedagogy. Martti's sadomasochistic approach to running is pedagogical. He is trying to teach Heidi a stoic worldview – idealistic, rule bound, masculine, concerned with harmony. As Martti pushes Heidi further, Heidi resists him by intensifying her teaching. Heidi is also trying to teach her parents, but she is teaching them to embrace an affective state, and a desire for commonplace, pleasurable experiences.

-Äiti. Katso nyt teidän liittoa.

-Mitä siitä?

-Ei näytä ihmisten elämältä.

-Millaista ilotulitusta sen sitten pitäisi olla?

-Ei nyt ilotulitusta, mutta edes normaalia.

-Ihan normaalihan tämä on.

-On, jos siihen suostuu. Sano rehellisesti äiti, oletko sinä onnellinen?

-Pitääkö sitä nyt onnellinen olla?

-Pitää.

-Ei nyt tässä iässä enää. Kun ei ole haaveitakaan. Kaikki on tässä. Mies, koti, perhe. Hyvä tässä on. Otatko vielä ruokaa? (MV: 191)

“Mom. Just think of your marriage.”

“What about it?”

“I mean, it doesn’t really look like a life, does it?”

“What kind of fireworks should it involve, then?”

“Well, I don’t mean fireworks, but at least something normal.”

“But this is a normal marriage.”

“It is, if you give in to it. But tell me, honestly, Mom, are you happy?”

“Do you have to be happy?”

“Yes.”

“Not at my age. No more dreaming. This is it. A husband, a home, a family. Not bad. Do you want anything more to eat?”

Heidi argues that the deprivation is sadomasochistic, because it imposes on Heidi and Sirkka a painful set of expectations, intended to make them suffer. Heidi’s argument seeks to teach her mother an alternative view. Heidi gives up her stoicism when Martti goes too far. Heidi almost dies of hypothermia in an extreme training session. Martti and Sirkka’s marriage ends in divorce. Heidi’s lessons change Sirkka’s mind.

One angle on this conflict is the affect theorist Sara Ahmed’s argument about the “imperative to be happy”, which she develops in her study *The Promise of Happiness* (2011). The problem is not that the characters want each other to be happy. Rather, it is that they are trying to make each other happy in ways that they themselves approve, allegorically and affectively – a contradiction in how we think of the accessibility of happiness, as the psychoanalyst and critic Adam Phillips has observed (2010: 88). Martti cannot tell Heidi she is not happy, only what should make her happy in his opinion. Neither can Heidi tell her father, or mother, he or she is not happy, only what should make them happy. There is not a narrative that can unify these emotional states and the affects that underpin them, but rather divergent lives, which belong to variant views of the world. The very staging of this conflict connects to the multiculturalism and postmodern identities discussed by Taylor and Hall above, for the notion that there are multiple sources of happiness, which are interchangeable, exemplifies the pluralism they find characteristic of late modernity. Moreover, the characters do not agree about what happiness is, advocating as they do for different notions of happiness, a state of reflection and an affective state. Ahmed argues that in this sense, happiness entails a notion of happiness in the eyes of others, making happiness depend on others’ recognition (2011: 38-45), which for her involves mixed feelings, which always haunt happiness.

The title of MV might be seen to sum up the conflict that emerges as the novel’s characters seek to teach each other to be happy. ‘Maaninka’ of the title refers to Martti’s idol Kaarlo Maaninka, who won silver and bronze in the 10000m and 5000m track events at the Moscow Olympics in 1980. The runner later confessed to having used blood doping to achieve the results. The religious Maaninka could not live with himself for his infraction. If we take Maaninka as a figuration of the elite runner, built through obsession like Martti’s, the ‘-vaara’ of the title might be seen to

refer to the danger of such obsession. One meaning of the word is danger – implying a cautionary tale lies in the novel, which also resonates in the name of the main character Martti, whose namesake is the disqualified Finnish 10000m medalist from the Los Angeles Olympics, Martti Vainio. So the title might be taken as a warning, about Martti's obsessions and worldview. 'Vaara' also refers to a geographical feature, typical of place names, and the combination of surname and the geographic feature designates a place in northeastern Finland, where Martti holds the family training camps. At the end of the novel, he also makes his retreat to Maaninkavaara, where he seeks to recover and start a new life.

### **Conclusion: Christmas in Thailand**

Martti is able to house-sit for a friend in Maaninkavaara, because the friend and property owner is in Phuket with his Thai wife. His absence provides Martti the peace he needs for his contemplation. For her part, Sirkka has sought happiness with a new companion, and they are on Christmas holiday in Thailand. Heidi and Sakke are on a downhill skiing holiday, albeit at the Finnish resort not far from Maaninkavaara. Martti, Heidi, and Sirkka are thus united by a "Christmas in Thailand," each touched by such a connection, which summons multiple points of reference, the "postmodern identities" to again recall Hall's terms, which figure so prominently in MV and Nousiainen's other novels. This article's argument has suggested that the novels each construct their protagonists as subjects of multiple lives. As they orient themselves within these lives, find them to be contradictory, and seek to reconcile the contradictions with other identity discourses, from stereotypes to pluralist views, contrasts emerge which can well be understood in terms of theories of multicultural or postmodern identity and postnationalism. In so doing, the novels humorously show the rigidity and incapacity of national allegories to make sense of the characters' multiple lives, as the "Christmas in Thailand" at the end of MV suggests.

The characters in each of the novels also seek happiness in their notions of happiness (obsessive as they often are) and in other characters' efforts to teach them how to be happy. Identities and associations with identities are supposed to make them happy. Can they make them happy? "Well, no," as Adam Philips writes, "but only because nothing and no one can make us happy, as in do something to us that will create this wonderful thing. What [they] can do is create the conditions in which [we] might be happy, and an environment in which [we] can begin to get a sense of the conflicts that happiness" entails (2010: 93). What Nousiainen's novels perhaps do best is leave us with a fuller sense of the conflicts identities entail today, and how these conflicts are tied up in the happiness identities seem to offer. In this, they leave us with many questions.

How do we situate the pluralization of identities and the aspirations of these contradictory lives depicted in these novels? As suggested in the introduction, ironic depictions of national identity can be traced

back to the early twentieth century, and not least to the years around Finland's Civil War, with its fraught cultural politics. Rigidly normative, stereotyped identities can also be dated to that time, and much earlier – the Bonden Paavo archetype of J.L. Runeberg. In recent years, ironic depictions have flourished. Influential theorists like the late Stuart Hall argue a fragmentation of identities has been brought about by global capitalism, and that the fragmentation has loosened the hold of identities, making it possible to ironize them for fun but also for critical purposes (1996: 618-22). Yet at this late date it is clear that while fragmentation may be a seminal dimension of the culture of global capitalism, as Hall argued, an even more pervasive and influential dimension is the reassertion of serious, robust, convention-bound identities, including movements and identities that build upon particular nationalist and class identities, and assertions about the betrayal and victimization of such identities. Yet even so, the reassertion of these identities resonates with Nousiainen's novels, in which such stereotyped identities are represented as at once durable, commonsensical, and resonant, at the same time as they are fragile, brittle, and easily co-opted with humor. This nexus of contradictions around identities, the vacillation of identities, and the continuing importance of identities within the cultural politics of late modern Finland and northern Europe, call for more research, which uses cultural texts and theoretical interventions to better account for the periodization of identity discourses in the context of the reassertion of conservative identity politics.

Another way to see this call for more investigation is to position Nousiainen's novels as a response to a problem faced by Finland and the Nordics, as well as other Western polities: the emancipatory narratives of nation and class, which motivated the establishment of the social-democratic welfare state (chronicled obsessively by Mikko Virtanen in VVP) have become obstacles to the welfare state's reinvention. It does not work anymore to say, "that is the way we do it here." As the political theorist Etienne Balibar writes, "the difficulty for democratic politics is to avoid becoming enclosed in representations that have historically been associated with emancipatory projects and struggles for citizenship and have now become obstacles to their revival, to their permanent reinvention" (2004: 10). Nousiainen's novels stage a conflict between characters whose worldviews are shaped by narratives of such emancipatory projects and characters who come after their exhaustion, and who are drawn by a utopian notion of a more pluralistic community. In this, Nousiainen's modest and slender comic novels raise key questions for our late-modern world of global capitalism.

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GUNILLA HERMANSSON

## Picture – Word – Scream

### Hagar Olsson and the Art of Tomorrow

“Salvation is the name of the new aesthetics”, wrote Hagar Olsson in the early 1920s (“Frälsning heter den nya estetiken”, 1922b: 110).<sup>1</sup> A statement such as that is typical for her critical prose, not only in its uncompromising wording and messianic spirit but also in its anti-formalistic core: “Wherever someone creates man and saves others by saving himself, there the new song is sung, regardless of which formula it follows” (“Där någon diktar människan och frälsar andra genom att frälsa sig själv, där blir den nya sången sjungen, efter vilka formler det än sker”, 1922b: 110). Olsson was one of the foremost advocates of avant-garde and modernist literature in Finland in the inter-war period – and as such immensely sensitive to the form and materiality of art. This article seeks to highlight and discuss the fluctuations of Olsson’s medial awareness before World War II, the hopes and fears that she invested in different media and art forms. The contention is that such an investigation will further a more nuanced understanding of her work as well as of her assessment of expressionism and other “isms”, and, thereby, of her role as a mediator for international modernism and the avant-garde in Finland.

The intermedial approach taken here to Olsson’s critical and fictional work is partly inspired by W.J.T. Mitchell’s early work and concentrates on the values and problematics associated with different media and art forms (1986, 1994). However, whereas Mitchell focused on historical debates and works as part of a struggle between picture and word and sought to identify the idea of medial purity as “an ideology, a complex of desire and fear, power and interest” (1994: 98), a study of Olsson shows a more entangled and unstable state of affairs. Neither purism nor hybridity was of primary importance for her. If anything, she was an ambivalent anti-formalist and anti-materialist, working very consciously with media and matter, especially during the 1920s. Furthermore, a third means of expression, besides word and picture, also needs to be taken into consideration: the scream, on the verge between language and pure sound, and ranging from existential anguish to effective agitation.

In 1916, Olsson made her literary and critical debut and thereby started her career in a turbulent period that witnessed not only war and revolutions but also some of the historical avant-garde’s most radical, abstract and intermedial experiments. It should be stressed that the heightened medial, material and technological awareness among artists and writers in contemporary Europe was never detached from ideological, political, philosophical, and religious discussions and

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<sup>1</sup> All translations from Swedish are mine.



examinations or even from occult theories (e.g. Mitchell 1994: 227; Hjartarson 2007: 187–88; Kleinschmidt 2012:17–18). Olsson's inter-war work resonates not only with the experimental "discoveries" of the continental avant-garde and the ongoing critique throughout Europe of *l'art-pour-l'art*, but also with a wave of modern messianism and utopianism. The latter is just as important for understanding Olsson's work and its curious combination of bold experiments, wariness about different new forms or isms and relentless strivings for an art (and mode of existence) to come.

### **"Modernism" and messianism**

Olsson engaged in pacifism, internationalism, collectivism, youth and education, feminism, and "modernism", a word she used as an umbrella term for every ism or work that broke with naturalism and traditional art. We might say that under this umbrella she recognised that what are commonly understood as opposites in many cases constituted overlapping fields: avant-garde practices, which (in Peter Bürger's terms) rejected the autonomy of art and aimed to destroy art as an institution and reintegrate it into the everyday life, and modernist art, which experimented with form and content without making these radical claims (cf. Eysteinnsson 2009).

What is notable is that when she was propagating these causes Olsson used language and imagery permeated by words, structures, and ideas drawn from religious and idealist traditions: "Samarkand", "the-land-which-is-not", "Paradise", "the golden kingdom", "Canaan", "the unknown", "the unconditioned", "salvation". She would describe the modernist poet as a revolutionary and a soldier, but also as a prophet and an evangelist, and her fictional works often depicted self-sacrifice, mystical experiences, spiritual breakthroughs, and death as thresholds to new worlds.

Yet, Olsson certainly did not propagate traditional idealism or religious views. Nor was her agenda political, at least not in the sense of party politics (Svensson 1975: 313; Meurer-Bongardt 2011: 148; it is possible though to detect a turn from a Nietzschean aristocratism, with a matching contempt for socialism, towards clearly expressed sympathies for socialist and communist ideas around 1920). Rather, her agenda was utopian and spiritual-social in a consciously vague and non-determined fashion.

In 1949, Olof Enckell pointed to a seeming split in Olsson's universe between mysticism and transcendence and commitment to the idea of brotherhood and social reform. He explained them as twin-ideas forcing heaven and earth together, rather than being contradictions (1949: 130–31). Others have also highlighted Olsson's rapprochement with mysticism (primarily Monica Vikström-Jokela 1993, but also Paillard 1956: 32 and Glyn Jones 1995: 174). Judith Meurer-Bongardt (2011), however, has criticised this interpretation in order to inscribe Olsson's work more thoroughly in a tradition of utopianism and to stress

Olsson's affinity with German Expressionism. Utopianism no doubt is a major key to Olsson's work, as Meurer-Bongardt's thesis confirms. The related concept of modern, non-theological messianism (Glazova and North 2014) might also prove helpful for understanding Olsson's complex navigation between the religious and the secular, as well as how her unrelenting steering towards a new dawn intertwines with her experiments with different media and expressions.

The word "messianism" covers a long and heterogeneous tradition, which centres round the belief in the coming of a saviour (person or not) that will redeem humankind (or a chosen people) and effectuate the realisation of a new or restored paradise. The twentieth century saw various secularised versions of what originally was a religious and theological structure of thought. The era of German Expressionism coincided with an intensified messianic desire among thinkers and writers, as Lisa Marie Anderson has shown (2011; 2014). Anderson has described German expressionist messianism in terms of a dynamic between re-sacralisation and secularisation, resulting most often in non-religious visions clothed in a religious idiom, built up with central motifs from the Christian and Jewish scriptures. She sees it moreover as part of a modern and modernist reworking of the sacred, but specifically defined by suffering, utopian expectation and ecstatic expression, "with a generation of artists defining itself by its forbearance through severe unrest, in pursuit of an end both ecstatically envisioned and ultimately unknowable" (Anderson 2011:3; cf. Anderson 2014: 16–19).

Many expressionists expected their art to disrupt time and revolutionise humankind spiritually and/or socially. The intense and pathos-filled mode of expression was considered part and parcel of the transformative power of their art. Both their mode of thought and expression would quickly fall into disrepute, partly because of the resistance that the uses of pathos has repeatedly evoked throughout history (Zumbusch 2010), partly because of the potential affinity of messianism with totalitarian visions (Liska 2007: 197). In 1940 Walter Benjamin, and later Jacques Derrida among others, would reformulate the messianic in much more cautious, indeterminate, and "weaker" versions in order to rethink temporality and history without discarding the possibility of hope and change (Boldyrev 2014: 35; Glazova and North 2014: 8–10; Svenungsson 2014: 137–254).

It is largely against this background of unabashed claims and critical wariness within modern messianic thought that I propose to point out and analyse Hagar Olsson's uses and assessment of the word, the picture and the scream as means of expression in a number of fictional and critical texts written before the outbreak of the Second World War. She was castigated by both contemporary and later critics for her ideological and political vagueness, but it would be possible to view the vagueness as a deliberate strategy for maintaining a forward direction while avoiding a fixed and totalising definition of the longed for future. It is a strategy of mobility and constant renegotiation, which she also applied to her mediation of the international avant-garde. Olsson

was always intensely seeking the art of tomorrow, but at the same time wary of both repressive and impotent, “decorative” tendencies.

The points of relationship between messianism and avant-garde art are perhaps not only to be found in the hopes for a revolutionised society or the expressionist’s ecstatic desire and uses of religious traditions, but also in the role of violence in the two. “When we speak of a messianic potential”, Anna Glaxova and Paul North write, “we should be careful not to dwell only on its restorative or revolutionary power, when the destructive dimension is part and parcel of it. [...] Hope for a revolution that both destroys and creates is its classical form” (2014: 5). Destruction and violence were also part of avant-garde aesthetics and its conflation of art and action – from the futurist glorification of war to André Breton’s idea of firing a gun into a crowd as the most surrealist action (*Second Manifesto of Surrealism* 1930, cf. Hjartarson 2007: 183; Hermansson 2015a: 7–8; Hermansson 2015b: 110–114). Actual brutality and the new art’s violation of aesthetic rules and boundaries were imagined in this way as parallel actions. The similarities between messianic hopes and avant-garde practices and ideas should not be over-emphasised. However, Olsson’s navigation in the complex field of messianic thought and modernist and avant-garde aesthetics may be seen as a mixture of fascination with and resistance to this inherent aggression and violence amidst ideas of creation and salvation, an ambivalence which would be typical for early Nordic modernism (Hermansson 2012; 2013; 2015a).

In the following, I shall single out some of Olsson’s work, beginning with her first short fiction, which was published between 1916 and 1917, and which connect and contrast scream and pictorial art in different ways. I shall then turn to reviews and articles from the early 1920s in which Olsson commented on expressionism. I then discuss two of her dramas from the late 1920s, and finally the novel *På Kanaanexpressen* (*On the Canaan Express*) from 1929. The latter not only signal its messianic core in the title, but remains Olsson’s most thorough intermedial experiment within the confines of a book. In the conclusion, I will briefly discuss the results in the context of early Nordic modernism and/or avant-garde.

### *Screaming and silent pictures*

One of Olsson’s first published texts “En konstutställning” (“An Art Exhibition”, 1916) was a dense hybrid between a review and a piece of non-naturalistic short fiction. It related a visit to the national gallery in Helsinki, the Ateneum Art Museum, which in 1916 showed a retrospect of salon painter Gunnar Berndtson’s (1854–1895) meticulous work. To the narrator, however, a painting by van Gogh was the only one that provided a truly transformative art experience. It appeared as if it was screaming and it awakened in the narrator a fear of a threatening, imminent but unknowable revolution or change.

Anxiety is only the final of a range of reactions to the exhibition. Berndtson’s detailed and harmonious art causes ennui in the narrator

and a rebellious, disrespectful laughter, which turns into angry aggression. The narrator feels an urge to tear, scratch and kick these works to pieces. Faced with van Gogh's painting, pathos-filled fear and pity replace laughter: "And I felt it whistling with heavy wings over my head, that which the lonely one [van Gogh] awaited, but which struck him with terror and drove him to self-destruction, that which we all await" ("Och jag kände det susa med tunga vingar över mitt huvud, det som den ensamme väntade, men som väckte skräck och drev honom till självförstörelse, det, som vi alla vänta", 1916: 204). In passing, we note that van Gogh represents not only true and transgressive art, but also self-aggression.

Unlike Edvard Munch's globally iconised *The Scream*, the painting by van Gogh in Olsson's text is not a representation of a scream. Rather, the scream is an effect of the painterly expression, the twisted trees and houses which lean shuddering against each other. This effect lasts all night, as the narrator experiences a nightmarish scene in her or his room: the furniture is twisting with anxiety, and the laughter is taken over by the threatening "unknown", trolls, and time personified. Unlike the admired artist, however, the narrator endures and in the morning is able to use a broom to wipe away the laughter, which has fallen like dry dust to the floor.

Thus, in Olsson's modernist hybrid text, the scream functions as a metaphor for the expressive style and "distortions" of modern art, as the contemporary art discourse would name it, and scream and modern art are presented as two sides of the same coin. A year later, however, scream and painting came to represent two contrasting ideas of art in Olsson's cycle of short prose texts, *Själarnas ansikten* (*The Faces of the Souls*, 1917; cf. Enckell 1949: 122). Yet, both scream and a certain kind of painting are defined as the new and necessary forms of the art of tomorrow.

In the opening text of *Själarnas ansikten*, four cornerstones of romantic idealism are put within quotation marks, negated, and replaced: "art" by "anti-art", "God" by "He who is not" (Honom som icke är), "truth" by "the unconditioned" (det Obetingade), and "faith" by an image of traumatic rapture: "Your soul should be a large open wound from which enthusiasm flows" ("eder själ skall vara ett stort öppet sår ur vilket hänförelsen rinner", 1917: 10). The art of tomorrow, anti-art, is furthermore defined as "an inarticulate scream [in] towards the infinite" ("ett oartikulerat skri in mot det oändliga", 1917: 10; "skri" here equals the German expressionist "Schrei" of existential anguish and protest against existing norms).

*Själarnas ansikten* functions almost as a medieval anthology of edifying exempla in which de-individualised men and women struggle with fear, pain, and desires. They sacrifice and overcome themselves and eventually experience a spiritual breakthrough. The language is biblical-Nietzschean and stylised; the milieus consist of mountains, the sea, low huts and houses, and trees that twist themselves in van Gogh's manner. However, the second and third of the texts in *Själarnas ansikten* introduce an individual in a sketchy modern environment. The story of

Stig Henrik's adolescence lets him test and discard a range of ideologies – conservatism, socialism and anarchism – and settle for the aesthetic and world view of a female artist called *Stjärnbarnet* (*The Star Child*).

Two portraits play a significant role in the brief story of Stig Henrik, one of his late mother and the other a self-portrait by *Stjärnbarnet*. We are told that both of them picture a human's loneliness and pain before the infinite, and that the frame around the *Stjärnbarnet* looks as if it is about to burst from its expanding content. In a conversation with Stig Henrik, *Stjärnbarnet* preaches that art is the source of man's spiritual renewal; it is destined to become revelation and grace. She prophesies that a chosen few with a pure passion for beauty will create an art "simplified to the uttermost contours, whose stylised, beautiful and crystal-like balanced system shall be transparent to the light of the infinite and the inexpressible and whose colours and words shall not obscure the road to that which is not" ("den till den yttersta konturen förenklade konst vars stiliserade, sköna och kristalliskt avvägda system skall vara genomskinligt för det oändligas och outsägbaras ljus och vars färger och ord icke skola skymma vägen för det som icke är", 1917: 48).

In this work then, the amorphous scream and anti-art is associated in a paradoxical way with an inward direction, which is nonetheless also the direction towards the infinite, whereas the stylised form is endowed with a more direct expanding and transcendent power. Together the scream and the stylised art (materialised through colours and words) form a paradoxical aesthetic, combining the ugly, base or abject (the wounds, the bestial scream) with balanced beauty, as well as inwards and outwards aggression with tranquillity and transcendence.

A key word in *Stjärnbarnet*'s vision of a future art is "transparency", an ideal that she herself seems to incarnate. From the beginning, she is thin, virgin-like and pale, indeed almost transparent. Her face is pure soul, and this is captured in the painted self-portrait, which Stig Henrik experiences at the art gallery. When communicating with him, *Stjärnbarnet* whispers and what draws her away from him and earthly existence is also the silence and whispering of "the infinite". Thus, *Stjärnbarnet* is on the brink of both colourlessness and wordlessness, and in the end she simply evaporates into that which is not. The faces of the souls, the title of the work, is that which lies behind and beyond the body – and similarly the reduced materiality of art (scream, crystal, words, colours) is supposed to annihilate itself in a transition towards the infinite and inexpressible. This is probably the closest Olsson got to a line of aesthetic-messianic thought of which Kandinsky was the best known exponent. Through the purifying of art forms and their material and following the principle of inner necessity a new spiritual kingdom could be built, he wrote in *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* (1912) (Kandinsky 1984: 141; Kleinschmidt 2012: 58).

The attention Olsson pays to the scream as well as to avant-garde pictorial art (stylised, distorted or abstract) in these two texts is characteristic of the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Pictorial art was perceived as taking the lead among the arts, and with the dissemination of futurism, cubism, and expressionism throughout Europe, modern painting

was formulated as a model for other arts, especially for literature, thus creating an *avant-garde ut pictura poesis*-tradition (Mitchell 1994: 228; Jelsbak 2005: 87). In addition, the scream was reformulated and loaded with new aesthetic as well as utopian qualities, not the least by proto-expressionists and expressionist writers (Anglet 1997: 191; Anglet 2003: 3). This went hand in hand with a Nietzsche-inspired reinterpretation and reevaluation of pathos launched by members of the *Neue Club* in Berlin, among others. In the *Neopathetische Cabaret* and the magazine *Der neue Pathos* (1913–1919), they launched pathos and the scream as a sign of vitalism, but also as a more immediate and original form of communication uniting poet and the masses (Stücheli 1999; Streim 1998; Zumbusch 2010: 17–20). In the expressionist drama, the scream functioned as “mute” gestures expressing that which lies “beyond the epistemological grasp of conventional representation” (Murphy 1999: 143). It is also as “a revolutionary gesture of insight”, a culmination of what was also articulated with words and other gestures (Kuhns 1997: 132).

*Själarnas ansikten* quite explicitly partakes in the re-evaluation of pathos, and exhibits a related, yet different Nietzsche-reading than the neopathetics and later expressionists, with whom Olsson would have not had contact at this point. The overall effect of the collection is one of an intense and pathos-filled, but controlled and stylised prose (Paillard 1956: 30; Donner 1963: 9). Only one scream is in fact “uttered” in the book and it is by a female narrator in the final text. It is a scream of existential fear and despair that is answered by “the infinite” and turned into a mind-expanding initiation: Angst and pain is transformed into a precious tiara. The final note is not just one of humble joy, but a longing for another human being. The scream as a final peak of intensity releases a contact not only between humans and heaven/the infinite, but also between humans.

### *Expressionism, art and action*

When Olsson introduced her readers to the literature of German Expressionism, the dynamics between silence and scream, words and picture, people and infinity that we find in the two early texts were altered. Her presentations and assessments of expressionism during the 1920s are in fact quite revealing for how she navigated between art forms, media, and modes of expression. Traditional and *avant-garde* forms competed when she tried to find words for the art of tomorrow, art which is engaged and engaging and thus avoids drawing all the attention to either the beauty or shock effect of itself as art. Apparently, she found it increasingly important that art did not become either too detached from earthly reality or tend towards the market logic of the newest fashions.

In February 1920 she used the image of a finely cut marble pillar – a calm, classical and architectonic form – to contrast Else Lasker-Schüler’s poetry with the “isms” of the day, which were treading towards a chaotic dance to the drumming of the expressionist’s prophet Kasimir Edschmid.



Olsson characterised contemporary literature as having two faces: one ghostlike, fading into blue, with an unhealthy mysticism, the other “distorted by a ruthless elementarism which seems to touch upon the inarticulate howl as the only salvation from the untruth and artificiality of art” (“förvridet av en frän elementarism, vilken tyckes tangera det oartikulerade skränet såsom den enda frälsningen ur konstens osanning och förkonstling”, Olsson 1920). Lasker-Schüler’s poetry, according to Olsson, represented a calm and sound mysticism combining earth, human blood, and the expanse of heaven.

In her first lengthy comment on expressionism, “Det expressionistiska seendet” (“The Expressionist Vision”, 1920) Olsson stressed its affinity to avant-garde pictorial art, which she associated with a new, active, and productive vision (1953: 28; cf. Holmström 1993a). This is less surprising when seen in the context of the modern *ut pictura poesis*-doctrine. The article comments on a new edition of *Expressionismus* (1916) by the Austrian critic, Hermann Bahr, which had been the first published monograph discussing literary expressionism. Olsson made two interesting choices when presenting his work. Firstly, she chose *not* to use his most famous and most quoted paragraph, in which he defined expressionism as a scream: “der Mensch schreit nach seiner Seele, die ganze Zeit wird ein einziger Notschrei. Auch die Kunst schreit mit, in die tiefe Finsternis hinein, sie schreit um Hilfe, sie schreit nach dem Geist: das ist der Expressionismus” (Bahr 1916: 123). This choice seems to be connected to the fact that expressionism in this case was metonymic for modernist/avant-garde art, which Olsson propagated. Apparently she deemed the scream and the howl as suspiciously uncontrolled or powerless. Instead of stressing the sense of desperation, Olsson’s expressionism was more potent, rebellious, and constructive: it comprised an awakening, a revolt against limitations, dryness and the uniform life. But she also added a (modern-vague) messianic touch, when she wrote that expressionism was a visionary attempt to draw the sign of “the unknown” (“ett nytt försök till ett ritande av det obekantas tecken”, 1953: 30).

Secondly, she concluded with a comment on Bahr’s bewilderment when he tried to read works by Martin Buber. Bahr could appreciate the music in them but not make sense of the actual words and sentences. Olsson almost lectured Bahr and stressed the importance of being able to listen to the rhythm of poetry. Sensitivity towards the visionary as well as the rhythm was paramount for understanding the new art. Her version of expressionism was, in this case, going beyond the meaning of words towards a new vision and a new hearing – which were revolutionising the world, but in a constructive and controlled way.

Two years later, Olsson had still not decided whether expressionism was a superficial craze or a serious artistic endeavour. This becomes clear from the treatment of expressionism in the short-lived magazine *Ultra* (1922), which she edited together with Elmer Diktonius, Lauri Haarla, and Raoul af Hällström. In a programmatic text in the first issue, she stated that all isms should be surmounted, schools of art were only for “those who must scream in order to be heard, because their

words lack inner power, and for those who need to gesticulate in order to be understood, because their faces are dead” (för dem som måste skrika för att göra sig hörda, emedan deras ord saknar inre makt, de äro till för dem som måste gestikulera för att bli förstådda, emedan deras ansikten äro döda, 1922a: 16. The unsigned article is attributed to her by Roger Holmström 1993b: 57). When Diktonius wrote an introduction of Edith Södergran’s poetry for *Ultra*, Olsson insisted that he should avoid making Södergran into a sort of advertising sign and therefore avoid using the word “expressionist” (undated letter, SLSA 568: 5).

Her negative assessment of isms as such seems to be motivated by a resentment of another version of the scream, which was growing in significance in the urban sphere as well as in the arts in the inter-war period. This was the agitating scream (for earlier instances, see Anglet 2003: 284–96). This (articulate) scream or cry, was perhaps seen and read just as much as it was heard, as the many depictions and examinations of the dynamics between agitator and masses in literature, painting, sociology, journalism and so on during the inter-war years suggest (Lewer 2011, Jonsson 2013). More than ever, the smartness of commercial advertising, the dedication of political engagement, and the ironic and shocking effects of avant-garde art and manifestos became overlapping, interacting fields. Olsson’s reaction to this screaming for attention leaned to the negative in 1920–1922, and her later comments and literary depictions show deep ambivalence.

Nevertheless, expressionism was presented and scrutinized more than other isms in *Ultra*, probably in a large part due to Diktonius’ dedication. But Olsson was also softening towards it because of its connection with mysticism, spirituality, and utopianism. Whereas their Scandinavian colleagues, such as Emil Bønnelycke and Tom Kristensen, continued to imagine literary expressionism as equivalent to colourful, brutal, distorted or non-mimetic avant-garde paintings, Olsson and Diktonius more clearly associated expressionism with the longing for a New Man as well (Hermansson 2015b: 42–98). In 1922, when Olsson named the new aesthetics “salvation”, she identified it as an inheritance from the great Russian writers and the German expressionists. By at least 1924, for Olsson expressionism had become a positive force in literary history, albeit one that had been rightly overcome and abandoned.

She now formulated the shortcoming of the expressionists as too deep a reliance on words instead of action. In “The New Revolutionary Poetry”, (“Den nya revolutionära dikten”, 1924), Olsson claimed that unlike the expressionist poet, the new “singing revolutionary” did not just *sing* about love, reconciliation, murder, and violence, but simply *was* in the struggle itself. This poet interpreted the sufferings of the wordless and nameless masses, and Olsson seemed to expect that his words would be transformed into action. This idea led her once again to the problem of finding a mode of expression that was able to transcend the medium of the written and spoken word.



## Words and bodies on stage

With a few exceptions, Olsson was extremely negative towards film and the cinema, especially in the early 1920s (Fridell 1973: 71, 175; Holmström 1993b: 40). Her argument could be summed up as follows: film is not art; it is soulless, superficial, mechanical, banal, uniform, cut-up, and easily digested. In contrast, for Olsson the theatre was an affair of the heart and in the second half of the 1920s she produced her most extensive experiments with intermedial combinations as a novelist and playwright.

Olsson's first staged drama, *Hjärtats pantomim* (*The Pantomime of the Heart*, premiered January 1928, published 1962), presented an idea of a communal heart and contrasted it against individual worldly desires in a prologue, four tableaux, and an epilogue. In the drama, a man wins the lottery, discards his beloved, and seeks happiness in luxury articles. Through a line of nightmarish tableaux the man understands that he has gone astray. He screams once when he recognises himself in a rich and miserly man, and he jumps to murder the miser/himself – an action of (interrupted) violence that embodies the start of his awakening and return to the heart and the woman. The scenography at the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki was created by the modernist artist Wäinö Aaltonen (Donner 1962: 11; Fridell 1973: 76), and lightning, rumbling, music and pictorial projections were part of the art work. On the level of the plot, however, the drama worked against visual media as well as against the word.

The only negatively conceived character in the drama is tellingly enough an author. Olsson made him a self-absorbed conventionalist in Hamlet costume, and in an interview she described him as “the spirit of conventional calculation” (Donner 1962: 11). But it was not just his conventionality or nose for business and fame that tainted him. It was the fact that he offered words instead of his heart. The woman exclaimed, “Words cannot alter the course of the drama. That which a heart has endured, no word can erase. Words mean nothing, the heart determines everything!” (“Ord kan inte rubba dramats gång. Det som ett hjärta har genomgått, kan inte ett ord utplåna. Ord betyder intet, hjärtat avgör allt!”; Olsson 1962: 78). When the author appreciated the *sound* of this pathos-filled line, the woman called him a parasite, feeding on other people's hearts. She continued, saying that visions (“illusioner”) are not worn on the lips but carried under the heart, and then delivered to the world under great pain. Consequently, she turned her attention to an inner world and concentrated intensively on the “invisible drama” in which the man returned to her, while the author and an art dealer ventured on a discussion about art on the visible stage.

Lena Fridell has shown that this epilogue was difficult to manage on stage. It was rewritten several times during rehearsals and revised for the 1962 print version. In the original version, the man is neither heard nor seen and the invisible drama is related only through the words and gestures of the woman (Fridell 1973: 114, 117). However, the later manuscripts reveal that the director found it necessary to show the man

on stage and have his words heard in order to convey the message to the audience more clearly. The man was forced to articulate his experiences and insights. In the staged version, the author was moved by this “other” drama. Whereas the staged version highlighted the transformative power of the “true” drama, the printed text accentuated Olsson’s critique of aestheticism and the word instead. In the printed version only the woman’s voice is heard, and the true drama stays invisible, mediated entirely through her reactions. She goes through rejoicing and fear and ends in quiet ecstasy, falling on her knees and exclaiming, “All is consummated” (Allt är fullbordat). Here the author keeps his cynical stand and gets the final word: “The heart! What a banality”.

The stage directions in the printed version describe the author as pale, immaterial, shadow-like and powerless against the reality and logic of the true, passionate drama. The shifts between what is presented as material and immaterial can be explained as a way of highlighting the paradox between visual and non-visual reality that is a basis of the play, as Fridell has suggested (1973: 133). But it also means that art as such holds an ambiguous position in the drama. The aesthetic eye and ear is parasitic, false, and impotent. Apparently, to avoid this, the printed version continually shifts between visual and auditory elements, between the scenery and the bodies on stage, and the words pointing away from the stage towards the immaterial non-art.

Olsson’s next drama, *S.O.S.* (published in December 1928, premiered in March 1929) accentuated a tension between different styles and aesthetics, but with a markedly greater confidence in all kinds of media. The intricate problem lies more in the valuation of the agitating scream and the idea of the masses versus the individual. At the centre of the plot is a scientist, Patrick, who has awakened to his ethical responsibility and destroyed his new chemical weapon. When he turns up on stage, Patrick is a fugitive enemy of the state, and when he has left it, he is described as almost a religious leader for a sort of underground resistance group. The activities are summed up in abstract terms: the youth, the heart, humanity is fighting against the reign of machines, weapons, and money.

This drama also adopted a non-naturalistic, expressive acting style, and decorations and costumes in the different productions underlined that *S.O.S.* was a new landmark for modernist theatre in Finland. After the second act, the events were interrupted by two scenes comprising a fantastic and allegorical interval in which the suffering of the world is confronted with the growing militarism despite ongoing talks of peace and disarmament. The interval virtually bombarded the audience’s senses with shifting tableaux and “futurist decorations” plastered with headlines, as well as screams, noise and shouts. A choir cried “Woe upon us!” (“Ve oss! Ve oss! Ve oss!”) while lights flashed, signalling *S.O.S.* The first scene ended with Patrick’s desperate scream “But this is madness!” (“Det är ju vansinne”, 1928: 60). In the second he turned into an agitator swinging the red flag, promising to cry louder than all storms, wars, and destruction and summoning everyone for the last battle, while the choir sang the “Internationale”.

The play's similarities with Georg Kaiser's *Gas-trilogy* (1917-1920) are apparent, as Egil Törnqvist noted (1976: 67). But whereas Kaiser's dramas problematise the messianic figures' ability to salvage the all too swayed and blinded masses, Olsson is more interested in the process in which a young woman, Maria, sacrifices her personal desires and becomes a soldier for the cause – a better tomorrow. Thus, the rest of the drama pays more attention to Maria, who helps Patrick with his first escape. The more realistic scene that follows the interval sheds a contrasting and ironical light on Patrick-the-saviour with the powerful voice. He is nervous and afraid, while Maria engages in a controversy with her father, Patrick snatches the money she has stolen for him out of her hands and runs like a thief. This is a turning point for Maria as she realises that Patrick will not fulfil her romantic desires. She accepts this and remains calm but burns with quiet enthusiasm for the cause and the beloved leader throughout the rest of the drama. Her role as a soldier is connected to passive endurance, belief and suffering rather than violence and action.

Maria's transformation and dedication is not only depicted as solemn and pathos-filled, but is also associated with more traditional art and a sentimental component. Both father and daughter address a painting of the dead wife/mother and they play the violin in order to connect with her. In short, the chaos of the day and the protests against it (the militant anti-militarism, as it were) are presented through screams and avant-garde styles and effects, while the vision for tomorrow, Maria's dedication, is framed as quiet, leaning towards the sentimental and traditional. Both aesthetics are efficient. They serve the same goal, but the emotional centre of the drama lies with Maria, her sacrifice and her calmness.

### *From pictures to the scream*

Olsson's photonovel, *På Kanaanexpressen* (*On the Canaan Express*, 1929), shares several features with *S.O.S.* It is also a pacifist work which presents an individual, Peter, who decides to wipe out his individuality and (paradoxically) become an anti-militarist soldier for the cause of revolutionising society from within and creating a New Man and a new tomorrow. The religious and messianic connotations are enhanced and combined with vague socialist ideas. The word "Canaan" (the promised land) and the French "impossible" quoted from Étienne Cabet's communist-utopian novel *Voyage en Icarie* (1840) serve as mottos for Peter and a young woman, who together decide to honour the victims of World War One by rejecting the pessimism of post-war Europe. As mentioned, the novel is also a striking intermedial experiment (Brynhildsvoll 1991; Meurer-Bongardt 2015; Holländer's reading 1993 is less convincing). However, its effect and framing are slightly different than those of *S.O.S.*

The novel is arranged as a montage of pictures and texts with different focalisations and genres. Eleven photographs and one

reproduction of a painting are inserted into the text. The pictures range from cubism, abstraction, Bauhaus and Neue Sachlichkeit to advertisements and celebrity and documentary photography. The cover uses photographs in a montage designed by Olavi Paavolainen. Thus, in this work almost all available media and art forms of 1929 are present – concretely or mediated through words. The result looks stunningly modern. However, as I have argued elsewhere, in many cases the words and pictures complicate each other. Modern pictorial art is paradoxically associated with both violence and meaningless superficiality (Hermansson 2013; 2015a; 2015b: 140–155).

In the novel, Peter exclaims that youth have their belief in action, not in words, (1929: 37). But when this is translated into a programmatic slogan – “even poetry must be action” (“Även dikt skall vara handling”, 1929: 61) – by a poet in Peter’s circle of acquaintances, Peter rejects it as an empty attempt to exploit the new ideas and media for the sake of profit and self-promotion. He is nauseated by the poet’s idea of outshining Marinetti by adapting his poem on Charles Lindberg’s aeroplane to film, and he reacts aggressively. A photograph of an American military airship reinforces the theme of exploitation, militarism and violence. The irony is that Peter’s own public breakthrough is just as much a cunning media stunt.

When Peter’s childhood friend Teresia kills herself, he publicly claims that he and all society is the killer. At this point, Peter, a quiet, middle-aged film censor suffering with ennui and impotence, re-creates himself and the fate of Teresia as a work of art that transgresses all medial boundaries and affects everyday life, not the least for a group of young people connected with a small, avant-garde magazine, *The Torch* (Facklan, supposedly modelled on the Finnish *Tulenkantajat*). The decisive difference with the poet is of course Peter’s non-commercial and non-individualistic conviction and goal. Nevertheless, the novel shows that the reception of Peter’s ideological “work” and slogans runs its own course. Regardless of Peter’s intentions, suicide becomes modern. The young torch bearers are fascinated as much with him as an individual and with the style of his expressions as with his utopian ideas. They fantasize about his character: the magazine editor sees, for example, an agitator and *dictator*, and he jealously admires the effectiveness of Peter’s slogans, which are shouted by the newsvendors on the streets (cf. Meurer-Bongardt 2011: 321).

After Peter decides to become a soldier, the narrative is interrupted by an abstract photo by Hannes Flach (in *Der Querschnitt* 1928 it was entitled “Welten im Werden”) and a short poem by Walt Whitman which are printed on each side of the opening of the book. The picture is a calm, yet dynamic composition. The poem, “Hast Never Come to Thee an Hour”, invokes the moment of epiphany and reduction into pure existence. Both words and picture strive at reduction on several levels. The narrative, however, does not depict Peter’s calmness and “reduction” in the moment of his breakthrough as either epiphany or creation, rather as machine-like (1929: 175, 195).

Along with the story of how Peter becomes an almost inhumanly efficient agitator, the novel pays attention to the women around him. They are women of his own generation, who give up and cease to take part in life, and younger women who willingly sacrifice their individual desires to work for the coming of the new dawn. This gendered slant is emphasised and complicated by the pictorial elements. Half the pictures in the book represent female faces and bodies, and all but one (and Max Burchart's portrait on the cover of a young girl "Lotte" cut in half) is in danger, confinement, or distress. The first and the last of the female portraits establish an interesting formal and thematic dialogue with each other and with Flach's abstract photo. The first portrait is Marie Laurencin's self-portrait *La prisonnière I* (1917), which shows a woman's face behind a dark grid that covers the canvas. The last is a self-portrait by the Berlin photographer Yva (Else Neuländer-Simon), double exposed with a cubist painting by Heinz Hajek-Halke (Finnan 2006). The features are androgynous, the expression is calm and neutral, the hands are arranged over the chest, creating multiple associations with wings, self-protection, or a dead body that has been laid out. The cubist painting interfering with the portrait echoes both Laurencin's imprisoned self and the Y-shape of Flach's abstract photo. The effect becomes a flickering between confinement and liberation.

As it interacts with words and other pictures in *På Kanaanexpressen*, Yva's self-portrait seems almost paradigmatic for Olsson's continuing process of drawing near to avant-garde aesthetics and resisting them, her shifting between hopes and fears for the future and for the future of avant-garde art. But for some reason, Olsson chose to close the novel with words that approach a verbalised scream. They come from Teresia's younger sister, Florrie, who is deathly ill from tuberculosis. They are printed in spaced out letters on the last page without a concluding full stop:

I feel the fever. It is life burning in me. My heart will endure for days and nights, it will not weaken. My heart is a predator, it will consume all of my anxieties, my tears and my loneliness. It will consume the last remnant of my love and my last expectations, nothing will tie my hands in the breaking of dawn. My heart is a glorious predator, it has clutched its teeth in my own flesh, it hungers, hungers (1929: 231)

Jag känner febern. Det är livet som brinner i mig. Mitt hjärta skall hålla ut i dagar och nätter, det skall inte förslappas. Mitt hjärta är ett rovdjur, det skall förtära all min ängslan, min gråt och min ensamhet. Det skall förtära den sista resten av min kärlek och min sista förhoppning, ingenting skall binda mina händer i morgongryningen. Mitt hjärta är ett härligt rovdjur, det har huggit tänderna i mitt eget kött, det hungrar hungrar (1929: 231)

Whereas Peter's sacrifice made him into a strong and attractive public figure, Florrie's is staged as private and bloody. The contrast to the calmness of the diptych with Whitman's poem and Flach's abstract photo is striking. The heart as a predator feeding on its own flesh not

only (again) turns aggression inwards, but also echoes typical images of expressionist poems, at least in a Nordic context (Pär Lagerkvist, Edith Södergran, Elmer Diktonius). The hunger is ecstatically messianic, emphasising the logic of destruction and restitution/construction.

As conclusion to this tour-de-force of modern visual culture, war and violence, art, gender issues and messianic hopes, Olsson chose words – and not just any words, but a sort of verbalised agony with the intensity and imagery of expressionism. Why? Perhaps we should understand it as combination of two tendencies in the earlier works. Firstly, we have noticed Olsson's incessant interest in the painful process of transgressing and discarding the individual self, and her subtle unease with the fictional figures the moment they turn into efficient agitators/saviours. If we should name her relentless investment in "tomorrow" as an instance of modern messianism, it is, as we have seen, indeed a messiah-sceptical one, fascinated by and simultaneously sceptical of the nature of exchange between the saviour-figure and the masses. Added to this is Olsson's tendency to bend aggression and brutality inwards as a more acceptable form of violence, in aesthetics as well as in "real" life. Apparently, she felt expressionist imagery and expressions of existential anguish to be more appropriate for this than modern pictures.

Secondly, we might also read it as a symptom of Olsson's habit of shifting between media and styles. The novel does not provide answers to the questions that it poses, but gives the outlines of a process. In fact, the most common feature of the works I have analysed here seems to be a constant shifting of attention towards and unease with most of the available media and forms of expression – the word, the picture, film, the body and the inarticulate howl – a constant moving to or from unconventional forms of expression.

### ***Mediating international avant-garde and propagating a new dawn***

Olsson's idea of the scream and of pictorial art was not one, but many. During the inter-war period, she was enthusiastic about the liberating power of modern pictorial art and modernist rhythms, but nevertheless balanced it with calmness, classical sculpture and music. This ambivalence is matched by an apparent need to use the scream in almost all its modern variants and to control it all the same. The messianic mode of being and thinking in its expressionist variant, the intensity and pathos with which the poets and writers sought to revolutionise the world through their art, and the focus on the saviour-figure likewise seems to have both attracted and repelled Olsson.

Olsson negotiated avant-garde aesthetics not only in her essays and reviews but also in her fictional work. Her assessments were less determined by conservative moderation and more by a persistent wariness towards surfaces and inauthenticity. Rather, Olsson's sceptical attitude to avant-garde aesthetics such as futurism and expressionism was Janus-faced, wary about formalism, aestheticism, shallowness, and, at the same time, fascinated with and anxious about the violent energies



in them. Her heroes were soldiers as well as prophets – aggressors, but most of all martyrs for a cause. She often used aggressive attacks on traditional art and society but also replaced them or channelled them into self-castigating gestures. As we have seen, the anti-formalist stance is extended to a suspicion of all kinds of expressive media: the body, the word, the scream, the picture. Olsson's unease is often due to her avant-garde demand on art to be performative, to engage, to transform.

In Olsson's universe before World War Two, the imperative of transgressing borders and pressing onto new beginnings seems to have resulted in a restlessness both in how she employed different media and how she assessed them within the fictional worlds. It would be wrong to see this as a lack of decisiveness or firm conviction on her part. Instead, the texts examined here point out an incessant and engaged navigation between (perceived) possibilities and pitfalls connected with the different media, between expectations and watchfulness. Of course, the art of tomorrow (and the society with which it was linked) remained vaguely defined.

In a Nordic context, the messianic slant in Olsson's work is rather idiosyncratic. But the ambivalent and conditioned ways in which she both used avant-garde devices and attitudes and critically assessed them is recognisable in other contemporary Nordic works. (For other Nordic prose modernists inspired by expressionism, see Hermansson 2015b). This tendency does not need to be understood merely as cautious moderation, typical of peripheral cultures as opposed to the centres of the true or pure avant-garde. As Benedikt Hjartarson and Per Bäckström have suggested, it may also be viewed as a conscious, active and critical response, which in fact takes part in the formation of the avant-garde (2014: 23). While specifying a distinction between modernism and avant-garde is a meaningful, albeit difficult enterprise (see e.g. Eysteinnsson 2009; Hubert van den Berg 2005 and 2012), it is equally important to recognise the dynamic and performative negotiations that went on in the overlapping fields, in the centres as well as the peripheries. In this way, Olsson's work in the inter-war period is both part of the formation of early Nordic modernism and an active response to (and thereby also a formative part of) the European avant-garde.

Olsson's novel *Det blåser upp till storm* (*There's a Storm Brewing*, 1930) marked a turning point, when avant-garde art ceased to attract the same attention in her fictional work. The seemingly hyper-rational narrator, Sara, declares that modern painting is utter nonsense and poetry and fiction a thing of the past. She prefers functionalist architecture; hearing the masses sing the *Internationale* makes her proud and gives her pleasure. But classical music does give her a new understanding of art and she experiences a moment of cosmic rejoicing in her heart (1930: 128–29; cf. Meurer-Bongardt 2011: 231). In *Chitambo* (1933), modern pictorial art produces only one passing comment (1933: 62–63). In both works, however, secular messianic thought is still active. The atheist Sara even explicitly reflects upon her own inclination to use the language of religion to describe a feeling of richness and grace (1930:

145). The novel ends with her optimistically looking ahead towards a new dawn, in spite of the death of her beloved.

Nevertheless, after the Second World War, Olsson expressed her continued belief in the transgressive power of avant-garde art and literature in the essay *Jag lever* (I Live, 1948). The essay describes how looking at avant-garde paintings releases the individual consciousness and opens for a powerfully radiating, universal consciousness. Olsson wrote, “The impulse comes from the canvas, the miracle happens within you, and the alien power that carries you is flowing from your own inner you” (“Impulsen kommer från duken, undret sker inom en, och den främmande kraften som bär en utströmmar från ens eget inre”, 1987: 96).

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ANNE HEITH

## Postcolonial<sup>1</sup>, Transnational, Literary Fields: Sámi and Tornedalian Counter-Histories

During the last decades there has been a vivid discussion about the writing of literary history and how this enterprise is connected with transformations of nation-states related to the impact of the EU, migration, and historical multiculturalism, multilingualism and domestic ethnic minorities. In 1998 Hans Hauge contributed to this debate with a plea for a postnational Danish literary history (Hauge 1998). From the vantage-point of the contemporary situation in Denmark he claimed that nation-states are being phased out and that the factors just mentioned are being hidden by national, monolingual literary histories: “The phasing out of the nation-state compels us to revise our literary history” (“Nationalstatens afvikling tvinger os til at revidere vores litteraturhistorie”, 1998: 78).

This article will discuss contemporary challenges of stories about national literatures based on the concept of a relatively homogeneous nation-state, with the set out from Sámi and Tornedalian imaginative writing as well as narratives about Sámi and Tornedalian literature. The issue of what Sámi literature is may be approached from different points of departure. When discussing Sámi women’s path to authorship Hirvonen addresses this issue and concludes that she has restricted her study to authors who live in the “Nordic countries, leaving out the Russian Sámi”, the decision being based on “both historical and cultural differences between the Russian and Nordic Sámi” (Hirvonen 2008: 19). The scope of this article’s discussion is limited by another factor captured by the concept of the “literary field” (Bourdieu 1996). Today there are alternative literary fields with local publishers publishing in Sámi languages and Meänkieli, previously called Tornedalian Finnish. These publishers are vital elements of alternative literary fields. The major Sámi publishers, DAT and Davvi Girji, are both located in Finnmarken,

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<sup>1</sup> The term “postcolonial” is used here in connection with the concept “counter-histories” in analogy with the way Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin use the terms in their classic *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (2009). This implies that the term is used as a synonym to “anti-colonial”. The concept “counter-histories”, of course, implies practices of resistance, protest and decolonisation in a situation when colonialism has not come to an end. In her thesis about Sámi women’s path to authorship Hirvonen uses what she calls “postcolonial criticism” as a tool of Sámi research, and she devotes a chapter to “Sámi identity and the experience of colonization” (Hirvonen 2008). One point of establishing a connection between the concepts “postcolonial” and “counter-history” is that it emphasises the theme of decolonisation in response to the establishment of colonising binaries which have denigrated the cultures of minorities and indigenous peoples (Heith 2016). However, it should be noted that there are Sámi activists today who reject the term “postcolonial”, while stressing that Sápmi is still colonised, for example Swedish performer Sofia Jannok and artist Anders Sunna (Heith 2015a).

Norway.<sup>2</sup> The establishment of these publishers is related to the language-revitalisation which was enhanced in the 1970s. But, as there are several Sámi languages, some of which are facing extinction (Pietikäinen et al. 2010) the issue of language is complex. Today, even the dominant Sámi language, North Sámi, struggles to strengthen its position, and the publishers DAT and Davvi Girji play a vital role for preserving and developing it. The Sámi literary field in focus in this article is thus a field where the most prominent Sámi publishers contribute to revitalization of the North Sámi language. When it comes to the question of how to define a Sámi or Tornedalian author, *self-identification* is a central concept. If an author defines her- or himself as a Sámi or Tornedalian, performs Sáminess and Tornedalianess as a public persona, and is active on a Sámi and Tornedalian literary field, respectively, this qualifies her/him as a Sámi or Tornedalian author.<sup>3</sup>

Sámi and Tornedalian writers are also published in national majority languages by well-established publishers located at a distance from Sápmi and Meänmaa. Both Sápmi and Meänmaa, the traditional homeland of the Sámi and Tornedalians respectively, overlap nation-state borders. While Sápmi stretches from northern Norway in the west to the Kola peninsula in the east, Meänmaa, literally “Our land”, covers a space on both sides of the Swedish-Finnish border in the north. A major theme of present day cultural mobilization is, as mentioned above, language revitalization aiming at strengthening Sámi languages and Meänkieli. However the exchange between traditions and literary fields is complex. The Swedish Tornedalian writer Bengt Pohjanen, to mention one example, is published by Kamos and Barents Publisher, two publishing houses he started himself in Meänmaa, and by Norstedts. Norstedts, located in Stockholm, was founded in 1823 which makes it Sweden’s oldest, still existing, publishing house. When writing for a Tornedalian readership Pohjanen writes alternatively in Meänkieli, Swedish and Finnish, while all his work published by Norstedts is in Swedish.

The emergence of alternative Sámi and Tornedalian publishers is related to cultural mobilization and decolonization, but also to minority politics and official political recognition of minorities. While the Sámi and Tornedalian local publishers that were established in the context of cultural mobilization are engaged in language revitalization, this does not prevent them from publishing also in national majority languages, and as is the case with the major Sámi publishers DAT and Davvi Girji in English. This indicates that the publishers address multiple readerships with varying language skills. While old, established publishers in the capitals of the nation-states do publish works by minority writers in national

<sup>2</sup> All Sámi publishers mentioned in Solbakk’s *The Sámi People: A Handbook* are located in Norway (Solbakk 2006: 295). Of course there are other publishers as well, but when it comes to publishing in the dominant Sámi language, North Sámi, the roles of DAT and Davvi Girji cannot be over-estimated.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of performativity in connection with Tornedalian literary history and Sámi culture, respectively, see Anne Heith “Platsens sanning. Performativitet och gränsdragningar i tornedalsk litteraturhistoria och grammatik” (Heith 2012d) and “Indigeneity, Cultural Transformations and Rethinking the Nation: Performative Aspects of Sámi Elements in Umeå 2014” (Heith 2015b).

majority languages, it is mainly local publishers like DAT, Davvi Girji and Barents Publisher that publish in Sámi and Meänkieli, respectively. This implies that one role of the local publishers is to contribute to the development of alternative literary fields where Sámi languages and Meänkieli, respectively, are used.<sup>4</sup> However, there are exceptions. In 2011 Gyldendals in Oslo published Sámi Rawdna Carita Eira's debut as a poet in a bilingual volume in Sámi and Norwegian (Eira 2011). The publication of *løp svartøre løp / ruohta muzetbeallji ruohta (run blackear run)* represents something new as it is not customary that a publisher with a central position in the dominant, Norwegian literary field publishes a text in Sámi. As opposed to DAT and Davvi Girji, Gyldendals is an old well-established publisher which from the vantage point of anticolonialism is located in the colonial centre.

### *Homogenizing nationalism under attack*

Although nation-states are changing, they can hardly be said to be in the process of being phased out in contemporary Europe, as suggested by Hauge (1998). One only has to consider the recent success of EU-skeptical parties in order to see that there is a considerable popular dissatisfaction with the idea of a Europe without national borders. Nevertheless, transformations have occurred which modify the ways in which nation-states are being conceptualised. This theme may be approached with theories formulated in order to describe the ideology behind the formation of nation-states. Umut Özkirimli discerns three sets of claims that underpin what he calls the nationalist discourse: 1) identity claims, 2) temporal claims, and 3) spatial claims (Özkirimli 2010: 208-209). Identity claims involve that the world is divided into 'us' and 'them', while temporal claims imply that a construction of the past is used in the present for the purpose of legitimizing decisions related to the shaping of the nation. Spatial claims finally, are connected with "a fixation of territory, the quest for a 'home', actual or imagined" (Özkirimli 2010: 208-209). A central question is how these claims are supported, alternatively challenged and deconstructed, today. My claim is that Sámi and Tornedalian literature and narratives about literature problematize and challenge all three sets of claims that underpin the construction of traditional literary histories used in educational institutions in the Scandinavian countries.

To some extent the critique of homogenizing nationalism has influenced politics. In Sweden for example there are five domestic,

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<sup>4</sup> As indicated above in the discussion of a North Sámi literary field where there are publishers publishing in North Sámi this does not exclude that there are other literary fields focusing upon other Sámi languages, or other dominant national languages such as Finnish in Finland. For example, when there was a breakthrough for Sámi literature in the 1970s, Kirsti Paltto from the Finnish part of Sápmi was one of the most prominent new Sámi authors. Her books were published in Sámi and translated to Finnish. Paltto was nominated for the Finlandia Prize for literature for the translation *Vojjja minun poroni*, which shows that the works of a Sámi author may very well circulate on a dominant literary field, provided it is available in a majority language.



historical minorities that have been recognized by the Government. Two of them are the Sámi and the Tornedalians. This is not something which is applauded by Sámi people who emphasize that the Sámi are an indigenous people and not a minority among other. If the Sámi were recognized as an indigenous people by the Swedish Government this would strengthen the position of the Sámi politically. However, so far the Swedish Government has not ratified Convention No. 169, also known as the ILO-convention 169, a legally binding international instrument dealing with the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples (Heith 2015a: 111). In the contexts of Sámi and Tornedalian cultural mobilization identity claims that have marginalized or effaced the cultural traditions of the Sámi and Tornedalians respectively, are questioned, and homogenizing narratives deconstructed. In a seminal essay Homi K. Bhabha describes colonizing nationalism as the dissemination of the idea of the nation as the many as one (2008: 204). In the geographical context of northern Scandinavia a version of this ideology was implemented in assimilationist policies, which have resulted in language loss, as well as loss of cultural identity for Sámi people and Swedish Tornedalians. A study of the situation of minority languages at the North Calotte concludes that all Sámi languages as well as Meänkieli, are threatened by extinction today (Pietikäinen et al. 2010: 6). This historical backdrop is vital for the understanding of the emergence of alternative, postcolonial, decolonizing Sámi and Tornedalian narratives.

### ***Critical examinations of the genre of literary history***

In contributions to the debate about the writing of literary histories alternatives to homogenizing nation-building have been proposed. Both *Rethinking Literary History* from 2002 (Hutcheon and Valdés: 2002) and *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe* from 2004 (Cornis-Pope and Neubauer: 2004) emphasize that the writing of literary history must be connected with economical, political and broad cultural and societal perspectives so that issues related to ethnicity and gender are explicitly addressed (Heith 2008). In *Rethinking Literary History* Linda Hutcheon explicitly criticizes a model for writing literary histories that doesn't take into account the ethnic and linguistic plurality of the globalized world. The editors of *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe*, Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer, emphasize that their aim is to redefine literary traditions by playing down nationalist myths and to include elements that previously have been excluded, in particular elements that contradict the idea of the cultural homogeneity of the nation-state. The idea of the homogeneous nation-state is based on the metaphorical notion that the nation is a closed container, with a content which must be kept pure. Cornis-Pope and Neubauer propose an alternative model which may account for analogies, exchange between cultural traditions, hybridity and elements that have been seen as marginal within the homogenizing nation-building context. As these examples show there is a critical discussion going on about the writing of



literary history with an emphasis on the need for critical examinations of traditions based on obsolete, and even racist, understandings of national culture.

The central themes of the two critical examinations of the genre of literary history just mentioned are prevailing also in histories of postcolonial literature. *The Cambridge History of Postcolonial Literature* published in 2012 emphasizes that cultural differences, marginalization and exclusion are central themes of postcolonial studies, furthermore that postcolonial studies pays equal attention to minorities in the West, as to regional, indigenous forms of representation around the world (Quayson 2012). This is a broader context useful for the analysis of Sámi and Tornedalian counter-histories.

### Strategic essentialism

One vital element of Sámi and Tornedalian new literary histories is the use of 'strategic essentialism'.<sup>5</sup> This concept is central to postcolonial studies. It was proposed by Spivak in interaction with the Subaltern Studies Group, which aimed at rewriting the history of colonial India from the position of subordinated social groups. A central goal for the Subaltern Studies Group was to provide access or space for the subaltern to speak (Wolff 2014). *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* defines Spivak's notion of 'strategic essentialism' as a strategy "which simultaneously recognizes the impossibility of any essentialism and the necessity of some kind of essentialism for the sake of political action" (Buchanan 2010). *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* gives the following definition: "A political tactic employed by a minority group acting on the basis of a shared identity in the public arena in the interest of unity during a struggle for equal rights." (Chandler and Munday 2011).

Strategic essentialism is a central element of the ideological backdrop of contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian literature and narratives about literature. Without the insistence upon the existence of a specific Sámi and Tornedalian culture and identity, respectively, there would be no basis for a struggle for obtaining redress, decolonization, visibility, alternative spaces and histories. Against the horizon of homogenizing nation-building which has excluded specific Sámi and Tornedalian cultures and histories there is a performative quality in present-day challenges. Just as the Subaltern Studies Group performed the rewriting of the history of colonial India, Sámi and Tornedalian alternative histories perform rewritings of Scandinavian colonial histories. Although postcolonial literatures from different parts of the world have distinctive features, they also share some concerns, such as the reclaiming of spaces and places, assertions of cultural integrity, and revisions of history. These concerns are the catalysts of resistant descriptions which counteract a colonizing discourse circulated in educational, legal, political and social

<sup>5</sup> The concept has been used in Sámi studies previously, see for example Lill-Ann Ledman's thesis about representations of Sámi women in Swedish and Sámi press (Ledman 2012: 39 ff).

texts (see Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2009). A common trait of the Sámi and Tornedalian literary histories discussed in this article is that they represent insider stories, i.e. they are written by Sámi and Tornedalians themselves. This is a central aspect of decolonization as described both in postcolonial theory and the methodology of indigenous studies.<sup>6</sup>

### Narratives of Sámi literature

The most prominent persona among contemporary Sámi authors, Áillohaš – Nils-Aslak Valkeapää (1943–2001) – was born in Enontekiö in Finnish Lapland. During long periods of his life he lived in Käsivarsi near the Swedish border and in Skibotn, Norway, Áillohaš came from a family of reindeer herders who traditionally had moved their herd to summer pastures in northern Norway. Enontekiö, Käsivarsi and Skibotn are situated in Sápmi, the traditional homeland of the Sámi people. As the northern parts of Scandinavia were colonized and nation-state borders established traditional Sámi ways of life were in many respects disrupted. The histories, memories and emotions evoked by this development are themes addressed by Áillohaš in *Beaivi áhčážan* (*The Sun, My Father*) a book consisting of a lyrical text and a large number of photographs (Valkeapää 1988; Heith 2010a; Heith 2014). Áillohaš was well aware that publishing a book in North Sámi would limit the readership as linguistic skills among Sámi people themselves were, and still are, varying. He referred to *Beaivi áhčážan* as a Sámi family album, thus evoking the notion of a collective Sámi identity (Heith 2010: 336; Kulonen et al. 2005: 423). The choice of language reflects Valkeapää's engagement in the ethnopolitical mobilisation of the 1980s and his preoccupation with Sámi language revitalisation. Valkeapää was also engaged in the international movement of indigenous peoples and the struggle for political and cultural recognition (Gaski 2008). In this context he actively promoted the idea of a collective Sámi identity by claiming that the Sámi are one people, that there is a Sámi 'we', a specific Sámi culture and history, and a place, Sápmi, that is the traditional homeland of the Sámi. The very foundation of Valkeapää's identity, temporal and spatial claims is the idea that there is a collective Sámi identity, and he himself contributed actively to shaping such an ethnonational identity in his role as an activist, writer and artist.

While engaging in the revitalisation of the North Sámi language Valkeapää also saw to it that *Beaivi áhčážan* became accessible for readers with diverse linguistic skills. A translation to the two versions of Norwegian (*bokmål* and *nynorsk*) and Swedish, *Solen, min far* was published in 1990. In 1992 the Finnish translation, *Aurinko, isäni*, was published and a few years later in 1997 the English translation *The Sun, My Father*. When addressing the issue of the Finnish translation Valkeapää claimed that one of its purposes was to make the Sámi original accessible also to Sámi people who do not fully master the Sámi language: "The Finnish translation is

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of methodologies in indigenous studies, see Maori Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2008).

meant as a guide to readers who cannot access the Sámi original” (Dana 2004: 21–22). One important feature of the translations is that they lack the large number of photographs of the original (Heith 2014).

*Beaivi áhčážan* and its translations exemplify how strategic essentialism is used for the promotion of a collective identity which may function as the basis for political and cultural struggle. Definitions of strategic essentialism indicate that the use of group identity as a basis of struggle does not exclude that complexities and diversity are debated within the group (Wolff 2014). This certainly is the case in Sámi and Tornedalian cultural mobilization. A quick survey of narratives about Sámi literature show that there is a great variety concerning intended readerships and circulation on various literary fields. *Beyond the Wolf Line: An Anthology of Sámi Poetry*, edited by Pekka Sammalahhti and Anthony Selbourne is a volume introducing modern Sámi literature for an international readership. It was published by Waveland Press in 1996 (Sammalahhti and Selbourne 1996). Another anthology, *In the Shadow of the Midnight Sun*, edited by Harald Gaski was published in English in 1997 (Gaski 1997). *Skriftbilder. Samisk litteraturhistorie (Written Pictures. Sami Literary History)* by Gaski was published in Norwegian by one of the major Sámi publishers, Davvi Girji in 1998 (Gaski 1998). The volume is part of a thematic series intended for use in the upper secondary school. Both Gaski’s booklet and Vuokko Hirvonen’s dissertation from the same year are pioneering works. Hirvonen’s dissertation was the first one ever published entirely in a Sámi language, while Gaski’s contribution is the first attempt at writing a Sámi literary history presenting literature in a broad sense, from the oldest period of oral culture to the present.

Hirvonen’s dissertation about Sámi women’s path to authorship from 1998 was published by the Sámi publisher, DAT (Hirvonen 1998). In 2008 an English translation entitled *Voices from Sápmi: Sámi Women’s Path to Authorship* was published by the same publisher (Hirvonen 2008). The dissertation exemplifies how a focus upon gender and feminist perspectives introduces complexity and diversity to the Sámi literary field. The primary aim of the study is to distinguish a tradition of Sámi women writers. Among the writers discussed some are explicitly critical of aspects of traditional Sámi culture which is seen as male oriented and dissatisfactory for women. Rauni Magga Lukkari is mentioned as one successful poet critical of certain aspects of traditional culture. Hirvonen’s study is important as it contributes to introducing contemporary debates and theoretical perspectives to the study of Sámi literature (Heith 2010b). Critical voices and voices addressing current issues of debate are in fact vital for the development and survival of a Sámi and Tornedalian tradition, respectively. In a survey of Greenlandic literature from colonial times to self-government, Karen Langgård addresses this issue from a Greenlandic point of view. She argues that the “old ethno-national discourse” is not “constructive any more” but that Greenlandic literature needs to develop in order to thrive (Langgård 2011: 171). According to Langgård “ethnic-national symbols reifying general concepts from the spiritual pre-colonial culture [...] have been over-communicated for a too long time” (Langgård 2011: 169).

Renewal, development and adaption to modern modes of writing are themes addressed by the Sámi writer Sigbjørn Skåden (b. 1976). Like John Trygve Solbakk in *The Sámi. A Handbook*, Skåden has warned against the risk of a homogenization of Sámi culture which implies that North Sámi culture and the life of nomadic reindeer-herders become ethno-national symbols which exclude other groups of Sámi (Solbakk 2006: 44–45). Within Sápmi there are several groups of Sámi with different traditional livelihoods. There is also linguistic diversity which complicates the issue of linguistic revitalization. This is a theme Skåden elaborates upon in his master's thesis in literature from Tromsø University which has the development of Sámi poetry in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as its main topic (Skåden 2004).

Skåden made his debut as a fiction writer in 2004 with a long epic poem entitled *Skuovadeddjiid gonagas (The King of Shoemakers)*. For this book he was nominated to the Nordic Council's Literature Prize. The much discussed short novel *Ihpil. Láhppon mánáid bestejeaddji (Ihpil: The Saviour of Lost Children)* was published in 2008. The text was first written and published as a blog during the autumn 2007. In the summer of 2008 it was edited as a book and marketed as the work of a young Sámi, lesbian woman student who had been found drowned in the harbor of Tromsø in December 2007. *Ihpil*, which means 'ghost', is the pseudonym of the dead blogger presented as the author. A Norwegian translation with the title *Ihpil. De fortapte barns frelser* was published in April 2010. In the same year it was revealed that the book in fact is not the authentic diary of a lesbian, Sámi student in Tromsø but a work by Sigbjørn Skåden. In an interview from 2011 Skåden explains that he wanted both to write Sámi literature in a modern form, and to explore the theme of homosexuality in the Sámi community (Lieungh 2011).

By using sexual orientation as a major theme Skåden contributes to the renewal and development of narratives about identity. This is also the aim of the Swedish project "Queering Sápmi" which has resulted both in an exhibition and a volume. During three years Elfrida Bergman and Sara Lindquist worked with the project which aims at making visible the lives and experiences of Sámi homo, bi, trans, and queer persons. The project explores how people have managed their lives having two strong, intersecting identities, an ethnic and a sexual, and the material they have used are the life-narratives of both anonymous and public individuals from Norway, Sweden and Finland. A book entitled *Queering Sápmi – samiska berättelser bortanför normen* was published in 2013 (Bergman and Lindquist 2013). In 2014 an English translation, *Queering Sápmi: Indigenous Stories Beyond the Norm*, was published (Bergman and Lindquist 2014). Both Skåden's formal renewal and conscious challenges of conservatism within the Sámi community, as well as the Queering Sápmi project's challenges of heteronormativity, exemplify an ongoing discussion within the Sámi community concerning ethnic and sexual identity. As mentioned in the discussion of strategic essentialism a focus upon diversity within the community is not incompatible with the use of a collective identity for the purpose of retribution, decolonization and cultural mobilization.

## Tornedalian Literary History

In the context of Tornedalian cultural mobilization two volumes of Bengt Pohjanen and Kirsti Johansson's history of Tornedalian literature have so far been published. In 2007 the first volume, *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen. Från Kexi till Liksom* (Tornedalian Finnish Literature from Kexi to Liksom) was issued by the local, Tornedalian publisher Barents Publisher which publishes in Meänkieli, Swedish and to some extent in Finnish (Pohjanen and Johansson 2007). It was followed by the second volume by the same authors, *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen. Från Kalkkimaå till Hilja Byström* (Tornedalian Finnish Literature from Kalkkimaå to Hilja Byström) two years later (Pohjanen and Johansson 2009). Pohjanen has become known as an advocate of Meänkieli and Tornedalian cultural mobilisation. Throughout his authorship, he has criticized the cultural homogenisation complicit with the modernisation of Swedish society and its negative consequences for the Tornedalian minority. The central theme of his widely disseminated poem "Jag är född utan språk" ("I was born without language"), first published in 1973, is language loss and loss of identity (Heith 2007: 235; Heith 2009a: 142; Heith 2012a: 166–168; Heith 2012b: 89; Heith 2012c: 19). The critique of assimilationist policies and marginalisation is elaborated upon in the two volumes of the Tornedalian literary history. In the first volume Pohjanen introduces the term 'l'Ugritude' – a combination of "Ugric" and "Négritude", in order to perform a critique of the marginalisation of Tornedalian culture in Swedish nation-building. In one of the chapters he criticises the role of Selma Lagerlöf's well-known book about Nils Holgersson's journey from the south to the north of Sweden. Lagerlöf's book was originally commissioned as a textbook aiming at teaching Swedish school-children about Swedish geography. It has been an important element in the construction and teaching of Swedish geography, variations in the nation's landscape and history and specific character (Heith 2008; Heith 2009a; Heith 2012d). This is the target of Pohjanen's critique, which is expressed as follows:

Nils Holgersson never saw us. The author left out a large part of the country: Meänmaa whose first language during its first three thousand years has been Meänkieli. Selma Lagerlöf simply gave us a Swedish identity. We were there through another people, another language and another culture, in our own country, where the Swedes immigrated long after us. (Pohjanen 2007: 11, my translation.)

Pohjanen and Johansson evoke a communal Tornedalian ethnic identity as a point of departure for the struggle for the cultural visibility of a group that historically has been marginalised in Sweden. The marginalisation of Finno-Ugric groups in northern Scandinavia also affected the Kven population in Norway which at times was seen as a potential threat to the nation (Niemi and Eriksen 1981). The notion of a Finno-Ugric threat also prevailed among the Swedish elite during the period when Finland was a Russian Grand Duchy (Åselius 1994; Rodell 2009). This historical backdrop is a vantage point for present day cultural mobilisation among



Tornedalians in Sweden and Kvens in Norway. In this context strategic essentialism is used in the interest of unity during a struggle for equal rights (cf Chandler and Munday 2011). As in the case of Sámi cultural mobilisation this does not preclude the existence of diversity within the Tornedalian group. Ester Cullblom, for example, has depicted traditional Tornedalian culture as being patriarchal from a feminist perspective both as an investigator of unequal gender structures and as a writer of fiction (Cullblom 1996; Cullblom 2005; Cullblom 2007; Heith 2009c).

## Conclusion

Today there are Sámi and Tornedalian postcolonial, transnational, literary fields from where counter-histories are produced which challenge the tradition of homogenizing nation-building. Surveys of Sámi and Tornedalian literature produced for the Sámi and Tornedalians themselves explicitly challenge the claims of the nationalist discourse described by Özkirimli. By making the excluded Other the agent of history, from whose perspective events are narrated and circumstances described, Sámi and Tornedalian alternative histories challenge the notion of the majority as the norm with the preferential right of interpretation. By insisting that there are specific Sámi and Tornedalian shared histories respectively, Sámi and Tornedalian narratives undermine the temporal claim of the nationalist discourse. And finally, through the emphasis on Sápmi and Meänmaa as the historical homeland of the Sámi and Tornedalians respectively, the spatial claim is deconstructed. When analyzed with critical perspectives from postcolonial and indigenous studies the homogeneous nation-state is no longer a legitimate construction. Neither are the histories produced in compliance with it. This is the ideological backdrop of recent Sámi and Tornedalian counter-histories.

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## Secrets of Universal Reading. The Moomin Books by Tove Jansson from the Perspective of Implied Reader and Literary Response

Tove Jansson's Moomin books are generally perceived as major works in the history of Scandinavian children's literature. The first novel of the nine-volume series, *The Moomins and the Great Flood*, from 1945, is considered, together with the literary debuts of Astrid Lindgren and Lennart Hellsing, a breakthrough of modern children's books (Westin 1999: 24-31).<sup>1</sup> In this article I revisit Jansson's works from the perspective of an implied reader and literary response and with a focus on philosophical intertexts. A theoretical overview at the beginning introduces the notion of two or even multiple simultaneous voices, as the observation that children's literature implies more complex interpretations addressed in fact to adult readers has accompanied literary studies for a few decades. In spite of the fact that the Moomin series is broadly perceived as children's literature with a successively growing adult readership, I attempt to show that the multiple mode of address already characterises Jansson's second, and third books, *Comet in Moominland* (Jansson 2011a, = CIM) and *Finn Family Moomintroll* (Jansson 1990, = FFM) respectively, which comprise intertexts available to more experienced readers. Using the comparative method I demonstrate that the characterisation in these books alludes to readings of Oswald Spengler and Henri Bergson. Next, with reference to Norman Holland's theory of the dynamics of literary response, I posit another potential explanation for the Moomins' global popularity, based on his theory of suspension of disbelief and gratifying introjection of a phantasy embodied in the book.

The implied child reader was a clear, distinctive and satisfactory quality of children's literature before it started to build its own theory. But with time, within the academic discourse there appeared a new reflection about a double or even multiple address revealing that children's books appealed to another, implicit and immanent addressee: the adult. Many approaches arose around this observation; for example, Zohar Shavit presented the notion of *ambivalent texts*, by which she means "texts that synchronically (yet dynamically, not statically) maintain an ambivalent status in the literary polysystem. These texts belong simultaneously to more than one system and consequently are read differently (though concurrently) by at least two groups of readers" (Shavit 1986: 66). According to the Israeli scholar, by addressing a book to children and adults, and pretending that it is only for children, writers can expect its acceptance.

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<sup>1</sup> Since then the Moomins have become a world-wide phenomenon with translations into over forty languages. In this article I focus only on the literary aspect of the Moomins, though the literature opened the way to their broader cultural success.

A different perspective is presented by Barbara Wall, who analyses the narrative voice, proposing a triple typology that has become popular within the study of children's literature. As she argues, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the category of *a single address* gave way to a *double address*, and understanding the difference between these two forms of appeal is of great importance, as it implies the departure of an adult narrative voice and its replacement with a voice genuinely concerned with child readers: "The adult teller with whom adult readers had comfortably identified had disappeared and a teller committed to pleasing child readers regardless of what other adults might think had emerged instead" (Wall 1991: 147). The third category, *a dual address*, is a fusion of the two previous ones (Wall 1991: 9).

The Danish researcher, Torben Weinreich, presents a view similar to that of Zohar Shavit but without any evaluations concerning literary status. In his opinion, though children's literature transmits on one channel, which proves the identity of the work, it does not exclude the possibility of many levels of meaning and consequently a diversified readership:

When a work is read with profit by an adult it – to keep to the channel imagery – can be because adults can receive in two channels, an adult and a child's channel. The adult carries the child within him, perhaps the child or the idea of the child that the respective adult was once, and who in reality actualises the text. The adult casual reader is thereby also a type of nostalgic reader. However, the nostalgia is not tied to a specific work but to a more general children's universe and a children's literary universe. (Weinreich 2000: 101.)

Another approach proposed by Emer O'Sullivan, questions Wall's model and objects to ascribing the address to age categories. The scholar suggests instead many modes of reading, conditioned by relative factors, and replaces unequivocal taxonomies with the notion of *a multiple address*:

More appropriate to the description or analysis of inscribed readers or addressees would be rather a sliding scale rather than two poles. It would therefore seem preferable to speak about multiple address, which of course includes double and dual address. Premature identification of the nature of the address in a text also ignores the fact that there are various 'adult' ways of readings children's literature. An adult may read aloud, read on behalf of the child, or read children's books for their own sake, as if they were peer readers. (O'Sullivan 2005: 16.)

Similarly, Perry Nodelman disputes clear-cut divisions into two radically different addressees, children and adults, and proposes a new perspective. In his opinion children's books imply "a more complex shadow text – one reader can access by reading the actual simple text in the context of the repertoire of previously existing knowledge about life and literature" (Nodelman 2008: 77). This more difficult, subtle layer of meanings is hidden under a primary one and seems to be a distinctive quality of children's literature. Hence there are two sets of perceptions,

a simpler one and a more complex one, traditionally associated with an implied child and an implied adult reader. “But there is no reason to ignore another possibility: that the single implied reader of these texts, whether a child or an adult, is expected to experience a double awareness of the events described, seeing them simultaneously or, perhaps, in turn, in both ‘childlike’ and ‘non-childlike’ ways” (Nodelman 2008: 209). At the same time, the scholar points out the inevitable presence of a ‘hidden adult’ in children’s fiction and its specific binarism, which is a consequence of the fundamental premise – an adult having a mission of special writing for children (Nodelman 2008: 339-340).

As this short overview demonstrates, the observation about an adult being an inherent reader of children’s literature has accompanied the theory for a long time. Although scholars point out many modes of address, which are diachronic and relative, they are in agreement on either the overt or covert presence of adults within a readership of children’s fiction. Emer O’Sullivan puts this idea synthetically and convincingly. I consent that there are not only many ways of reading, but there are also many ways for adults to read children’s fiction. Therefore I use the notion of ‘multiple address’ when referring to the category of diversified implied readers, whereas when discussing an audience of a more sophisticated text I employ the term ‘experienced reader’.

Maria Nikolajeva (2000) calls the Moomin suite a rare work, which spans all categories depicting children’s fiction as a continuum between a myth and its disintegration.<sup>2</sup> She interprets the Moomin novels as texts that take “their protagonists from a world of complete idyll through a period of quests and picnics beyond the point of no return” (Nikolajeva 2000: 231). In other words, they represent successively: the first prelapsarian stage of fiction introducing readers to the sacred; the second – the carnivalesque, taking them out of Arcadia and bringing them back; and the third – postlapsarian, being the departure from childhood and the entrance to adulthood. The literature classified as the first utopian phase creates a myth of childhood as a never-ending paradise, based on a circular pattern of time (*kairos*) and a number of other recurrent features like a secluded setting, a general sense of harmony, a significance of home and absence of death. In the second stage, circular time opens into linearity (*chronos*) and the fiction can be here described in terms of carnival: protagonists play the role of brave, strong adult heroes, but finally they are brought back into the cyclical state and their progress into adulthood is stopped. In the last, postlapsarian stage there is no possibility of a return to the Arcadia of childhood, and the awareness of linearity carries a clear implication of death.

This interpretation helps us to understand why the early, idyllic novels of the Moomin series were often considered by educationalists

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<sup>2</sup> Although Nikolajeva points out that her study “eradicates the difference between the implicit addressees, which are two very heterogeneous groups generally referred to as children and adults” (Nikolajeva 2000: 264), she also notes that “As always when speaking of children’s fiction we are dealing with a double set of codes. Unlike adult fiction, in children’s fiction we have double narratees and double implied readers. An adult writer evoking an adult reader’s nostalgia is merely one aspect. Hopefully, the child reader is targeted as well, although in a different manner” (Nikolajeva 2000: 263-264).



to be suitable for children, whereas the last two works tended to be regarded as books for adults. It does not seem coincidental, as Jansson herself began to depart from a genuine implied child reader already in *Tales from Moominvalley* from 1962, a matter which she openly expressed in her diary, discussed by Boel Westin:

She talks about starting to write short stories and links the form to her change as a writer – she writes for children but is starting to be an adult. It works as a way of distancing herself from writing for children, a kind of double movement that will henceforth characterise her writing. The short stories are also about her longing to write herself away from the children – so she makes the child invisible. (Westin 2007: 362).<sup>3</sup>

This tendency grew stronger within the novels that followed and was confirmed by the writer's explicit wish in 1970 to distribute the last part, *Moominvalley in November*, as a pocket book for adults (Westin 362: 433). It is therefore not a revelation that the Moomin suite expands its multiple address and gradually develops the appeal to a more experienced readership. However, my purpose here is to prove that the second and third books, *Comet in Moominland* from 1946 and *Finn Family Moomintroll*<sup>4</sup> from 1948, traditionally perceived as books with a single address, already include intertextual references indicating the multiple character of their appeal.

### ***Catastrophism and other philosophical stances***

The turbulent events of the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century made many people perceive history as a series of catastrophes similar to natural ones. It is therefore not surprising that Oswald Spengler enjoyed remarkable popularity, and it is impossible to discuss the decadency and catastrophism of those years without mentioning his work *The Decline of the West* from 1918. Jansson read this book (Westin 2007: 190), and it can be viewed as a significant sphere of reference to *Comet in Moominland*. The story is based on the motif of a comet approaching the Earth and threatening to destroy Moominvalley. The world is experiencing annoying, pre-apocalyptic changes, and it is noteworthy how the characters react to them: the Muskrat seems to ignore the comet, the Professors from the Observatory calculate the time of its arrival but do not care about the consequences, Sniff is scared, Moomintroll wants to explore and understand the phenomenon, whereas Moominmamma and Moominpappa continue going about their normal lives. The parents send Moomintroll and Sniff to the Observatory in the Lonely Mountains to examine the comet, with the intention of diverting the children from the Muskrat's gloomy prophecies. The plot is episodic, cumulative, as new figures – Snufkin, Snork Maiden, Snork and Hemulen – join the main characters; and circular – the adventurers set out from home

<sup>3</sup> Translations of Westin's book by Eeva-Liisa Bastman.

<sup>4</sup> The citations are from the English translations, but the discussion is based on both the original and the translated version.



and eventually return there. The story concludes with a happy ending in accordance with Jansson's recipe for a good children's book. In her opinion, children enjoy being scared and are attracted by disasters, but safety must always return at the end of a story like peace after a storm (Jansson 1978: 9). Initially the plot of *The Comet* seems quite simplistic, but on the level of the adventure there are deeper layers of meaning which are open to more experienced readers. These are intertexts of Spengler's book and the imagery of the titular comet.

In *The Decline of the West* (1918) Spengler rejected the traditional Eurocentric perception of history as a set of facts, dates and figures in a cause-and-effect sequence with a division into epochs like "Ancient", "Mediaeval" and "Modern" (Spengler 1991: 12). Although he was aware that such a belief dominated the European way of thinking, he put forward an alternative, controversial way of perceiving world history as eight cultures, each marked by their own distinctive courses and similar to a human life encompassing birth, youth, growth, maturity and decay. Hence cultures are dynamic and evolve like nature, their final stage being death, which Spengler identified with civilisation. As he argued, his times represented the decline of Western culture:

A century of purely extensive effectiveness, excluding big artistic and metaphysical production – let us say frankly an irreligious time which coincides exactly with the idea of the world city – is a time of decline. True. But we have not chosen this time. We cannot help it if we are born as men of the early winter of full Civilization, instead of on the golden summit of a ripe Culture, in a Phidias or a Mozart time. (Spengler 1991: 34.)

In this approach civilisation also means that the soul and spiritual values give way to reason, whereas its members, which Spengler called "Faustian men", are characterised not only by their lack of religion but by a lack of tradition and slavery to the Machine.

The *Decline of the West* guaranteed Spengler the position of an extreme pessimist and together with Ortega y Gasset's concept of dehumanisation, coupled with the First World War and the Great Depression, contributed to the popular belief in the inevitable extinction of civilisation in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A symbol of this vision in Jansson's second Moomin book is the comet, while a consistent prophet of the catastrophic prospect is Muskrat. He is a secondary character who appears as a victim of Moominpappa's bridge building. In a sense, a prototype of this figure is Jansson's fiancé from that time, Atos Wirtanen:

The philosophical muskrat has to do with Atos and the representation of the male thinker, but what the muskrat personifies is rather the philosopher as an idea than the person himself. In a bog near the villa in Grankulla lived a muskrat, and the bog became a place for contemplation over Moomins as well as over philosophers: "Atos went to the muskrat bog and contemplated Nietzsche", writes Tove in the almanac the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1945. Atos was working on a book on this "Great Idol" and Tove writes about it in her notes. He read Spengler, but was by no means a prophet of downfall. (Westin 2007: 194.)

The Muskrat is also a reader of Spengler's book, which Jansson displayed unambiguously in a picture above a heading of the second chapter. It depicts the hero, tightly wrapped in a blanket and lying in a hammock, under which there is a book signed "Spengler". This is not the only instance in which the artist employs the potential of iconotext – in two other illustrations Moomintroll and the Hemulen are portrayed in 'philosophical postures', reminiscent of *The Thinker* by Auguste Rodin. Both are sitting with the faces resting on their paws, deep in thought. Although they too are contemplating the same impending disaster, they do it in two significantly different fashions. The Hemulen worries in his egocentric manner, commenting on the red sky: "It can be spotted for all I care. I hardly ever look at it. What worries me is that my beautiful mountain stream is nearly dried up. If it goes like this much longer I shan't be able to splash my feet" (CIM: 81-82). On the other hand, Moomintroll ponders in an altruist-hedonistic way:

He sat staring out over the desolate sea bottom. It was lit by the red glow of the comet, and shadows like black velvet lay across the sand. Moomintroll thought how frightened the earth must be feeling with that great ball of fire coming nearer and nearer to her. Then he thought about how much he loved everything; the forest and the sea, the rain and the wind, the sunshine, the grass and the moss, and how impossible it would be to live without them all, and this made him feel very, very sad. (CIM: 123-124.)

In Muskrat's catastrophic vision the comet is inevitably going to lead to the end of the Earth. When in the morning Moominvalley was covered with a mysterious layer of grey dust, he was in no doubt as to what it indicated, announcing in a calm voice: "The destruction of the Earth, certainly", this phrase being dropped in the English translation. A while before this, he had tried to persuade the annoyed Moomintroll: "'Now I think I shall go to sleep,' said the Muskrat. 'Run off and play, my child. Play as long as you can'" (CIM: 35), and continuing in the original text with a sentence which again has unfortunately disappeared in the translation: "If we cannot do anything we have to take it philosophically". For the Muskrat 'philosophically' means 'stoically', as he seems to repeatedly express opinions of this school of thought. His statements represent a fatalism typical of the Stoics which, in facing the impossibility of affecting a course of events, implies a rejection of all emotions. A real Stoic accepts his fate, whatever it is, thanks to his intellectual perfection, and this enables him to overcome emotions that are destructive in nature. Material things are of no importance, whereas real happiness can be achieved through wisdom and virtue. The Muskrat seems committed to these principles, at least in theory. He expresses this attitude explicitly in the very first scene while talking to Moominpappa:

'I am the Muskrat,' said the wretched creature faintly. 'A philosopher, you know. I should just like to point out that your bridge-building activities have completely ruined my house in the river bank, and although ultimately it doesn't matter what happens, I must say even a philosopher does not care for being soaked to the skin.' (CIM: 22-23.)

It is characteristic that each of Muskrat's observations is completed with a *but* that introduces a correction to his 'philosophy'. In the cited passage the *but* is used to discomfort Moominpappa and make him feel guilty. It has the same function in another of Muskrat's statements: "'I'm not a great one for beds,' said the Muskrat, 'they are unnecessary furniture really. It was only a hole I lived in, but I was happy there. Of course it's all the same to a philosopher whether he is happy or not, but it was a good hole...'" (CIM: 23). His indifference disappears absolutely when the situation concerns the philosopher's dignity. This he puts more explicitly in a scene in *Finn Family Moomintroll* when he has fallen out of his hammock and decides to retreat to his cave:

The earth can crack and fire come down from heaven for all I care – that sort of thing doesn't disturb me – but I do not like to be put into a ridiculous situation. It isn't dignified for a philosopher. [...] Last year, for example, a comet fell on us. It was nothing. But as you perhaps remember, I sat on your wife's chocolate shape. It was the deepest insult to my dignity. (FFM: 49-50.)

In spite of the damage to his dignity, Muskrat still reads philosophical literature – "The uselessness of everything" – a sarcastic allusion to Schopenhauer – and, supposedly influenced by the reading, speaks about the insignificance of material things, for instance when Moominmamma's handbag has disappeared: "'Of all unnecessary things,' said he, 'your mother's bag is the most unnecessary. After all time passes and the days change exactly the same whether she has her bag or not.'" (FFM: 136.)

*The Comet* includes many subtle allusions to philosophy, but the dominant intertext is the catastrophism inspired by Spengler's readings. It is expressed both in Muskrat's stance and in the apocalyptic atmosphere evoked by the approaching comet, which covers the whole story. Muskrat is certainly not a pure herald of Spengler's ideas but rather a caricature, a would-be philosopher suited to a book with a strong multiple address, including children. Tove Jansson is consistently sarcastic towards pseudo-philosophising and preaching elevated theories, which stand in opposition to a preacher's life; senseless fatalism, whose predictions do not come true but only scare a close circle of friends and family; a show of asceticism that conflicts with one's ego. These aspects are open to more experienced readers, whereas a good adventure guarantees good reading for others.

### *Vitality, freedom and order*

Henri Bergson was one of the most influential philosophers at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He accused philosophical thought of limiting nature in static concepts and emphasised the importance of 'becoming'. In his *Creative Evolution* (1907), Bergson, drawing on Darwinian evolutionism, subjected the human intellect to a thorough critique and put forward a non-mechanistic conception of the nature of living beings. He argued that "our thought in its pure logical form

is incapable of presenting the true nature of life, the full meaning of the evolutionary movement” (Bergson 1983: ix-x). As we are used to dividing reality into separate states, we inevitably miss the principle of duration. In this endless dynamic, the philosopher rejected finalism or determinism and pointed out the possibility of randomness.

Bergson considered both the Darwinian and Lamarckian theories to be true up to a point and completed them with the notion of a life force, *élan vital*, which drives evolution on its creative path (Gunter 1983: xxxii). He stated that, apart from intellect, there are other forms of consciousness, of which we have only a faint idea, but which express something immanent and essential in the evolutionary movement. In other words, he built his biological theory of knowledge on the distinction between intellect and instinct – the latter perceived as a mode of knowing – and argued that its intuitive character could lead us to new insights. In this theory, intuition is an essential epistemological complement, which helps us understand the duration of time. The intuitive perception is linked with the above-mentioned ‘vital impetus’, *élan vital* – the key concept in Bergson’s work, understood as humanity’s creative impulse, widely identified with dynamism, vitality and spontaneity. The Moomin family seems to be an incarnation of these qualities, constituting a counterpart to the Muskrat’s fatalism and ‘stoicism’. Tove Jansson knew Bergson’s works too:

The 1940s was a period when Tove cultivated her interest in philosophy, an interest partly inspired by the acquaintance with Atos Wirtanen and his literary circles. Earlier she had read Schopenhauer (whom she disliked), Nietzsche and Bergson. She returned to Bergson in late summer 1945 when she was writing *The Comet*, and she celebrated her 31st birthday alone in Åland, reading the great French philosopher. (Westin 2007: 193.)

When the comet is nearing the Earth and Muskrat is spreading his defeatism, the Moomin parents almost instinctively come up with the idea of sending Moomin and Sniff to the Observatory in order to focus their energy on a more meaningful purpose.<sup>5</sup> The decision about sending the children to the Observatory in the Lonely Mountains comes quickly and easily, and this ‘there-and-back’ journey reveals characteristics typical of the positive life vitality: surprise, quest, novelty and effort.

In spite of the seemingly inevitable destruction of the world, the Moomin parents go about their normal lives, a fact rendered in Mamma’s farewell words to the departing children: “‘Don’t forget to give my regards to all the house-troll relatives!’ cried Moominmamma. ‘The shaggy ones, you know, with round heads. And put on your woolly trousers when it’s cold! The tummy powder is in the left-hand pocket of the rucksack!’” (CIM: 38). Her care and pragmatism never give way to hysteria or apathy, which one might expect of someone whose days are numbered. She

<sup>5</sup> The English translation has omitted the phrases expressing this focalisation: “‘Vi måste få dem att göra någonting’, sa mamma bekymrad till Moomintrollets pappa. ‘De vill inte leka. De kan inte tänka på någonting annat än de här undergångsidéerna som Bisamrättan har lurat i dem’. ‘Jag tycker vi skickar dem hemifrån ett slag’, sa pappan.” (Jansson 1997: 25.)

is unceasingly the same mother, full of vitality and energy, fearless and constantly planning for the future. As the end of the world draws closer, Moominmamma makes food, and as the family prepares its evacuation to a nearby cave, she becomes an ace of logistics: packs provisions from the pantry, a set of curtains, a bathtub, bedding, shells and roses from her flowerbed. Finally it is the optimistic, seemingly careless attitude of the parents that wins over Muskrat's fatalism.

The attitude represented by Moominmamma is not an implication of any reflection or intellectual calculation, nor is it supported by any theoretical declaration. Her unreflective knowledge seems immediately converted into action. Her behaviour is natural, almost instinctive, and in this respect it bears parallels to the Bergsonian life force that drives evolution on its creative path. It is certainly not the philosopher's strict use of the term referring to the process of evolution but rather its broader implication applied in a cultural discourse – here employed additionally in a book whose audience includes children.

Bergson, while questioning reason as the only premise of the proper development of humankind, inclines towards irrationalism,<sup>6</sup> and this tone manifests in *The Comet* as a critique of intellectualism. Idle activities and achievements of self-centred scholars undergo covert judgement in the characterisation of the professors at the Observatory, the Muskrat and the Hemulen. When the fearless adventurers finally arrive at the Observatory, they encounter the following scene: "Inside, scientists made thousands of remarkable observations, smoked thousands of cigarettes, and lived alone with the stars. [...] Two professors bustled here and there, tightening screws, pushing knobs and making notes" (CIM: 71). While waiting for the comet, they do not care about the world, people and their problems, and ignore the Moomins' attempts to make contact. Only Sniff is privileged enough to observe the comet through their telescope as he starts a conversation with flattery: "I am very interested in comets, and I've heard so much about your wonderful discoveries here.' The professor was very flattered and put his spectacles up on his forehead. 'Have you now?' he said. 'Then you must come and have a look, my little friend'" (CIM: 73).<sup>7</sup> The professor is able to give precise information about the comet's arrival – 7<sup>th</sup> August, eight forty-two in the evening – but he does not wonder what it means. He claims he had no time to think about it but is going to record the course of events in detail. His work and efforts are academic, pointless, and he does not notice that his hermetic intellectualism costs him sensitivity both to others and the beauty of the world.

The Hemulen, whose world is confined to stamp collecting, acts in a similar way. The character is so unnaturally focused on his album that he is unable to understand the approaching danger. His own fixation does not deter him from criticising the same fault in his cousin: "He is very

<sup>6</sup> Bergson's intuitionism, questioning reason as an infallible epistemic tool, can be perceived as an irrationalist philosophy.

<sup>7</sup> This English translation skips the information that the professor wants to name the comet after himself. In the original text, he says also: "Det här är en ovanligt vacker komet. Jag funderar på att låta uppkalla den efter mig själv" (Jansson 1997: 60).

stupid. We don't even know each other now. I broke off our relationship.' 'Why was that?' asked Sniff. 'He had no interest in anything but his old butterflies,' said Hemulen. 'The earth could crack under his feet and it wouldn't bother him'" (CIM: 128).

In the theory of creative evolution Henri Bergson does not exclude the freedom of a human being, but, as he argues, if somebody wants to experience it, they have to surmount pragmatism and utilitarianism. When individuals break free from collective practises, conventions and automatisms, they can become capable of creative activities:

Our freedom, in the very movements by which it is affirmed, creates the growing habits that will stifle it if it fails to renew itself by a constant effort: it is dogged by automatism. The most living thought becomes frigid in the formula that expresses it. The word turns against the idea. The letter kills the spirit. (Bergson 1983:128.)

Snufkin is the character that most features the freedom opposing automatisms of habits. He leaves the valley every autumn and sets out for secret destinations. As the most reticent person within the whole Moomin constellation, Snufkin embodies the principle of Bergsonian mistrust in the formula and the "imperfect letter", and expresses himself in the sounds of his harmonica. He also constitutes a counterpoint to Sniff's greed. When the latter wants to collect all the rubies from a giant lizard's cave, Snufkin gives him permission and explains that everything he can see in the world belongs to him (CIM: 48-49). His non-materialistic philosophy of absolute freedom is emphasised on different occasions, for instance when the family finds the Hobgoblin's top hat:

"Now you've got a new piece of furniture again," he said, grinning, for Snufkin could never understand why people like to have things. He was quite happy wearing the old suit he had had since he was born (nobody knows when and where that happened), and the only possession he didn't give away was his mouth-organ. (FFM: 21.)

His characterisation is formed within the first books of the suite – in being a counterbalance to the bonds of the Moomin's family and Muskrat's empty words, he represents a creative attitude. In contrast to this pseudo-philosopher, Snufkin lives in compliance with his words. Furthermore he is an artist, and his affiliation to the artistic circle is confirmed by his indispensable attribute – the harmonica.

Another interesting epistemological motif referring to Bergson's theory is linked to the Hobgoblin's top hat. It possesses magic powers and transforms its content into something beyond recognition in a series of episodes: eggshells are turned into clouds, the water in the river into raspberry juice, Moomintroll into an unrecognisable creature. All these metamorphoses constitute starting points for exceptional games, perhaps with the exception of Moomintroll's transformation, which illustrates the power of a mother's love.

It is particularly noteworthy that the Moomin household was transformed into a tropical jungle by Moominmamma when she light-



heartedly threw Hemulen's perennials into the hat. Additional factors – heavy rain and sunshine – accelerated vegetation and made plants grow, flowers blossom and fruit ripen at an incredibly fast pace, whereas winding lianas barricaded the doors and further complicated traditional family life. Moominpappa, busy with writing his diary, suddenly noticed a ripe plum fall on to his papers and automatically suspected it was the children's prank:

“Bless my tail!” bust out Moominpappa. “Moomintroll and Sniff must be home again!” And he turned around to scold them. But nobody was behind him: instead he found himself staring at a thick bush covered with yellow berries. He jumped up, and at once blue plums rained down on him from every side. Then he noticed that a great branch was growing slowly towards the window with green shoots sprouting in all directions. (FFM: 106.)

This temporary distortion of the normally functioning Moomin house evokes Bergson's concept of order. The philosopher theorises about its negation, disorder, a state traditionally perceived and defined by its contrary notion, order. It raises the question as to why theory would not suggest an inverse sequence. In practice, disorder implies the dissatisfaction of someone who expects the opposite order. But in theory one order substitutes the other, so we are in fact dealing *de facto* with two kinds of order. Bergson positions them in relation to the entirety of life, interpreted as creative evolution, and specifies: “We may say then that this first kind of order is that of the *vital* or of the *willed*, in opposition to the second, which is that of the *inert* and the *automatic*” (Bergson 1983: 224). The whole situation appears highly relative, and this relativity is portrayed by the jungle (disorder) in the Moomin house – although it represents an absolute opposition to the accustomed state of the home and the practices of its dwellers (order), it is still a source of positive experiences. Moomintroll and Sniff get into the house despite the overgrown door, Moominmamma becomes enchanted by the garlands of white flowers hanging from the ceiling, and the children lose all sense of time in a fascinating game of Tarzan and Jane. The motif of the gripping play referring to the popular book and film figures is directed mainly at young readers and makes this motif particularly child-friendly, leaving deeper insights to the more experienced readership.

When the sun sets, everything returns to its initial state:

It had stopped raining, and night began to fall. And at the moment that the sun went down something happened to the green mound that was Moominhouse: it began to wither as quickly as it had grown; the fruit shrivelled and fell to the ground; the flowers drooped and the leaves curled up, and once more the house was filled with rustlings and cracklings. (FFM: 112.)

In Moominvalley the traditionally viewed order interchanges with the traditionally viewed disorder smoothly, suggesting the impossibility of drawing a borderline between these two utterly different states, which could perhaps ultimately be simply two variants of the same unity of life.

## Eternal phantasies

A representative of the modern reader-response criticism, Norman Holland approaches the problem of the relation between literature and the human mind employing the concepts of psychoanalysis. His interpretation of a reader–book contact, presented in *The Dynamics of Literary Response* (1989), rests on references to the Freudian oral stage when *self* and object were not differentiated. The mechanisms – when inner and outer are still blurred – arise again when people read. They perceive the text both consciously – giving it a meaning that is unconditionally required by the ego, and unconsciously – responding to it with a matrix of infancy.

Readers come to a literary work with an expectation of gratification, similar to that experienced while being nursed by one's mother, and a promise not to be forced to act on the external world. This is why they willingly suspend disbelief and in some way 'regress' to early infancy to evoke the old matrix of perception:

It is true that we suspend disbelief or, more exactly, we do not reality-test as we do in everyday life. But something much more profound has happened. We do not reality-test because, in part at least, we have ceased to feel we are separate from external reality. To some extent, we fuse with the literary work. In absorbing it, we become absorbed. (Holland 1989: 78.)

Holland holds that writers express their childhood fantasies in their works: "In effect, the literary work dreams a dream for us. It embodies and evokes in us a central fantasy; then it manages and controls that fantasy by devices that, were they in mind, we would call defences, but, being on a page, we call 'form'" (Holland 1989: 75). For example, irony resembles reversal reaction-formation, omission functions like repression or denial, improbable causality in a story is similar to projection, and presenting a moral looks like rationalisation (Holland 1989: 58).

A literary work finds in us a matrix reaching back to the many experiences of gratification at numerous stages of our life and makes the mental process embodied in literature become a process within us. Nonetheless, not all readers respond to texts with the same involvement. The crucial thing is introjection, which can take place only if the transformation in the literary work matches the reader's basic psychological patterns (Holland 1989: 96).

Tove Jansson completed the Moomin suite with the ninth novel, *Moominvalley in November* (Jansson 2011b, = MIN), written in the summer and autumn of 1969 and published in 1970. She was overwhelmed with new projects, jobs, ideas and a chronic lack of time, and she found it more and more difficult to establish a satisfactory balance between work and pleasure. She greatly missed the freedom from work and expressed this yearning in the novel, finally letting the Moomins go after twenty-five

years. The book also became a symbolic farewell to children's literature.<sup>8</sup> This farewell occurs in Moominvalley without the titular characters, who stayed on a remote island in the preceding book *Moominpappa at Sea*. Moreover, there is no Moomintroll, the central hero, which Maria Nikolajeva interprets as a thoughtful move – thus Tove Jansson removed the primary identification object and her own projection in order to subdue pain (Nikolajeva 2000: 250). Instead a number of so far secondary characters decide to visit “the Happy Valley” each with a reason of their own: Snufkin loses five bars of music and searches for inspiration; Fillyjonk cannot clean anymore, which evokes strong anxiety; Hemulen questions his own lifestyle of collector and organiser; Grandpa-Grumble wants to return to the happy state of childhood; the lonely and timid Toft dreams of Moominvalley as a paradise, though he has never been there before. Though they represent different ages, all of them go through some kind of crisis – often connected with their identity or a sense of life.<sup>9</sup> These conflicting personalities meet in the same place, with the same wish – to experience the Valley – and with time they are able to find a platform of agreement: the dream of the ideal family. They even try to reconstruct this dream: Fillyjonk takes over Moominmamma's role, locks herself in the kitchen, prepares food, tries to be liked by the others and looks after the orphan Toft, whereas Hemulen acts like Moominpappa, building a treehouse and asking Toft, the substitute for Moomintroll, for help. The climax of the story is a magic moment during a party when Fillyjonk performs a shadow puppet show: “the dark shadow took on colours, the silhouettes seemed to move and all the time Snufkin went on playing so fittingly that no one was conscious of the music until it stopped. The family had come home” (MIN: 129-130). The Moomins have not returned, but a new family has been constructed. The feeling of community helps the visitors to overcome their crises so that they can leave the Valley, which has not disappointed and has proved to be an infallible remedy for a life dilemma. The only one who stays is Toft.

The novel includes many references to dreams and the unconscious. The most illustrative scene is at the end the book when Toft wanders through a forest to welcome the Moomins, who it seems are returning:

Inside there was perpetual dusk. The trees stood uneasily close to one another, there wasn't enough room for their branches [...] It was a different world. Toft had no pictures and no words for it, nothing had to correspond. [...] His descriptions of the valley and the Happy Family faded and slipped away, Moominmamma glided away and became remote, an impersonal picture, he didn't even know what she looked like. Toft walked through the forest, stooping under the branches, creeping and crawling, and thinking of nothing at all and became empty as the crystal ball. (MIN: 155-156.)

<sup>8</sup> Jansson returned to the Moomin theme only in a script and a picture book (Westin 2007: 421).

<sup>9</sup> The only character that is an exception is Mymble, who is always content with herself. This is part of her consistent characterisation.

Darkness, a thick forest, the motif of creeping and the impossibility of verbalising are typical features of the unconscious that collects repressed phantasies.

For all these characters Moominvalley is a dreamlike space, and it can be read on an intratextual level as a fulfilment of their central phantasy. Furthermore, Jansson seems to blur the borderline between reality and fantasy, the characters and the readers. This is expressed, for instance, in a scene in which Grandpa-Grumble decides to set off for Moominvalley: “There came a moment in the darkness of early dawn when he knew that he wanted to go to a valley where he had once been a very long time ago. It was just possible that he had only heard about this valley, or perhaps had read about it, but it made no difference really.” (MIN: 43) There is no clear-cut distinction between readers, the writer and the fictional figures that might have read about the Valley, which suggests an interesting extratextual interpretation that can be viewed on two levels. First, it concerns the writer’s relations with fiction, her incarnation in the figure of Toft, and her longing for her beloved mother, Ham. Boel Westin states unequivocally that Toft is Tove’s *alter ego*:

In *Moominvalley in November*, the author Tove Jansson is present under a new name, derived from her own name: Tove has become Toft. He gives voice to the narrator who tries to call forth the family of the valley, depicts the impossibility to continue writing the earlier story and gives voice to the possibility of finding a new one – this happens at the end of the book. (Westin 2007: 424)

Second, we can recognise ourselves in a crowd of people who have read the Moomin books for many decades and view this situation from the perspective of Holland’s model. If Grandpa-Grumble might have read about the Valley, which is explicitly expressed, and could get there, we – real readers – can do exactly the same thing. We can reach that magic space through perfect immersion, using the old matrix of infancy. The metafictional suggestion that the characters might have dreamt or read about the Valley and the recurrent implications of the unconscious connote a fusion of self and fiction which takes place inside the reader.

Tove Jansson embodied her central phantasy in a suite of literary works and shaped it as an eternal arcadia: a happy family, living in a beautiful valley, with wonderful summers and overslept winters. Temporary dangers that protect this place from boredom are always obviated and each adventure is rounded off with a happy ending. It is a surprisingly simple phantasy, perhaps so simple as to be confounding. But it works and has worked for a long time, so we can assume – in line with Norman Holland – that plentiful introjections were possible thanks to a perfect match between the literary transformation and the readers’ expectations.

## Final considerations

In summation, the essential condition for understanding children's literature is to perceive it as directed not exclusively at an implied child reader. Furthermore, complex layers of meaning and form appealing to more experienced readers often decide its success. Books with a remarkable multiple address, i.e. which appeal successfully to young children and experienced academics – with an endless number of other implied readers in between, positioned in different spaces and times – are the domain of the greatest artists, and Tove Jansson was undoubtedly one of their number. Her narration perfectly balances on a long line of multiple address, offering infinite readings. Though the Moomin suite is traditionally viewed as 'maturing' with each successive volume, analyses have proven that even the early novels contain philosophical intertexts accessible to more experienced readers. Indeed, this may be viewed as one of the keys to the popularity of the series. These are the clear references to Spengler's catastrophism and their counterpoint, Bergsonian *élan vital*, which reveal that Jansson had other readers in mind than merely children. However, they do not constitute the only explanation of the Moomins' exceptional literary position – the series certainly offers a fascinating 'naïve' reading, allowing a wider audience to enter the world of simple solutions and unconditional love. In terms of Norman Holland's theory, it transforms a popular phantasy – here of a happy family – which is introjected by readers who willingly suspend disbelief to enjoy pleasure and, as it were, dream a sweet dream.

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# OVERVIEWS KATSAUKSET

MARJA JÄRVENTAUSTA

## Finnish Literary Studies at German-speaking Universities

Literary texts are regarded as an integral part of university foreign language teaching, since whoever learns a foreign language at a sophisticated level should also experience the literature of the foreign language and foreign culture. However, the association between learning a language and studying the literature of this language is based on a broad spectrum. On the one hand, literary texts are merely used as material for language acquisition goals. On the other hand, the foreign language literature is given intrinsic value by making its aesthetic character and its function of conveying knowledge about the foreign reality the focus of learning (see Ehlers 2010: 1531). The first approach is typical of “pure” foreign language teaching, while the second approach is primarily represented in study programmes that concentrate on the academic study of the foreign language and the foreign language literature and culture. Of course, the distinctions between these two positions are fluid, if only because good language skills form an essential precondition for the academic study of foreign language literature.

### *Finnish as a Foreign Language and Finnish Literature*

Some brief explanations of the concepts should precede the closer analysis of the relationship between “Finnish as a Foreign Language” and “Finnish literature”. In Finland, the abbreviation S2 “Suomi kakkonen” (‘Finnish two’) has become established as an umbrella term for teaching Finnish as a foreign and a second language. To clarify the different learning contexts and aims for (mostly academic) Finnish teaching outside Finland as well as school and integrative Finnish teaching in Finland, preference is given in the discussion below to the terms Finnish as a Foreign Language (FFL) and Finnish as a Second Language (FSL) (for further information on the blurred distinctions between FFL and FSL, see Latomaa and Tuomela 1993; Vaarala 2009: 89–90). When referring to Finnish literature at

least two alternatives may be implied: either literature composed in the Finnish language or literature created in Finland. In the first case, for example, Finnish-speaking literature in Sweden would be regarded as part of Finnish literature; while in the second case, among other things, the Finland Swedish and (Finland) Sámi<sup>1</sup> literature would be counted as Finnish literature. When adopted in language teaching one understands “Finnish literature” to mean Finnish-speaking literature, yet for instance if the study focus in academic Finnish Studies is on Finnish literature, then Finland Swedish and (Finland) Sámi literature naturally belong to “Finnish literature” as literatures emerging within the Finnish cultural space.

Teaching literature as well as methods and pedagogical approaches to teaching it are topics that have received comparatively little attention in S2 research. Two anthologies represent important milestones: in Koitto and Vehkanen (1995) Finnish lecturers working abroad compiled a report on the dissemination of Finnish literature, and in Mela and Mikkonen (2007) various aspects of teaching literature are dealt with in the FSL and FFL context. The contributions in Koitto and Vehkanen (1995) date back a while and are to be / could be regarded as records of the fact that literature “always” played an important role in Finnish teaching outside Finland (see also Vaarala 2009: 13). As Mela (2008: 130) asserts, this may be traced back to the fact that, in many countries teaching literature is seen as extremely important in native language and foreign language teaching, which is then also reflected in academic FFL teaching as well. However, literature’s role as conveying culture should not be overlooked either (see also Viinikka-Kalliala 2009: 117), in particular, in learning contexts outside Finland literature makes an important contribution to the acquisition of cultural competence.

Literary texts can be used in FFL teaching in versatile ways for the purposes of language and cultural education (see e.g. Buchholz 1996; Vaarala 2003a and 2003b). However, there is still a lack of methodic and pedagogical approaches to teaching literature that are specifically relevant for FFL. This would systematically treat the literary text as the object and medium of FFL teaching as well as define the linguistic, literary and intercultural goals of using literature in the FFL teaching. A first step in this direction could be a compendium of literary texts (and text excerpts) from original sources that are arranged according to the methods and approaches to teaching literature. On the one hand, texts could be included that would be particularly appropriate for a variety of learning contents based on different stages of language acquisition. On the other hand, original Finnish-speaking texts or even translations could be included that are allocated a special cultural and/or historical

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<sup>1</sup> The term “(Finland) Sámi literature” refers here to literature by Sámi writers who live in Finland. However, the term is more problematic than the established term “Finland Swedish literature”, firstly because of the shared Sámi culture and literary space in the Cap of the North; and secondly, because of the linguistic and cultural differences among Finland’s Sámi population.

relevance.<sup>2</sup> Of course, compiling such a “didactic canon” is fraught with numerous problems, since on the one hand literary texts for foreign language learning are often regarded as “too difficult, too long and too remote from the requirements of everyday communication” (Ehlers 2010: 1530). On the other hand, endless debates can ensue about the choice of literary texts, which are not too complicated and extensive, and could be particularly highlighted as “culturally relevant” (see also Groenewold 2010). Another challenge is the arrangement of texts based on didactical methods for the purposes of academic FFL teaching, since the (still relatively minimal) method-oriented or didactic approaches to teaching literature, which have been developed for FSL teaching, cannot be used without their further adaptation on the grounds of the contrasting learning environments and conditions (cf. Ehlers 2010: 1532). This naturally also applies for method-oriented or didactic approaches, which have been developed for native-language Finnish teaching (see Ahvenjärvi and Kirstinä 2013: 111–162), or for teaching German as a foreign language (see e.g. the contributions in Altmayer et al. 2014). Arranging literary texts according to didactical methods does not mean that they are degraded as a “practice field for language exercises and the processes of formal and content text analysis” (Ehlers 2010: 1532), or would be reduced to “their function as a medium of cultural education” (Ewert 2010: 1562). Nor does the reliance on didactical methods mean instrumentalizing literary texts as a mere vehicle for language acquisition and cultural education, but rather the spotlight should be on literature itself and “furthermore, by preserving its character as art” (Ewert 2010: 1562).

### *Finnish Studies abroad and Finnish Literature (Studies)*

The umbrella term Finnish language and culture is often used to refer to academic FFL teaching and Finnish Studies abroad, and this implies a broad concept of culture that naturally also incorporates literature. Thus, a basic position of literary studies is implied that can be described as literary studies from the perspective of cultural studies (see further e.g. Nünning and Sommer 2004). With regard to the treatment of Finnish literature from an external perspective this is also a reasonable approach, even if it also seems worth striving for a curricular separation of cultural and literary studies, not least because of the expansion of research approaches in cultural studies in the sense of “cultural turns” (see Bachmann-Medick 2014). Finnish studies abroad may then be understood as an umbrella term for language, literature and cultural studies approaches that focus on the Finnish language, literature and culture from outside Finland. In the Finnish studies abroad context, the academic study of Finnish literature would – to concur with Ehlich (2007: 29) – then be understood as “literary studies for/from the FFL position”.

<sup>2</sup> There are individual lists of recommended texts for FFL teaching (e.g. Jokinen 1995), yet these are more based on – largely valuable – experiences provided by FFL lecturers and not based on ideas about methods and approaches to teaching literature.

Two paradigms have emerged as particularly productive in foreign-language literary studies (see Riedner 2010: 1544–1545): the first model is “the literary communication model of reception aesthetics” that has proven its worth as a “foundation of scholarly reflection” with regard to foreign language literature. The other paradigm is formed by the various approaches arising from “cultural foreignness as a basic category”. An important task for a theory of teaching literature of a foreign language and culture would then be to research the conditions of the reception and specific cultural aspects of the respective literature and to clarify “how distances between the own and the foreign can be bridged by educational work” (Ehlers 2010: 1534).

The dissertation by Heidi Vaarala (2009) is the first (and until now the only) more extensive study where questions concerning literary studies, mainly text reception and interpretation, were discussed from the FFL viewpoint. Vaarala examines the question of how academic Finnish learners (in Finland) understand a Finnish-speaking literary text and how they discuss it. Her starting hypothesis is that knowledge of Finnish forms the necessary, yet by no means sufficient condition for reception; a considerably high level of cultural competence is needed, too. Thus, cultural foreignness is a basic category for the understanding of the foreign language and culture of the literature – even the Finnish language and culture (cf. Ehlich 2007: 29 with regard to German literature).<sup>3</sup>

The selection of suitable texts is a pragmatic way to overcome the linguistic challenges of literary texts in language teaching. Yet, linguistic challenges represent a much more fundamental problem for the academic study of Finnish literature. The literary texts themselves present the initial difficulty. As by no means all texts that are defined as “the literary canon” (e.g. Joel Lehtonens *Putkinotko* or L. Onervas *Mirdja*)<sup>4</sup> are available in translation, and as they are linguistically very sophisticated they can only be considered at a very advanced phase of the Finnish Studies course. However, if they have to be ignored due to the language barrier the overall picture of Finnish literature remains restricted.<sup>5</sup> The second challenge is presented by scholarly papers and essays in Finnish-speaking literary studies. For FFL learners the special language in Finnish literary studies presents at least two difficulties: firstly, due to the aesthetic use of language; and secondly, because of the terminology (cf. further Gardt 1998). Literary studies texts are less formulaic than, for instance, linguistic texts and the language is often full of surprises because of the stylistic flair. As far as specialist terms are concerned, the lack of international, Latin-based terminology (e.g. in comparison to linguistics) makes reading more difficult, particularly since the specialist terms are often the results

<sup>3</sup> To create an interpretive framework for the foreign cultural space, Ehlich (2007: 29) adopts the concept of “hermeneutics of foreignness”, Ehlers (2010: 1533) the concept of “hermeneutics of the culturally foreign”.

<sup>4</sup> Without going into further detail about the problems of forming the literary canon, here the idea of “defining the canon” should be understood quite pragmatically; the reading lists of Finnish Studies programmes offering literary studies could provide initial orientation.

<sup>5</sup> The language barrier might also be one reason why Finnish literature has scarcely been given any attention in comparative studies outside Finland.

of highly complex word formations – one need only think of derivations like *kirjailija* ‘author’ > *kirjailijuus* ‘authorship’ or *kirjallisuus* ‘literature’ > *kirjallisuudellisuus* ‘literariness’. Welcome reference tools are the literary studies dictionary by Yrjö Hosiainluoma (2003, although this is now out of print), as well as the open collaborative database Bank of Finnish Terminology in Arts and Sciences, in which the expert community has been very proactively involved in for the literary studies part of the project.<sup>6</sup>

## ***Finnish Literature and Finnish Literature Studies at German (-speaking) Universities – Preliminary Thoughts***

Finnish is taught at German-speaking universities in various combinations and on the basis of different curricular requirements.<sup>7</sup> These can be broadly divided into three categories:

1) Finnish as an optional foreign language: responsible for the language courses are often language centres of the universities (e.g. in Bielefeld) or related disciplines (e.g. Scandinavian Studies in Kiel or Baltic Sea Region Studies in Münster).

2) Finnish as a major language option in Finno-Ugric and Northern European Studies: in the German-speaking context, Finno-Ugric Studies are available in Göttingen, Hamburg, Munich and Vienna (only the Master’s programme). In all these locations Finnish can be chosen as a major language option. As part of regional studies degree programmes in Northern European Studies in Mainz and Berlin (Humboldt University), Finnish is available as a special language option. Depending on the study course, the curricular importance of Finnish literature varies from “only part of language teaching” to optional lectures up to compulsory introductory seminars.

3) Finnish teaching as an integral part of Finnish Studies: the universities of Greifswald, Cologne and Vienna (only Bachelor’s programme) offer Finnish Studies as a major subject, however with quite different curricula conditions.

Finnish literature can be integrated into language teaching for all of these three combinations. Introductory lectures on literary history and literary studies courses as well as advanced reading courses are possible in the Finnish Studies and Finno-Ugric Studies programmes as well as at the Department of Northern European Studies in Berlin (the study programme in Mainz “Northern European and Baltic Languages and Cultures” has no literary studies components). Literary studies learning contents that go beyond this are a compulsory part of the curriculum only in Finnish Studies programmes.

Which basic competencies in literary studies should be made available as the curriculum content for Finnish Studies abroad? There is surely no correct answer to this question, though at least the following three areas should be included in basic training both in literature and literary studies outside Finland: key aspects of Finnish literary history, knowledge of the most important works of Finnish (and not only just

<sup>6</sup> <http://tieteentermipankki.fi/wiki/Luokka:Kirjallisuudentutkimus>

<sup>7</sup> For more details on study programmes and syllabus outlines, see Pantermöller 2013a.

Finnish-speaking) literature as well as basic knowledge of literary studies concepts and analytical methods (with emphasis on the fundamental difference between linguistic and literary text analysis; contrast with Mela 2006: 66 and 2008: 132). This basic academic grounding should sufficiently equip students to attend seminars on specific themes of Finnish literature in order to graduate from their study programme with a Bachelor's or Master's thesis in literary studies, and with the aspiration of pursuing a career as a communicator of Finnish-German literary relations.

Unlike in German-speaking Scandinavian Studies, for instance, literary studies and related course contents in German-speaking Finnish Studies abroad manifest a more marginal tradition. There are certainly several reasons for this, although only two factors are briefly mentioned here. Firstly, Finnish Studies abroad – as it is understood today – is a relatively new and innovative combination that has only established itself in its own right and with its own specialist profile in parallel to the establishment and professionalization of FFL teaching as well as the development of FSL teaching in Finland. In addition, there is the close interrelation of Finnish teaching and the specialist content of Finnish Studies with Finno-Ugric Studies that is grounded on linguistic scholarship.<sup>8</sup> A further reason for the comparatively weak presence of literary studies in Finnish Studies abroad is the specialist understanding of Finnish Studies per se. As Hakulinen and Leino (2006: 12) asserted, Finnish Studies never actually considered itself to be a philological, but rather a linguistic discipline. This is also reflected in the history of the subject: in 1908 when the first Chair for Folk Poetry and in 1913 the first Chair for Finnish literature were founded, this led to a clear separation of Folklore Studies, Finnish literature and (linguistic oriented) Finnish Studies. This kind of distinction cannot be maintained in Finnish Studies abroad, as already implied by the conventional label of Finnish Studies abroad as Finnish Language and Culture. Alongside sophisticated language training based on linguistic principles, Finnish Studies abroad naturally includes comprehensive knowledge of Finnish literature and culture and all three specialist disciplines should also be represented in the curricula. Language acquisition, a necessary condition for reading Finnish-speaking literature, involves most of the learning content at the start of the course; moreover, traditionally, linguistic studies are granted much more space in the syllabuses than literature and culture, not to mention the literary and cultural studies.

### ***Finnish Literature and Finnish Literature Studies at German (-speaking) Universities – An Overview***

The Bologna Process, which was implemented rather slowly in German universities, involved multiple changes that have also had an impact and fundamentally modified Finnish Studies and Finno-Ugric study

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<sup>8</sup> Of course, this does not exclude the scholarly analysis of literatures of the Finno-Ugric languages or peoples (see e.g. Domokos and Laakso 2012).



programmes. The implementation of the two-tier structure of Bachelor's and Master's degrees and the modularization of study programmes have together led to a certain "school-like approach" to studying and a changed study culture. However, the changes were by no means merely structural, but due to the efforts to pursue more specialization and to accentuate the profile of the individual study programmes they partly led to significant modifications of course contents. These developments are also evident in Finnish and Finno-Ugric degree programmes and also concern the course content in literature and literary studies. Given that the Bologna Process led to a diversity of curricular profiles that is almost impossible to oversee, here it is only possible to give an outline overview of the importance of Finnish literature and literary studies in Finno-Ugric, Finnish and Northern European Studies.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Curricular Anchoring of Finnish Literature and Literary Studies***

The *Finno-Ugric* Bachelor's programmes in Göttingen and Munich incorporate a compulsory introductory seminar on Estonian, Finnish and Hungarian literature (Göttingen) or Finno-Ugric literature (Munich); in Hamburg, literature seminars can be chosen as options in two cultural studies modules. In the Finno-Ugric Master's programmes literary studies course contents can only be chosen as options. Depending on the study location and study programme, however, the options vary greatly for incorporating literary studies course contents into the individual syllabus. In general, however, students have the opportunity to expand their core skills in literary studies through the choice of their second subject, for example, German Studies or English Studies.

In the Bachelor's degree programmes in *Finnish Studies* in Greifswald, Cologne and Vienna, literary studies course contents are a fixed part of the curriculum. In Greifswald, the module "Introduction to Finnish Literary History" includes an introductory lecture, a seminar for advanced study and an extensive literature workload; the *viva voce* for the Bachelor's degree is divided equally into linguistics and literature sections. In Cologne, Finnish Studies at Bachelor's level is closely interrelated with Scandinavian Studies and in joint courses, e.g. in theoretical and methodological introductory seminars on literature and cultural studies, Finnish literature and culture are treated as an integral part of the North European literature and cultural landscape. The advanced module in the literary studies comprises a lecture and an advanced seminar on alternating themes as well as an accompanying tutorial on reading literary texts. The content of the lecture and seminar is often related to Scandinavian Studies, though if possible courses are also offered with purely Finnish Studies content (see below). Students can choose between linguistic and literary studies topics for the Bachelor's *viva* examination. In Vienna, a literary studies lecture and introductions to literary studies and Finnish literary history are integrated into the

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<sup>9</sup> More detailed information can be found on the website of the respective institute.

Bachelor's curriculum. After the compulsory courses the students can choose between a linguistic or literary studies specialism – the latter option involves a project or internship, a more extensive literary studies course and a tutorial. The Master's degree programmes in Finnish Studies in Greifswald and Cologne offer the students more freedom to choose and therefore also the opportunity to put emphasis on literary studies course contents; in both locations Finland Swedish literature is regarded as a natural part of the programme.

At the Department of Northern European Studies in Berlin, Finnish literature and culture is taken into account in lectures and seminars within the discipline of Scandinavian Studies/*Northern European Studies*. Students without any knowledge of Finnish can read Finnish literature in translations and for those who have chosen Finnish as an elective language there is a reading course in Finnish-speaking literature.

Generally, among the students there is lively interest in Finnish literature and questions relating to literary studies. However, demand can only be approximately satisfied because staff resources are so pressured that it is not possible to offer an equal choice of linguistics, literary and cultural studies course options. Furthermore, all staff positions in Finno-Ugric studies and almost all the posts in Finnish Studies are currently filled by lecturers whose specialist expertise is more in the field of linguistics. For this reason, "external assistance" is required to teach literary studies courses. A proven and popular source of assistance is sessional lecturers funded by the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO). In recent years in German-speaking regions, applications have been submitted (and approved) primarily to complement the range of literary studies courses.<sup>10</sup> These short-term or sessional lectureships make it possible to offer students an insight into current Finnish research in literary studies and to deal with specific thematic areas. Alongside guest lectureships on modern or contemporary Finnish prose literature over the past few years topics such as postmodernism or ecocriticism have proved popular. In Vienna, until recently the CIMO regularly made available pro-rata funding for a guest professorship in literary studies. However, this source of assistance is no longer guaranteed due to restructuring of the funding programmes. This jeopardizes the entire literary studies in Vienna because they were covered by the guest professorship. On the other hand, Cologne has profited from the restructuring by earmarking pro-rata funding from CIMO to set up half an assistantship post for two years with special emphasis on literary studies. During the period 2010–2013, Cologne's Finnish Studies also succeeded in applying for substantial funding from the STAR (= Strengthening and Development of Regional Studies) programme offered by the German Academic Exchange (DAAD) to enhance literary and cultural content in Finnish Studies. Guest lecturers and guest researchers could be invited to Cologne to strengthen the institution's own teaching and research. Four

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<sup>10</sup> ERASMUS sessional lectureships are also taken up, although due to the low teaching workload they can generally only be integrated into the existing teaching syllabus.

Spring Schools were also organized<sup>11</sup> and scholarships were awarded for Finland, so that students of other universities could benefit from the funding assistance as well.

### Final Theses and Dissertations

By examining Bachelor's and Master's theses, we can gain an initial overview of students' interest in Finnish literature. Since the students have a relatively free choice of topics, and because until now it has been possible in principle to submit Bachelor's and Master's theses on a literary subject in all locations, the share of literary studies topics already gives an insight into students' interests. Taking into account the period 2010–2014 (for the period 1980–2012 see Pantermöller 2013b), in Finnish, Finno-Ugric and Northern European Studies in Germany<sup>12</sup> approximately 65 Bachelor's and 55 Master's theses were completed with a focus on the Finnish language, literature and culture. The share of literary studies topics is about 30 per cent for the Bachelor's theses and about 25 per cent for the Master's theses. However, there are significant differences among the universities both with regard to the overall number of theses as well as the number of final theses on literary studies topics. In line with expectations, the share of literary studies theses in the Finno-Ugric study programmes is rather minimal; during the review period most Bachelor's theses in Finnish Studies with a focus on literary studies were completed in Greifswald, while most Master's theses were submitted in Cologne. The content of the theses reveals a wide range of topics covering more traditional subjects,<sup>13</sup> minority literatures<sup>14</sup> and current theoretical and thematic problems,<sup>15</sup> just to mention a few topic areas.

Doctoral theses, professorial theses (*Habilitation*) and other academic papers about Finnish literature are a rarity in the German-speaking context. In the 1970s and 1980s, in the former GDR, only two dissertations and a professorial thesis were completed: in 1977, Kurt

<sup>11</sup> A broad range of subjects were offered by the Spring Schools: in 2010 Realism and Naturalism in the Finnish Literature & Finnish Short Stories; in 2011, Eco- and Societal Criticism in the Finnish Literature; in 2012, Sámi Literature, Culture and Language and in 2013 Contemporary Finnish Poetry and Prose.

<sup>12</sup> In Vienna, the students submit two Bachelor's theses of approximately 20 pages in length. Thus they are not directly comparable to Bachelor's theses at German universities (appr. 40 pages) and are not included for the purposes of this analysis. In the Finnish Studies programme one of two Bachelor's theses can be submitted on a literary studies topic and this is also a popular choice.

<sup>13</sup> E.g. *Ein Vergleich der drei Hauptfiguren in Leena Landers Roman "Die Unbeugsame"* (Hamburg), *L. Onervas "Mirdja" – auf der Suche nach einer neuen Identität* (Cologne).

<sup>14</sup> E.g. *Tod und Depression in der nordfinnischen Literatur* (Greifswald), *Die Darstellung der Tornedalfinnen in ausgewählter Literatur von Mikael Niemi, Åsa Larsson und Tove Alsterdal* (Berlin), *Zur Konstruktion der samischen Identität am Beispiel von Kirsti Palttos "Zeichen der Zeit"* (Cologne), *Helsingfors/Helsinki – Stadtbilder in ausgewählten Romanen von Kjell Westö* (Cologne), *Die "Memesa"-Trilogie von Kiba Lumberg* (Cologne).

<sup>15</sup> E.g. *Zur Bewertung einiger postkolonialer Aspekte in Rosa Liksoms Roman "Crazeland"* (Greifswald), *Ökokritische Ansätze in samischer Lyrik* (Cologne), *Zur literarischen Auseinandersetzung mit gesellschaftlichen und persönlichen Traumata in Sofi Oksanens historischen Roman "Stalinin lehmät"* (Greifswald).

Schmidt completed his professorial thesis (*Habilitation*) in Greifswald on the basic positions of Finnish poetry and prose during the 1930s and 1940s; in 1980 in (East)-Berlin, Richard Semrau finished his dissertation on the representation of comics in Puntilla interpretations by Hella Wuolijoki and Bertolt Brecht (Semrau 1981), and in 1986 in Greifswald Christiane Menger submitted her dissertation on the literary appropriation of life in Finnish drama with reference to Minna Canth and Hella Wuolijoki. Presently, I am only aware of one literary studies dissertation project in German-speaking Finnish Studies, namely by Thekla Musäus (Greifswald) on the image of the Karelian people in Finnish and Russian fiction between 1920 and 1955. In German-speaking Scandinavian Studies academic dissertations are occasionally completed on Finland Swedish literature – an important milestone is the dissertation by Judith Meurer-Bongardt on utopian thinking in the works of Hagar Olsson (Meurer-Bongardt 2011).

### **Extra-curricular Literary Activities**

Alongside the manifold literary interests that can be covered within the curricular framework, in German-speaking Finnish Studies and Finno-Ugric Studies there are many extra-curricular literary activities, several of which merit special mention here. Every May for the past 20 years, the Greifswald Festival *Nordischer Klang* ('Nordic Sound') has presented music, performing arts, exhibitions, readings, films, children's programme and lectures from Nordic countries and other countries bordering the Baltic Sea. Greifswald's Finnish Studies programme is substantially involved in the organization, and readings with Finnish writers are a regular feature of the festival programme. Another institution, which has now become an established tradition, and actively involves Greifswald's Finnish Studies in the planning, implementation and documentation is the congress *Junge Literatur in Europa* (*Young Literature in Europe*) that has been held annually since 2000. Thanks to financial support from the Hans Werner Richter-Stiftung, young writers are invited to Greifswald to an international writers' meeting. So far, 14 Finnish writers have already attended the congress. Since many of the foreign guests are newcomers on the German literature market, Greifswald students translate their texts for the readings into German. Some of these translations have been published since 2005 in the series *Neue nordische Novellen* (*New Nordic Short Stories*). The extensive fourth volume *Auf dem Weg – Neue Nordische Novellen IV* (*On the Way – New Nordic Short Stories IV*) (Bindrim 2014) also documents a research learning project where students take the initiative to make contact with writers and publishers, to select appropriate texts and translate them. The anthology was published in time for the Frankfurt Book Fair 2014 and – as for all previous editions – also benefits from interesting short literary contributions from Finland.

The anthology *Invasion Paradies* (*Invasion Paradise*) (Domokos 2014) is also related to an extensive and mainly student translation project where more than one hundred degree students, PhD students, lecturers and assistants at Bielefeld University – known as the "Gruppe Bielefeld"

(‘Group Bielefel’) – translated and edited novel excerpts, factual texts, poems and newspaper articles on the topic of multicultural Finland. This book was also published to coincide with the Frankfurt Book Fair 2014 with Finland being the Guest of Honour of the Fair.

Although the Frankfurt Book Fair 2014 was a notable highlight for Finnish literature in the German-speaking context, the literary activities are intended to promote continuity. This not only applies for the *Nordischer Klang* and the *Junge Literatur in Europa*, but for all attempts to raise the profile of Finnish literature and to make it more accessible to students.<sup>16</sup> An important role play readings by Finnish writers, which are often organized by Finnish lecturers in cooperation and with the financial support of the Finnish Literature Exchange (FILI), the Finnish Institute in Berlin (FinD) and German-Finnish societies. To bolster the cultural studies approach to Finnish literature, as part of the STAR project in Cologne two Finnish Studies conferences were organized on literary studies. In May 2010, at an international symposium the literature of minorities and migrants in the Northern part of Europe were discussed. In October 2013, German-Finnish-German literary relations were the focus of the conference that brought together translators and literary scholars (see Järventausta et al. 2015). In association with the Cologne Children’s and Youth Book Weeks that promoted Finland in June 2014, 13 Finnish children’s book writers, accompanied and translated by students at Cologne’s Finnish Studies programme, gave numerous readings in Cologne’s schools and libraries – an academic conference was also held on current perspectives on Finnish and Finland Swedish children’s and young adult literature.

## Conclusion

When considering the different combinations of Finnish literature studies in the German-speaking context there are numerous intersections between course content, which is based on literary studies, and those courses primarily aimed at language learning. Through the close ties of both study areas, despite the compact curricular framework, it is though particularly in Finnish Studies study programmes possible to convey to the students specialist expertise in the field of Finnish literature and literary studies.

If the aim is further to reinforce the role of Finnish literature in FFL teaching and in Finnish Studies abroad, in my view it would be important to further develop both method-oriented and pedagogical approaches to teaching literature as well as literary studies approaches with regard to FFL teaching and literary studies. The method-oriented and pedagogical approaches to teaching literature are meant to embed the literary text into the foreign language teaching and learning context and to analyze

<sup>16</sup> For this purpose, already ten years ago an anthology (Järventausta and Kjellberg 2004) was published presenting Finnish contemporary writers. Leena Krohn, Juha Seppälä, Sirkka Turkkka and Kjell Westö gave their own view of their literary output in their contributions that are supplemented by an external literary studies perspective.

and evaluate its level of difficulty, its composition and contents with regard to teaching and learning goals and objectives (Ehlers 2010: 1532). The analytical framework is different for literary studies. The Finnish Studies abroad approach to literary studies should of course be taught in close alignment with Finnish research. At the same time, its special role lies in the external perspective – whether it is down to the perspective of ‘otherness’ or due to German-speaking research approaches that it can be seen as an enrichment of research on Finnish literature.

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VIOLA PARENTE-ČAPKOVÁ, JAN DLASK, LENKA FÁROVÁ

## Finnish Literary Studies in the Czech Republic

Charles University, Prague and Masaryk University, Brno

### *I. Charles University, Prague*

#### *I. Introduction*

At the Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague, the Finnish literature has been taught within the department of Finnish philology, which has enjoyed a long tradition here. Vladimír Skalička (1909–1991), Professor of General Linguistics and a member of the influential Prague School of linguistics responsible for developing the system of morphological typology, was also involved in the study and research of Finno-Ugric languages. He began teaching Finnish courses as early as the 1930s, although the MA Programme in Finnish philology was only initiated in the late 1960s. Skalička was also an important translator: he translated many canonical Finnish authors including A. Kivi, M. Waltari, F. E. Sillanpää or M. Talvio (as well as some less known writers such as A. Järventaus, A. Konttinen and E. Manninen), and used literary texts as material for his language classes. His scholarly publications were, however, in the field of linguistics. Since Skalička joined general linguistics with Finnish (and Hungarian) studies, for many years the Department of Finnish Studies belonged to the Institute of Linguistics and Finno-Ugric Studies. In January 2015, it became a part of the Institute of Germanic Studies, which included, from the very outset, the Department of Scandinavian Studies.

During the last 45 years, thanks mainly to Hilikka Lindroos, a long-time Finnish lecturer at Charles University, a substantial number of graduates from the Finnish department have become translators, some of them editors and several of them literary scholars. During this period, and in particular since the 1990s, literature as a part of Finnish Studies Programme has been taught within a solid theoretico-methodological framework, not at the service of language teaching (which, for its part, has always been connected to a deeper study of linguistics), but on a par with it: teachers of Finnish language and literature tend to cooperate within various projects. Though the main focus has always been on literature written in Finnish, Finnish literature at Charles University has been understood within a multicultural, transnational and multilingual framework: the literature of Finland encompasses not only literary production written in Finnish but all literature produced in the territory of Finland.

## 2. Finnish Literature as an Integral Part of Finnish Philology

From the very beginning, the teaching of Finnish literature was an important part of the five-year Master's Programme. For a long time, Finnish philology was taught as a major subject, in combination with one other philological subject (Russian, later English or German). Together with Finnish literature, students had to take up an obligatory course called Introduction to Literary Studies, taught by literary scholars from various departments.

The first (part-time) teacher of Finnish literature was Jan Petr Velkoborský (1934–2012), so far the most prolific and the most versatile Czech translator of Finnish literature. Like Skalička, Velkoborský translated many Finnish canonical writers (mainly prose, but also poetry and drama), and he was awarded the State Award for Foreign Translators (the Finnish Government Prize for the Translation of Finnish Literature) in 1983. Velkoborský's view of Finnish literature was strongly influenced by Kai Laitinen's *History of Finland's Literature* (*Suomen kirjallisuuden historia*), which he translated into Czech, though the translation has never been published. Although he specialised in translating Finnish-language authors, Velkoborský introduced through his lectures Laitinen's concept of the bilingual literature of Finland, i.e. literature both in Finnish and in Swedish. Velkoborský worked as an editor at the Prague publishing house Albatros, specialising in children's literature, and within the Finnish-literature curriculum he held courses in Finnish children's literature and literature for young adults. Velkoborský also published many translator's forewords and postscripts, newspaper articles dealing with Finnish literature, and entries in the *Dictionary of Nordic Writers* (published under various titles in 1967, 1998 and 2004; see Hartlová 1998; 2004).

After the major political changes in 1989, the number of students of Finnish Philology at Charles University increased (Finnish philology was always popular, and has remained so), and this in turn created the need for more teachers, especially in the field of literature. In the first half of the 1990s, Pavla Kmočová and Viola Parente-Čapková held literary seminars as part-time teachers. In 1994, Parente-Čapková became the first full-time teacher of Finnish literature at Charles University. In 2001 she moved to the University of Turku, where she has held various positions ever since. She has cooperated closely with the department (holding courses, supervising theses, acting as a consultant and opponent for BA and MA theses). In 2008, she became the first Docent/Associate Professor of Finnish literature in the Czech Republic; her Habilitation Thesis (Parente-Čapková 2007) was based on her history of Finnish literature, the first of its kind originally written in Czech and published as part of *Modern Scandinavian Literatures 1870-2000* (Humpál, Kadečková, Parente-Čapková 2006; 2013/2015). Since Parente-Čapková left Prague, Finnish literature has been taught by Jan Dlask, a specialist of Finland-Swedish literature, who became the first doctoral student to complete his degree in Finnish literature at Charles University. After having taught Finnish literature as a part-time teacher for six years, Dlask became a full-time literature teacher at the department in 2008.

After the implementation of the Bologna process, the structure of university studies changed. What remained unchanged was the vivid interest in Finnish studies, difficult to explain by any single factor. The number of students interested in enrolling has always been far higher than the number of those who could be accepted *vis à vis* the technical possibilities of the department. What also remained unchanged was the system within which students take up two major subjects (e.g. Finnish and English, Finnish and Ethnology, etc.), which are of equal importance and both curricula are of equal volume; only in the case of BA and MA theses must students decide in which of the two subjects to concentrate (that subject is then referred to as the 'diploma subject'). The previous five-year curriculum was nevertheless transformed into a three-year Bachelor's Degree Programme (Finnish Studies) followed by a two-year Master's Degree Programme (Finnish Philology). This, of course, led to changes in the structure of the Finnish literature curricula. Though the main part of the curriculum is dedicated to Finnish-language literature, students are also offered a course in Finland-Swedish literature, thanks to Jan Dlask's specialisation. Sámi literature has been taught within courses held by visiting teachers; in spring 2016 there was a course in Sámi studies (including literature), taught by experts from the University of Tromsø. The course took place at the Department of Scandinavian Studies and was meant for all students of Nordic languages and literatures. Such cooperation is natural since the Department of Finnish Studies is, together with the Department of Scandinavian Studies, a part of the Institute of Germanic Studies. Being in the same department with other Nordic languages has promoted collaboration in teaching the literature of Finland and that of the other Nordic countries: Jan Dlask regularly gives lectures on Finland-Swedish literature for students of Scandinavian Studies. Thus Finland-Swedish literature has been presented to students both as literature in Swedish, taught by teacher(s) from the Department of Scandinavian Studies, and as a part of the literature of Finland, taught by an expert in Finland's literature.

Most students of Finnish Studies at Charles University are native speakers of Czech (some of Slovak), and they usually only start to learn Finnish during their university studies. Therefore, it is not possible for them to read Finnish literature in the original from the very beginning of their studies. During their first two years, students read literary texts mostly in Czech (or Slovak) translations; texts in Finnish are limited to poems or short stories. As students acquire a better command of Finnish, the volume of literary courses and texts read in the original grows.

### **3. Structure of the Literature Curriculum**

At present, the teaching of Finnish literature within the Department of Finnish Studies at Charles University can be divided into several levels. In the first year of their studies, BA students attend an Introductory Course in Literature, in which they become acquainted with the basics of literary studies, especially literary theory; they are also encouraged to test and



apply their skills in analysing and interpreting literature on four Finnish prose texts which they read in Czech translation during the course. On the second level (which consists of five successive courses taught in four terms during the second and the third year of the BA Programme), the history of Finnish literature is taught within its socio-cultural context. The first of these courses is dedicated to the Finnish oral tradition, mainly the epic folk poetry, and the origins of Finnish letters until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The second course deals with 19<sup>th</sup>-century Finnish literature. During the third year of the BA Programme, literary courses focus on the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of the courses is taught in a seminar form. In order to obtain a BA degree, students have to undergo a final exam during which they have to demonstrate their knowledge of the history of Finland's literature, and, in case they have chosen to do so, to write a BA Thesis of at least forty pages on a subject relating to Finnish language or literature.

Finnish literature is also an important part of the two-year Master's Degree Programme in Finnish Philology. The curriculum aims at deepening students' general knowledge of literary history and theory. The Finnish literature MA courses deal with selected periods in literary history, schools of literary theory, and the sociology of literature. In addition, one course is dedicated to *The Kalevala* (in cooperation with Prof. Jan Čermák, an expert in Medieval English and epic literature and a Finnish graduate) and one to contemporary Finnish literature. During the Literary Translation Seminar, students work on translations of Finnish literary texts into Czech. Students complete their Master's Degree Programme in Finnish Philology by taking a final exam, and, again, if they choose to do so, by writing an MA Thesis in a subject relating to Finnish language or literature.

The topics of BA and MA theses are particularly varied and not necessarily strictly confined to the sphere of literary studies; indeed, they can be interdisciplinary, e.g. by combining Finnish Studies/Finnish Philology with Translation Studies. Some theses deal with sociology of culture or concentrate on the cultural exchange between Finland and the Czech Lands (Finnish literature translated and published in Czech, Czech literature published in Finnish, Finnish drama in the Czech Lands). A considerable number of theses deal with the works of one chosen Finnish author (e.g. J. Aho, O. Paavolainen, A. Kivi), with a certain aspect of an author's work (e.g. religion and sexuality in the work of T. K. Mukka; social issues in the works of C. Kihlman; E. Lönnrot's role in the creation of *The Kalevala*; the image of Finland in the work of T. Jansson; M. Waltari's literary development from *Tulenkantajat* to *Sinuhe the Egyptian*) or analyse a certain topic in the work of two or more authors from a comparative perspective (e.g. the concept of ecstasy in the work of E. Södergran and K. Vala; the depiction of war in the work of P. Haanpää and V. Linna). Comparative works often focus on gender aspects (e.g. the figure of Don Juan in Finnish literature). Various topics dealing with Finnish folk poetry (poems associated with the cult of the bear, spells) have always been popular among students, as has the Sámi tradition

and the images of Lapland in Finland's literature. Literature for children and young adults has also been tackled (in a thesis on Finnish fairy-tales or another on Finnish literature for girls). One can also find broader topics and mapping of literary genres (Sámi poetry, modern Finnish drama, the genres of diary and letter in Finnish literature), often dealing with modern or contemporary literature and/or with popular culture (Finnish underground, Finnish Weird) and analyses of literary motifs (the swan motif in Finnish literature). Some works have an 'interliterary' comparative character, such as one dealing with the figure of Kullervo as a source of inspiration for J. R. R. Tolkien.

Until 2006 it was possible to study Finnish literature at PhD level too. The re-introducing of this possibility is currently under discussion.

As indicated above, at the Department of Finnish Studies at Charles University literary texts have always played an important role in the teaching both of Finnish literature and language. Since 2000 BA students have begun their acquaintance with the Finnish language through a textbook written by Hilkkka Lindroos (2002) called *Finnish (Not Only) for the Self-Learners*. The textbook comprises many poems, short stories and even some essays. In this way, from the very beginning, students also become familiar with literary texts in Finnish from the linguistic point of view. This teaching strategy was tested for a couple of decades before the publishing of the textbook and proved to be very successful.

In the 1990s the Department established a wide network of relations with literary scholars from Finland, who have given lectures and taught courses facilitated through the Erasmus or CIMO programmes. Sometimes, they would combine lecturing in Prague with teaching in Brno and/or Bratislava. Thanks to the high level of the students' language proficiency, literature courses by visiting teachers from Finland can be held in Finnish, using material in the original language.

#### 4. Academic Research

The teachers at the department participate in larger scholarly projects and produce research within their own specialisations. Together with the department of Scandinavian Studies, they have worked on several larger projects such as *Dictionary of Nordic Writers* (Hartlová et al., 1998; 2004) and the aforementioned *Modern Scandinavian Literatures 1870-2000*. One of the topics on which they cooperate, and on which they have published several studies and articles, is the reception of Finnish literature published in Czech. As editors, they have cooperated on publishing the annotated version of *The Kalevala*, prepared and edited by the aforementioned Jan Čermák (*Elias Lönnrot and Josef Holeček's Kalevala in Modern Critical Perspective*; Čermák 2014). This edition also inspired two conferences on *The Kalevala* and the Finnish oral tradition held at Charles University in 2013 and 2015.

As a specialist in Finland-Swedish literature, Jan Dlask's PhD thesis dealt with the Tikkanen–Kihlman debate in the mid-1970s (*The Tikkanen–Kihlman Debate. Prelude. Works - Reception - Polemics*; cf. Dlask 2012). He

is currently working on a project examining the sociologically oriented history of Finland-Swedish literature (cf. Dlask 2012), which is supported by a grant from the Czech Science Foundation. The aim of the project is to write a history of Finland-Swedish literature in Czech, beginning in 1900, using the perspective of Bourdieusian methodology (e.g. the notion of the literary field, etc.).

Apart from literary history and the theory of literary history (the Habilitation Thesis at Charles University mentioned above), Viola Parente-Čapková's research interests have focused mainly on *fin-de-siècle* Finnish literature in a comparative perspective, L. Onerva and other decadent women authors (cf. esp. her PhD Theses at the University of Turku, Parente-Čapková 2014), gender studies, relationships between oral and written tradition, studies of (trans)nationalism and otherness. In 2013–2016, she worked in a HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area) funded transnational literary history project *Travelling Texts 1790-1914. Transnational Reception of Women's Writing at the Fringes of Europe (Finland, The Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Spain)*, which belonged also to the field of digital humanities.

Michal Švec, who graduated with honours with a MA Thesis on the motif of the swan in Finnish poetry (cf. Švec 2012), has taught a literary course at BA level. He is currently enrolled in the PhD Programme in Comparative Literature, which is, at present, one of the options offered to post-graduate students interested in doctoral studies in Finnish literature.

The research output of the literature teachers has been published on various forums and in various languages – in academic journals in the Czech Republic, Finland and the Nordic countries and elsewhere – in Czech, English, Finnish, Swedish and other languages, such as German or Italian. Authors often face the familiar dilemma of which language to publish their research in. Clearly, the pressure to publish in English, 'the main language of international scholarly communication', is growing all the time, but the task of researchers is also to communicate with both the academic and broader public in the country of her or his *alma mater* and to strengthen scholarly publishing in the local language (in this case, Czech). However, since the broadest academic audience for the study of Finnish literature is, clearly, in Finland, publications in Finnish and Swedish are of major importance.

The research networks of Jan Dlask and Viola Parente-Čapková comprise, naturally, networks within the Nordic countries as well as various other European countries including the Czech Republic, and countries outside Europe. Cooperation within Charles University has also been continuous and intense. In addition to colleagues from the Department of Scandinavian Studies and the Department of Anglophone Languages and Literatures, both researchers have collaborated, in terms of lecture series, publications and research projects, with colleagues from the Institute of Czech and Comparative Literature, the Institute of Translation Studies and many others.

Apart from their scholarly work, teachers of Finnish literature and language (Finnish language and linguistics is the specialist field of Lenka Fárová) disseminate knowledge of Finnish literature in various ways: they write reviews of works of Finland's literature translated into Czech, interview Finnish authors visiting the Czech Republic, prepare radio programmes on Finnish literature, take part in the organisation of various cultural events, such as literary evenings, festivals and round tables at book fairs. During the last decade, many of these events have taken place in collaboration with the Scandinavian House, a voluntary-based non-profit organisation established in 2005 which aims at presenting the culture and traditions of the Nordic countries in the Czech Republic. Michal Švec is the current Chairperson of the Scandinavian House.

### **5. Translating as an important output**

Translation is not only a part of the curriculum in the form of language courses or translation seminars; it connects the department with the larger literary field in the Czech Republic. All teachers and scholars of the department also have experience with translating Finnish literary and scholarly texts (from Johanna Sinisalo's *Not Before Sundown* to *History of Finland* by Eino Jutikkala and Kauko Pirinen) and anthologies of poetry (*My Face in Language. Anthology of Contemporary Finnish Poetry*; Parente-Čapková 1998). Their example opens the door for students; nowadays, almost all translators of literary works from Finnish into Czech are graduates from the department.

The Literary Translation Seminar connects the teaching of Finnish language and literature: the seminar is conceived as a workshop in which Finnish literary texts are analysed and interpreted both from a linguistic and literary point of view, taking into consideration the cultural context of the texts. Thorough analysis is the first step when working with literary texts. The next phase is creating the Czech version, discussing it in the group and polishing the translation.

The same strategy has been implemented in the case of one of the major literary activities of the department, i.e. three projects of anthologies of short stories, translated by MA students. Anthologies of literary texts from the Nordic literatures (*Yearbook of Nordic Literatures*, *Almanach severských literatur*, see Čapková et al. 1997; Fárová et al. 2000) were joint projects with the Department of Scandinavian Studies. They contained short texts translated by students and edited by their teachers, both linguists and literary scholars, and with the help of the foreign lecturers, who assisted the students mainly during the first phase of the project. The first *Yearbook* was a pilot project, consisting of short stories, poems and aphorisms translated from Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish and Sámi, while the second volume had a sharper focus: it presented Nordic women's writing in the form of short stories. The last translation project – an anthology of seven Finnish fantastic short stories (with the title *Forest Foxes and Other Disturbing Stories*, *Lesní lišky a další*

*znepokojivé příběhy*, see Fárová et al. 2016) – was published in spring 2016 by the publishing house Pistorius & Olšanská in their *Scholares Series*. The format remained the same: short stories by L. Krohn, J. Sinisalo, M. Verronen, J. Vainonen, T. Raevaara, P. I. Jääskeläinen and A. Leinonen were translated by MA students of Finnish Philology within the Translation Seminar. Again, linguistic assistance was initially provided by the Finnish lecturer Timo Laine, while the translation proper took place under the guidance of three teachers (Jan Dlask, Lenka Fárová, Viola Parente-Čapková) who also edited the publication and wrote an Afterword on Finnish fantasy and sci-fi literature. In May 2016, the book was presented at the Prague book fair (Book World Prague), where Nordic countries were the guest of honour.

## II. Masaryk University, Brno

MICHAL KOVÁŘ

### I. History and background

The history of Finnish literature at Masaryk University in Brno goes back to the 1960s, when Richard Pražák (1931–2010), the late professor of Hungarology, studied in Finland (1963–64). Even though his area of interest was mainly the history of cultural contacts in Central Europe and Hungarian literature, he occasionally held courses on Finnish, containing a brief introduction to the history of Finnish literature. As is the case with other Czech scholars, including the historian Miroslav Hroch and the literary scholar Vladimír Macura, we can assume that his interest in the period of the Enlightenment and the era of the National Awakening in Central and Northern Europe was partly motivated by the political role of national epics, namely of the Czech so-called *Manuscripts*, the Finnish *Kalevala* and the Estonian *Kalevipoeg*. Pražák wrote some articles about the history of Finnish–Czech relations, and he oversaw his student Pavel Mrkvánek's work on the Czech reception of *The Kalevala*, which led to Mrkvánek's thesis *The Czech Reception of Finnish Literature with Special Attention to The Kalevala: A Contribution to Czech-Finnish Cultural Contacts till 1914* (Mrkvánek 1969) with its central contrastive part focused on Czech and German translations of *The Kalevala*.

In 2002, a new field of study was founded at Masaryk University: Baltic Studies, with two branches, Lithuanian and Finnish. Given that the new field of study is based in Indo-European comparative linguistics, enriched with lingual areal convergences examined primarily from their social and cultural circumstances, the extent of Finnish literature teaching has been relatively small compared to that of e.g. the political history of Finland. Besides, students are expected to acquaint themselves with the history of Swedish, Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian literatures too. A one-semester course in the history of Finland's literature was

introduced in 2004 (in 2003, the first Finnish courses were opened as a new field of study), and since then it has been running every second year. The course, initially held by Markéta Hejkalová, daughter of Richard Pražák and one of the major Czech translators and publishers of Finnish literature, aims to explain the history of Finnish literature in terms of literary representations of the political and social changes in Finland. This course has been accompanied by a course comprising the individual reading of Finnish fiction in translation.

## 2. Current situation

Since 2010, both courses have been held by Michal Kovář, an alumnus of Prague Finnish Philology. His main areas of interest are Sámi literature and Finnish literature outside Finland. He is also a translator, having translated works by Bengt Pohjanen and Nils-Aslak Valkeapää as well as Sámi oral literature (tales and proverbs) to name but a few. Kovář enriched the basic orientation of the course with trans-border and transethnic views, using a broader referential frame of Scandinavian literature, Sámi literature (not limited to Finland's Sámi authors), and Finnish or "Finnish" literature abroad (e.g. that written in Kven, Meänkieli, Carelian). Finland-Swedish literature has occasionally been presented by Jan Dlask from Charles University, Prague. The relevant perspective of language standardisation with the help of fiction, along with a list of normative translations (translations of works belonging to the world literary canon) and mentions of literary life and basic institutions has also been used in the case of Finnish in Kovář's course Fenno-Ugric languages in historical and cultural context.

A one-semester course in contemporary Finnish and Estonian literature has been created for the Master's Degree students of the Baltic Studies programme. The objective of the course is the examination of two kindred traditions planted in different political and cultural situations and searching for analogies (e.g. North Finnish and South Estonian literary peripheries). Two lecturers from Estonia (Linda Püssa and Anni Tammemägi) have taken part in the course too.

The final opportunity for MA students to become acquainted with Finnish literary life in Brno has been a course in textual interpretation and a translation course focusing on Finnish fiction (held by Markéta Hejkalová). In the first case, the content of the course has been determined by the main interests of Michal Kovář (ancient literature, oral literature) and by the topics of students' theses, which have mostly dealt with literary imagology. However, there have been many sophisticated MA theses on subjects including the development of particular motives or particular subgenres in Finnish literatures. The translation course has served not only as an intense contact with foreign textuality, but has also led to tangible results as collective publications. Some of the alumni have continued translating. Notable among them is Alžběta Štollová, who is nowadays a renowned specialist in Finnish dramatic art and its translator into Czech.



### III. Conclusion

Though the departments in Prague and Brno have different profiles, the literature teachers and researchers from both departments share an intense interest in literary history, the theory of literary history as well as approaching literary history from the point of view of transnationalism, comparative and interliterary perspectives, postcolonial studies and various conceptualisations of otherness. At present, they are planning a history of Finland's literature written as a joint project and focusing on these themes.

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MIKA HALLILA

## Work and Future Promises

### Teaching and Researching Finnish Literature in Poland

In Poland there is a long tradition of studies in Finnish language and culture. This tradition is in the process of renewing itself and is improving all the time. It is worth noting that at present this very tradition contains the strengthening trend of research into Finnish literature. A new generation of researchers has appeared, and their recent work in progress will contribute to future debates in the field of Finnish literary studies.

Finnish studies is a popular subject at Polish universities. The number of applicants to departments of Finnish language and culture is relatively high compared to many other departments of foreign languages studied at universities throughout the country. The popularity of Finnish studies is not only explained by the increase in interest in research (despite the fact that for the writer and readers of this essay research is the most important aspect of all); there is much vibrant business-life interaction between Poland and Finland, and economic collaboration is flourishing. Those young people in Poland interested in Finnish and Finland assume that there is demand in the work market for Finnish-language skills. Fortunately at present there are many reasonable opportunities to study Finnish at university level in Poland, too.

Finnish language and culture is available as an academic subject at three Polish Universities: Warsaw, Poznań, and Gdańsk. The latest addition to the group is the University of Gdańsk, where Finnish language teaching began in the autumn of 2015. The opportunities for success and productivity in the business sphere that such teaching provides are immense. Initially, at least, the Finnish department at the University of Gdańsk must necessarily place great emphasis on practical language skills, though it is of course possible that more research will be conducted here in the near future.

The University of Warsaw and the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań represent dustier humanism in terms of Finnish studies: both are traditional seats of learning. In addition to those many students who have graduated in recent years with either a Bachelor's or a Master's degree, both Warsaw and Poznań will have new doctorates in the near future, most of them researching Finnish *literature* in their dissertation.

In Poland the teaching of foreign languages and literatures at university-level has traditionally come under the purview of philology. The position of Finnish philology ("fennystyka") in university departments depends either on stressing linguistic affinity and the connection to linguistics (as it does, for instance, at the Department of Hungarology in Warsaw and the Department of General Linguistics in Poznań) or geographical position and cultural characteristics (as at the Department of Scandinavian Studies in Gdańsk). Particularly, as with

the 'Gdańsk model', it is typical in Poland to identify Finland and Finnish with the Scandinavian countries, cultures and languages. For instance, one explanation as to why Finnish studies is so popular at the University of Warsaw might be the fact that there is no Scandinavian studies at all in repertoire of these universities, the logic being that those applicants interested in the cultures and languages of Sweden, Norway, Denmark or Iceland would, as a result of lack of opportunity to study these subjects, choose Finnish studies instead.

Linguistics has established a powerful position in foreign-language philology, and the same holds true with Finnish philology. In terms of language learning, such a position is certainly reasonable. Linguistic knowledge is very helpful when learning a new language, although the basics of strong language skills are grounded in practical language teaching. In the Polish educational system this is evidenced by the large number of contact teaching hours per week, with similarities to school teaching.

In order to write an MA thesis or, particularly, a doctoral thesis in Finnish literature, it is essential that students have excellent Finnish language skills. This is the current state of affairs in Warsaw: during the time in which I have worked here as visiting professor of Finnish literature and culture, it has been a great honour for me to supervise such well-educated graduate and post-graduate students. Being unable to have their thesis supervision in Polish, students have to write their theses either in Finnish or English, which will be the case with some doctoral dissertations. To my mind this is a good thing since, instead of using their mother tongue, students have to use either the language they are studying or the international language of science. It is clear that, when using either Finnish or English, doctoral students will have more audience for their research works on topics in Finnish literature in the initial phase of their study.

All three universities currently have professors in Finnish studies. My post as a visiting professor of Finnish literature and culture in Warsaw will last until the autumn of 2018. Katarzyna Wojan is professor at the University of Gdańsk, and she specialises in the Finnish language. However, from the perspective of the study of Finnish literature in Poland the most considerable academic position is at Poznań, where Bolesław Mrozewicz serves as professor of Finnish literature. His career in teaching, supervising and researching has had great impact on the general activity of research into Finnish literature and culture in the Polish academic field. Furthermore, PhD Łukasz Sommer from the University of Warsaw, who specialises in Finnish cultural history, continues to make a strong contribution to cultural and literary studies within Finnish studies via teaching, supervising, and researching Finnish literature and culture. This is not to forget all those who translate Finnish literature into Polish. For instance, Łukasz Sommer is an active translator of Finnish poetry, and talented translators such as Sebastian Musielak from Poznań play a crucial role in increasing knowledge and awareness of Finnish literature in Poland.

Finnish studies at the Adam Mickiewicz University place emphasis on Finnish literature more than the courses at the universities of Warsaw and Gdańsk. In Poznań, students can write their theses on a topic related either to language or literature. The majority of students choose literature. In Warsaw, linguistics is a relatively popular selection among graduate students in choosing the topics of their MA theses. Moreover, our profile is such that in addition to language and literature it is possible to write theses on various different themes within the field of cultural studies. For instance, I also supervise some MA theses that do not focus on literature or the themes associated with literary studies.

Nevertheless, the postgraduate students whom I supervise happen to be among the most talented young *literary researchers*. The profile of the doctoral programme in Warsaw is thus very similar to that at Poznań; it stresses literary research. This is the reason why we in Warsaw and Poznań also feel so comfortable working with each other that we organise joint research seminars every semester. Moreover, the few doctoral students writing doctoral dissertations on Finnish linguistics often take part in these seminars and, in addition to bringing together researchers of literature and culture, this helps to strengthen the common identity of Finnish philology.

It can be said that Finland has been relatively well known in Poland in recent decades. Some research into Finnish literature has also been conducted, notably in Poznań. Since the 2000s one might even speak of something of a 'Finland boom'; one proof of this is *Czas Kultury* magazine's theme number 'Fiński Syndrom' (2008). The contributors to this supplement are scholars and other agents in Polish cultural life. The articles consider multiple themes around Finland and Finnishness, thus presenting the country and its culture to the reading audience in Poland. Among the list of contributors, one author in particular leads us to a doctoral dissertation in which a Polish researcher has recently published research on Finnish literature. The researcher in question is Katarzyna Szal and the work is her doctoral thesis from 2013: *Finnish Literature in Poland, Polish Literature in Finland – Comparative Reception Study from a Hermeneutic Perspective*.

Szal's research was conducted in Finland and at a Finnish university (at the University of Eastern Finland). At Polish universities we aim, nevertheless, to publish new doctoral theses on Finnish literature here in Poland. The first goal is to produce new research on contemporary Finnish detective novels and to publish it in Polish. This will be the doctoral thesis by Martyna Kokotkiewicz from the Adam Mickiewicz University. After this, a number of doctoral students under my supervision are due to publish: Ewelina Bator, Joanna Elantkowska-Białek, Magdalena Dryll, and Justyna Polanowska. Within a couple of years all of them shall publish their doctoral theses in the form of a research monograph. After that, written either in Finnish or English, will be new research on Finnish socialist poetry and its links with socialist realism, research into contemporary Finnish comic strip art, contemporary short stories of the 'new weird' genre in Finnish literature, and historical representations of the women active during the Finnish civil war.



The state of teaching and research on Finnish literature in Poland is good and holds much promise for the future. But before these promises can be fulfilled, the only promise that can be made is that there is still plenty of work to do.

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# REVIEWS

## ARVOSTELUT

CHRISTIAN BANK PEDERSEN

### A Decadent Ophelia

*Viola Parente-Čapková (2014): Decadent New Woman (Un)Bound: Mimetic Strategies in L. Onerva's Mirdja, Turku, University of Turku, 269 p.*

According to a note in Viola Parente-Čapková's *Decadent New Woman (Un)Bound*, L. Onerva – pen name of poet, critic and novelist Hilja Onerva Lehtinen (1882-1972) – belonged to the first generation of Finnish women able to access higher education without a prior special study permit, granting the female student “freedom from her sex”, “erivapaus sukupuolesta” (p. 111). So, if you will, L. Onerva and her rather few women colleagues entering university at the turn of the twentieth century constituted quite an original phenomenon, liberated from the obligation to be ‘freed’ from their sex as they were. But if that was really a (new) beginning, how were these women supposed to get started? Until then, not being a man was something you had to be dispensed from. Logically, what followed was thus an odd liberation from a pure negativity. If you need to be freed from your sex to educate yourself – and thereby fulfil what you already are –, then who, or what, are you really? A liberated non-entity. If you do no longer need to be liberated from what you are to become yourself, then what does that make you? Same as above, basically. In any case, you are ‘liberated’ from what society considers your own deficiency, your own shortfall. You are liberated from being a woman. Obviously, the question of finding a model to follow – and to leave behind, eventually – becomes crucial.

In her study of the early work of L. Onerva, a modernist writer having long stood in the shadow of her male contemporaries, Parente-Čapková emphasises the importance of the mimetic strategies by means of which the author creates, or constructs, female subjectivity in the context of *fin-de-siècle* decadence: which version of the New Woman comes to light in L. Onerva's writings from the beginning of the twentieth century, first and foremost her debut novel *Mirdja*, published in 1908? Originally invented by the Irish writer Sarah Grand

(1854-1943), the term “New Woman” represents in Parente-Čapková’s book “a discursive construction” eminently related to the “concerns of middle class women” (p. 8). Specifically, she uses the term to “point to the various means by which *fin-de-siècle* thinkers and artists/writers created a conception of female subjectivity that differed from previous conceptions” (p. 8). Guided by Ebba Witt-Brattström, Parente-Čapková refines this definition by characterizing the New Woman as a “figure negotiating the divide between nineteenth century discourses on sexuality and the contemporary women’s movement(s)” (p. 8). The divide in question seems a difficult one to negotiate.

The conception of mimesis elaborated by Luce Irigaray plays a very important part in the theoretical framework presented by Parente-Čapková: Given the absence, pointed out by Irigaray, of “a maternal genealogy in Western thought” (p. 181), which “image of woman” could possibly be transmitted from mother to daughter? None, really, at least not “a culturally accessible and respected” one (p. 181; Parente-Čapková refers to the work of Margaret Whitford). This is where the Irigarayan notion of mimesis comes into play: In Western thought, truth is One and truth is Male, the masculine reproducing its own representational patterns in a trans-historical order that leaves no room for the female. Woman is but the ‘other’ of the one and eternally undivided ‘same’, the masculine in the truth of its own reflection. A new mirror is needed.

According to Parente-Čapková, Luce Irigaray conceives mimesis “as a strategy of ‘playful repetition’, that is, ‘playing with mimesis’, serves to identify the role of femininity without allowing oneself to be simply reduced to it, requiring distance” (p. 24). Through this distance, irony and parody come forth as useful strategies of *defamiliarization* vis-à-vis the reflected image that is not one’s ‘own’. Following the ‘Platonic’ division at the heart of Irigaray’s notion of mimesis – as well as the developments proposed by Naomi Schor and Hillary Robinson – Parente-Čapková considers the “productive” and the “non-productive” mimesis at work in L. Onerva’s *Mirdja*, a novel that, according to the concluding remarks of *Decadent New Woman (Un)Bound*, must be read as “a *picara* novel and a decadent *picara* novel” (p. 223; see also p. 24 and p. 219), subverting, and ‘playing with’, the traditions of the *Bildungs-* and *Künstlerroman* of the nineteenth century.

Productive mimesis is intimately associated with a Nietzschean sphere of aesthetic play, deconstruction and reconstruction, while non-productive mimesis stays put within the orderly lines of verisimilitude and thereby confirms the hold of the existing male order, and the models for identification it has to ‘offer’. With these theoretical tools at her disposal, Parente-Čapková enters the decadent universe of *Mirdja* to investigate not only how L. Onerva depicted, or created, “woman’s (artistic) subjectivity in her early work”, but also how various aspects of mimesis related to her conception of “women’s emancipation” more generally considered (p. 17).

In her convincingly argued and well-structured study, Parente-Čapková therefore analyses closely the existential and artistic wanderings of *Mirdja*, the main character of L. Onerva’s eponymous novel. Firmly

placing the work in the context of decadence – with its abolition of the distinction between art and life *and* its primacy given to art in relation to reality –, the author offers a thorough reading of a multifaceted mimesis, reflecting both the representational choices made by L. Onerva in the writing of *Mirdja* and the mimetic options available to Mirdja as a character representative of a generation of women torn between “outer bindings” and “inner inhibitions” (p. 18). Through main chapters covering mimesis as “identification” – identification mainly with (dilettantish) male role models who offer education by means of seductive artistic games –, and analysing with great care the theme of love and its imitative aspects as well as the (im)possible search for an origin in the figure of the ‘Mother’, Parente-Čapková presents an interesting perspective on *Mirdja* as a woman’s *Künstlerroman* relating the story of a heroine who never quite finds an ‘art’ of her own, be it an art of living, creating, or loving. It should be added that in her very detailed reading of L. Onerva’s work Parente-Čapková never lets the socio-historical context out of sight, staying loyal all the way, one could say, to the author’s own conviction of the inseparability of aesthetics and politics: from Paul Bourget and Oscar Wilde to the rather conservative Lutheran elements within the Finnish women’s movement, a wide variety of formal and thematic aspects of the Nordic and European *fin-de-siècle* is put into play, shedding new light on the ways in which L. Onerva regarded, and transformed, questions of gender identity, sexual difference and artistic desire, among others.

That being said, the theoretical framework put into place by Parente-Čapková suffers from some minor lapses. From time to time, for instance, the references seem to be rather distanced from the original source. Let’s take the example of Nietzsche, whose conception of (self)creation is of utmost importance to L. Onerva and, therefore, to the author of *Decadent New Woman (Un)Bound*. Discussing Nietzsche’s somewhat complex presence in the cultural sphere of the *fin-de-siècle*, Parente-Čapková states:

Women writers’ creative appropriation of Nietzsche’s ideas (cf. Diethel 1996; Heczková 2003; Parente-Čapková 2004; Witt-Brattström 2007, etc.), was often, though not necessarily, intertwined with decadence. Nietzsche’s uses of “woman” are multiple and contradictory, referring at once to embodied women, female mythic figures and metaphors (cf. e.g. Pulkkinen 2002, 383). Nietzsche’s ideas about women, femininity and gender, at once provocative and stimulating (cf. Heczková 2003), are of important intertextual relevance to L. Onerva’s *Mirdja*, as well as Nietzsche’s complex stance on decadence. (pp. 16-17)

That may very well be a sound consideration of Nietzsche’s “uses of ‘woman’” and of his “ideas about women”. The ideas in question were certainly far from simple. But wouldn’t it have been appropriate to actually *quote* some of those ideas here? Which Nietzsche, *whose* Nietzsche, are we really talking about? The same argument could be made concerning the treatment given to Jacques Lacan a little further on in Parente-Čapková’s book, when the French psychoanalyst’s conception of the Mirror Stage is being discussed without a single quote from the

author himself (pp. 50-51). From a very different angle, I have difficulty understanding the absence of any mention of the work of Judith Butler in a dissertation that seeks to consider “the instability of the meanings given to gender and sexual identity” (p. 221).

However, these remarks should not deflect attention from the fact that Parente-Čapková has written a thoughtful interpretation of a work that is still, regrettably, fairly unknown outside of Finland. She writes with comprehensive historical knowledge and theoretical care – the abovementioned objections set aside – and positions herself clearly in relation to her feminist predecessors of the eighties and nineties (Päivi Lappalainen, Lea Rojola and Pirjo Lyytikäinen, among others). Most impressively, her dedication to the specificities of L. Onerva’s writing never seems to falter. In fact, the attention to detail remains decisive right up until the reading of Mirdja’s bitter end, i.e. the heroine’s death by drowning in the marshes – as an Ophelia of the bogs – in search for the child she never had. This death scene is, I take it, as far from any ideal as from any ultimately distancing irony. It is, after all, always a question of “real woman”, as Parente-Čapková rightly points out at the very beginning of her book.

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JUDITH MEURER-BONGARDT

## Bertel Gripenberg – A Modern Writer

*Anna Möller-Sibeliu: Roll, retorik och modernitet i Bertel Gripenbergs lyrik. Skrifter utgivna av Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland 791, SLS 2015. 352 s.*

During his lifetime Bertel Gripenberg (1878-1947) was a very popular Finland Swedish author, who was even a strong candidate for the Nobel Prize. Today he is often seen as a pioneer representative of the traditionalists, a movement known for its opposition against the new modernist generation with poets like Edith Södergran. Gripenberg is not only presented as being a conservative with respect to form and content in poetry, but as a glorifier of war who publicly displayed a fascist attitude. Revealing some parallels to the Norwegian author Knut

Hamsun, Gripenberg's case can be considered a classic example of the rise and fall of a national writer. Unlike Hamsun's case, however, also the evaluations of Gripenberg's poetry have changed during the last decades.

This change of attitude in literary criticism is illustrated in Anna Möller Sibelius' introduction to her lately published book *Roll, retorik och modernitet in Bertel Gripenbergs lyrik* ("Role, Rhetoric and Modernity in Bertel Gripenbergs poetry"). With her reading of Gripenberg's lyrics, Möller Sibelius aims not only to gain deeper insights into Gripenberg's time but also into the processes of composing literary history. Gripenberg is a useful example for examining those processes because his works have been valued very differently in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century compared to the time after the Second World War or compared to the last twenty years. Möller Sibelius chooses to present three different contexts when examining the Finland-Swedish, the Finnish and the Swedish literary historiography. This comparative perspective makes it possible to stress how aspects as class, politics and different national historical situations have an impact on critics' and literary scholars' judgements on a writer's quality. It is not Möller Sibelius' intention, as she stresses right from the start, to restore Gripenberg's reputation or to attract new readers. However, she argues that there is a certain value in Gripenberg's works because of his former popularity: His texts open up perspectives on people's reactions and attitudes towards the different tendencies of modernity. She refers, for instance, to how fear for the unknown led to the rise of nationalism – a development that can also be observed today.

Möller Sibelius presents a reliable piece of literary study with new readings of an author who is part of national literary canons both in Sweden and Finland. However, his books are rarely read today, which helps to perpetuate the static and one-dimensional picture of Gripenberg as a traditionalist with a dubious political attitude. Möller Sibelius analyses the critical reactions on Gripenberg but reads his texts also in relation to their historical context by using three keywords: "role", "rhetoric" and "modernity". She points out that the terms "role" and "rhetoric" are used as a "choice of perspective, as a focus on Gripenberg's way to communicate and address his readers" (s. 15) which sounds a little vague, but is working quiet well in the analyses and leads to interesting results. Especially with regard to the term "modernity", Möller Sibelius' findings reveal that the gap between modernists and traditionalists is much smaller than often described – an interesting fact that has also been demonstrated in other studies on for example Södergran (Lillqvist 2001) or Hagar Olsson (Meurer-Bongardt 2011). However, as far as I can see, Möller Sibelius is the first in the field of Finland-Swedish literature who has delivered a deeper survey on this subject with a traditionalist as the main object of examination. For this purpose, Gripenberg is the natural choice due to his popularity, his fights with the new modernist generation in the daily press and his anthology *Den hemliga glöden* ("The Secret Embers") (1925) published under the pseudonym Åke Erikson. This collection is a parody of modernist poetry, which was, to Gripenberg's great delight, taken seriously by modernist critics.



After her analyses of the Gripenberg-reception Möller Sibelius presents Gripenberg's oeuvre focusing on their most important topics: childhood, erotic, man in nature, politicization under the Civil War, ambiguity under the post-war period, the pseudonym Åke Erikson and death (death of culture/ culture of death). Thanks to the large material, Möller Sibelius manages to show the variety and the development of Gripenberg's work. He can be described as a typical representative of the Nordic fin-de-siècle especially when it comes to his poems on women and erotic. Later, however, he turned into a propagandist who uses literature to reach political aims, but then again he can be read as modern author who is struggling with his time in a way which is not so far away from the so called "new generation".

Möller Sibelius shows that, although Gripenberg's aims and motivation differ considerably from his younger colleagues, especially his motifs and topics often display an uncanny resemblance: the loss of childhood, urbanity vs. countryside, war, death, apocalypse, the new woman, nature vs. culture, manhood etc. According to Möller Sibelius, the reason behind Gripenberg's choice of topics and motifs must be seen in the author's ambition to write for a large audience, which also affected his style. In this context, the keywords "role" and "rhetoric" play an important role. Möller Sibelius demonstrates that most of Gripenberg's texts follow an appellative structure and are designed to aim at a dialogue with the readers – maybe one of the reasons behind Gripenberg's popularity.

But Möller Sibelius goes even further. She argues that Gripenberg's style of writing makes him in a certain way more modern than the modernists. He can be described as a writer of popular literature who even incorporates advertising strategies into his works. Although Gripenberg was well aware of class differences (he perceived himself as a representative of a nobility in decline) and politically exhibited an anti-democratic attitude, Möller Sibelius reveals his rhetoric approach of addressing all kind of readers as being genuinely "democratic". Moreover, the exclusiveness of some new forms of modern writing, e.g. Dada, raised Gripenberg's criticism. As Möller Sibelius shows with her comparative analysis, the poems in *Den hemliga glöden* were modern according to their topics but more traditional in their use of motifs and form (even though they were free verse poems) compared to for example Södergran's, Björling's or Diktonius' lyrics. Möller Sibelius concludes that it is not only possible to detect Gripenberg in Erikson's texts but that – funny enough – the parody of modernist aesthetics was a door-opener for a bigger readership to modern poetry. On the other hand, Möller Sibelius' analysis of for example the poem "Jazzprincessan" ("The Jazz princess") implies that Gripenberg might not fully have understood modernist aesthetics.

Möller Sibelius shows how Gripenberg tried to keep an ironical distance to his own profession as a writer, which bears resemblance to the kind of attitude characteristic for Knut Hamsun. Should the reader trust the author or not? This question should also be kept in mind, Möller Sibelius stresses, when reading Gripenberg's war lyrics. Gripenberg was

often described as an authentic writer, but Möller Sibelius is able to evidence that he played a role and designed his texts in a way that made them most appealing to the readers. She points out that Gripenberg perceived literature as a mere pleasure. And Möller Sibelius is right when she concludes that this point of view is much more in alignment with the modern consumer society than with the exclusiveness of modernist aesthetics. Möller Sibelius points out that Gripenberg took his parody much more serious than he was willing to admit. Apart from some shorter studies on the subject, up to now there has been no systematic analysis on the impact of modernity on the lyrical works of Gripenberg. With her new book, Möller Sibelius has filled this gap. She is not only able to show that *Den hemliga glöden* could be described as a typical work of Gripenberg according to its motifs, rhetoric and themes but also that modernity has had a deep influence on Gripenberg's "traditional" works.

Möller Sibelius draws a variety of interesting comparisons. References to several Nordic and European writers, philosophers and other intellectuals are made to show how Gripenberg was influenced by his time. Nevertheless, I would have liked her to take an even deeper critical look into modernity and modernism and to draw more comparisons between Gripenberg's poems and the texts of "the new generation". Sometimes Möller Sibelius displays a tendency to generalize when relating to the historical background of Gripenberg's works. In referring to a sombre perspective of future at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century associated with evening, end of times and fall (s. 131) she is perpetuating a male upper-class view. Women or working-class members would have described this period of time more positively.

However, overall Möller Sibelius' reading of Gripenberg is very inspiring. She manages to establish a view of Gripenberg as a typical representative of his time who turns out to be more ambiguous than earlier studies suggest. His poetry opens a door to a time that in several ways is not so different from ours. The upcoming modern society gave rise to similar feelings, observations and conclusions as globalization does today. This is why a new reading of an author like Gripenberg also might provide promising new insights for our understanding of the present time.

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MARI HATAVARA

## Modernist Minds in Marja-Liisa Vartio's Prose

*Elise Nykänen: Worlds Within and Without. Presenting Fictional Minds in Marja-Liisa Vartio's Narrative Prose. Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 2014. 318 s.*

Elise Nykänen's doctoral dissertation *Worlds Within and Without. Presenting Fictional Minds in Marja-Liisa Vartio's Narrative Prose* is a rare example of genuinely diachronic narratology with a clear literary historical target. Diachronic narratology often uses singular cases from a broad range of periods and cultural contexts, which results in a series of readings linked together only by some single phenomenon under scrutiny. Nykänen's concentration on Vartio's prose fiction enables her to reach a much more in-depth analysis of the material and of the period. Together with skillfully constructed and elaborated critical context, Nykänen is able to re-evaluate the nature of Finnish modernism both as an aesthetic and a stylistic phenomenon, at the same time contributing to the theoretical discussion on fictional minds.

The dissertation consists of a rather short introduction, followed by a chapter with heavy theoretical emphases and five chapters each analyzing one novel by Vartio. The research questions are formulated in the first two pages introducing three areas of study: Vartio's prose, modernist fiction, and the study of fictional minds. The third one is first formulated rather modestly to offer "an interesting point of departure" (p. 2), but is clarified and given more emphases on page 6, where previous Vartio study is reviewed: "These readings demonstrate how Vartio's narrative art offers a an intriguing playground for testing the formulations of (cognitive) narrative theory." All three goals – the nature of Vartio's prose fiction, the formal and thematic conventions of modernism, and testing narrative theory – are very worthy of pursuing, and Nykänen manages to gain results in all these areas.

The theoretical framework laid out in chapter 2 is mainly derived from studies on fictional minds, possible worlds theory, and narrative causality and plot theory. Chapter two is through and through well-informed and learned in its discussion of these areas of study. It is clear Nykänen knows and is able to evaluate and modify the theories, and to use them for the benefit of her study. The first area mentioned, fictional minds, gains most attention. Not only does Nykänen go through the classical theories, most importantly the ground breaking work of Dorrit Cohn, and demonstrate her command on the newer ideas introduced by Monika Fludernik, Alan Palmer, David Herman and Lisa Zunshine; additionally, she employs ideas from cognitive sciences by Antonio Damasio, Colin McGinn, and Joseph LeDoux.

Nykänen's research is original in putting together cognitively inspired narratology vis-à-vis the distinctiveness of an author's oeuvre. Nykänen manages to skillfully relate and discuss both current trends

and seminal traditions in the study of fictional minds. The application of newer theories on mind-reading, intermentality etc. clearly benefit from not abandoning the older models of consciousness representation or, for example, focalization. The combination in many places results into illuminating analysis of Vartio's novels. The use of cognitive and psychological models, on the other hand, raises the question of the possible distinctiveness of fictional minds when compared to real ones. The debate has gone on for long, and it is formulated quite clearly in David Herman's introduction to his book *The Emergence of Mind*, also used in Nykänen's dissertation. As Nykänen argues, literary fiction has been regarded as a laboratory for human cognition, a testing ground where the abilities and limits of the human mind are tried out and transgressed. The topical debate on the possible distinction of fictional mind representation is addressed in Nykänen's dissertation, but she does not take a definite stand herself.

For me, the analytical practice of the book seems at times somewhat too readily to move from stating a quality of the human mind outside of fiction into applying it to the minds represented in Vartio's prose. This happens especially in the analysis of *Hänen olivat linnut*. While this constitutes no real problem, it begs the question if it would also have been possible to emphasize more the very nature and distinctiveness of Vartio's fiction not just in relation to "the human mind" but in more detail to modernist aesthetics. The results of the chapter analyzing *Hänen olivat linnut* are, nevertheless, convincing, and Nykänen states, for example, that "[t]hese [textual] illusions reflect the prototypical activity of a human mind, and also, at the same time, the activity of fictional minds as purely artificial constructs." (p. 295). These are excellent results, clearly proven by the preceding pages of the dissertation, and testify to Nykänen's sound relation to the exceptionality debate.

The analytical chapters follow the order of the publication of the novels. This choice gives Nykänen the possibility to follow closely the development of narrative techniques in Vartio's prose. On the other hand, there is a slight imbalance between the theoretical framework outlined in the chapter two and the analytical practice exercised in the chapters to follow. This, I believe, originates from a possible discrepancy between the theoretical traditions used in the dissertation. It is generally understood that post-classical narratology's emphasis on experientiality and the embodied fictional minds is connected to a shift of focus away from features like sequentiality and temporal ordering in classical narratology. This move is most prevalent in the study of fictional minds, but also in the study of possible worlds, where the storyworlds are approached more as spaces and modalities than as series of happenings or events. Despite of post-classical emphasis in the theoretical chapter, the analytical part of Nykänen's dissertation builds heavily on the ideas of relating event sequences into causal, random or even counterfactual series. This discrepancy or tension between the theories used and the analytical practice is at least partially consolidated by the application of Hilary Dannenberg's research on counterfactuality, where time and

space are brought together. Moreover, Nykänen's analysis also makes use of theories and methods from the relevant generic traditions – most importantly female Bildungsroman –, and the study of motifs, plot structures, metaphors, and themes. This analysis connects Nykänen's dissertation very strongly to the core of literary studies, and provides a solid foundation for the dissertation.

With her approach, combining a rich theoretical frame and the analysis of an important author's oeuvre, Nykänen offers a significant contribution to the literary historical study of modernism by revisiting and revising the assumption that modernism included a move from the external world into the subjective consciousness as the center of attention. For this purpose, Nykänen introduces her model of the internal and external perspectives on fictional minds. The two perspectives allow her not only to thoroughly investigate the narrative techniques used in Marja-Liisa Vartio's novels but also to analyze how the characters in the novels negotiate between the private and the public, the individual and the collective, the conscious and the unconscious, and the rational and the emotional.

Nykänen's research is the first serious attempt to form a comprehensive overview of Marja-Liisa Vartio's prose fiction from a theoretically grounded perspective. This combination of theoretical, critical and historical aims is most recommendable, and a growing trend in the study of Finnish literature. Nykänen's dissertation will undoubtedly strengthen the status of Finnish literary tradition as a part of world literature due to its language (English) and its concentration on one of Finland's most notable modernists. Moreover, the dissertation contributes to the development of Finnish literature as a field considerably contributing to the development of literary theory and participating in comparative literature debates.

Marja-Liisa Vartio's novels and Nykänen's readings of them undisputedly revise and challenge the assumption of an inward turn in mind representation in modernist fiction. The readings also significantly illuminate and enrich the understanding of Vartio's relation to the modernist literary tradition and her contribution to the generic and stylistic evolution of literature in the 1950's and 60's. These are outstanding achievements in Nykänen's dissertation.

What comes to testing and developing narrative theories, the dissertation succeeds in a somewhat lesser degree. The effort is, however, worthwhile as an attempt to import new analytical methods into the study of modernism. And as stated before, Nykänen is successful in her readings of Vartio's prose, in the sense that the choice of theoretical framework does tease out new, insightful interpretations of Vartio's prose. What is more, I very much support Nykänen's practice of reading Vartio's prose in a bit more traditional literary studies sense than that advocated by cognitively inspired narrative theory. Discussing the motifs, themes, genres, plots and metaphors along with tracing the mental and intermental functionings of the characters results in a very sound and balanced analyses and interpretation of Vartio's prose.

The book's emphasis on the generic and literary tradition serves both theoretical, periodical and author-specific goals. Methodological choices that stem from the long tradition of literary analyses together with the newer insights, I am sure, ensure the results on Vartio, modernism and narratology offered in the book will prove more lasting than would have been the case had Nykänen fully immersed herself in cognitive narrative theory. The fact that Nykänen in practice has had to resort to analytical tools outside of her primary theoretical frame also testifies to the limits of cognitive narratology as a text analytical apparatus – and to Nykänen's ability to independent research, not confining herself to any one theoretical school but independently picking and choosing frameworks and methods. Elise Nykänen's dissertation is firmly grounded in her command of literary studies' tradition, and is recommended reading to literary scholars beyond just those interested in literary modernism or narratology.

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CORNELIUS HASSELBLATT

## Making History

*Novels, Histories, Novel Nations – Historical Fiction and Cultural Memory in Finland and Estonia. Edited by Liina Kaljundi, Eneken Laanes & Ilona Pikkanen. Finnish Literature Society, Helsinki 2015. 342 p.*

Given the polysemy of the – adjective or noun – “novel”, it is almost astonishing that no earlier accounts of such a book title have been found. In this sense it was about time to detect and reveal the interdependence between nation building and historical fiction and put it into a handsome title for a nice collection of a dozen of profound and competent articles on this topic. This is the first thing to praise the editors for. They have brought together Estonian and Finnish scholars in order to shed more light on the prominent position a certain literary genre can obtain, and indeed obtains, within the process of nation building. This topic is often neglected though very well-known. The oscillating reputation of the historical novel, or historical fiction in general, led to a situation where literary scholars did not take notice of the genre and historians regarded it as irrelevant anyway as they prefer ‘facts’ to fiction.



The second praise is for the exhaustive twofold introduction: one called preface (pp. 8-25) and providing a good theoretical framework which makes the reader familiar with the concept of 'invented traditions' and the interdisciplinary approach of cultural memory studies. The editors show convincingly why this approach is fruitful and even necessary. The second, labelled 'introduction' (pp. 26-76), makes the reader acquainted with the concrete situation in Estonia and Finland. Here, the authors point to the convergences, but also divergences between the two kindred nations with respect to their literary development in general and the emergence of the historical novel in particular. It is, by the way, refreshing to see Estonia freed from the so called 'Baltic context', where it is often forced into a context with Latvia and Lithuania which, especially the latter, have much less in common with Estonia than Finland. Now, the language-based approach (which never can be wrong when dealing with literature) reveals new perspectives with respective consequences: "The immediate result is an expansion of the archive of European literature, and the realisation that the frame of reference offered in previous studies is actually limited" – as Ann Rigney remarks in her postface (p. 323). But this is not all, as she continues: "... the view from this small corner of North-East Europe provides the basis for new theoretical perspectives on the role of the historical novel in nation building, both past and present".

Finally also the generally high quality of all the contributions has to be mentioned and positively stressed. The book contains eleven articles focusing on Finnish literature (Heidi Grönstrand, Mari Hatavara, Marita Hietasaari), Finnish history and literature combined (Ilona Pikkanen, Nina Sääskilähti), Estonian history and literature combined (Linda Kaljundi) and finally Estonian literature, which forms the largest subgroup (Tiina Ann Kirss, Eneken Laanes, Piret Peiker, Aare Pilv, Jaan Undusk). Most of them are written by experienced scholars, whilst some are still working on their PhD theses which, however, has nothing to say about the quality of their contributions. On the contrary, the essay by Aare Pilv on the 'Soviet' author Rudolf Sirge is an important, well written and fascinating treatment of this period and this author and one of the outstanding contributions of the volume. It is important, because the period and with it this author often are neglected in recent research. Another brilliant essay is Jaan Undusk's "Literature of Amnesia – On the Creative Function of the Loss of Memory" because it helps to understand the historical prose of Karl Ristikivi much better due to reference to Ristikivi's other (not historical) prose and comparisons to the Finnish writer Mika Waltari.

This good selection of competent authors is supported by ample bibliographies and a helpful in-depth index which refers to more than names only, but also historical events, ethnic and social groups as well as a selection of theoretical key concepts. The whole volume seems to be carefully edited and there are only some minor mistakes. Sometimes we find a wrong alphabetical order in the bibliographies, namely the Finnish one, where the English one would be expected. In English, ä and ö do not exist as separate letters with their own positions in the alphabet, but v and w are separate letters (!). Also the annotation system is unnecessarily

clumsy. It partly transforms the reading into a jumping between three places: the main text, the note at the end of the text and from there even further to the bibliography, which follows the notes.

There is, however, unfortunately one really annoying mistake in the introduction. It is annoying, because it is a crucial mistake which, in my view, even reveals a misunderstanding of Estonian literature. In the introduction (p. 51), the editors mention “Viivi Luik’s (b. 1946) *The Seventh Spring of Peace* (‘Seitsmes rahukevad’, 1985), published in the wake of Gorbachev’s policy of *glasnost*.” This is in dangerous vicinity of pseudohistory, or one could even use the much stronger German term *Geschichtsfälschung*. This is a severe accusation, certainly if uttered towards (partly) historians, but let me point out: ‘In the wake of’ means according to several dictionaries I consulted (just to be sure) ‘as a result of’ or ‘following’ or ‘succeeding’ or ‘in the aftermath of’ or ‘as a consequence of’, in other words: there is always a causal connection between the two events connected by the expression ‘in the wake of’. But in this case this simply is not true – if ‘truth’ is an appropriate concept in this discussion (!). Or let it put me so: this is not ‘my truth’, as I have a different personal experience:

Viivi Luik’s novel *The Seventh Spring of Peace* left the press in March 1985. I remember that because I received one of the very first copies on March 31 that year. I had met Viivi Luik several times and we also spoke about the novel, which had been delivered to the printing office in January that year. Even a post-post-Soviet child of the digitalized world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century can find out that a book published in print on March 31 must have been brought to the printing office, let alone been written, considerably earlier than March 11 – and this is the day when Gorbachev was elected. There simply is no connection whatsoever between the inauguration of Gorbachev and the publication of *The Seventh Spring of Peace*. I have pointed to this misinterpretation several times (Hasselblatt 2001, 421-422 [= Hasselblatt 2015, 259-260]; Hasselblatt 2006, 698-699). *The Seventh Spring of Peace* was written in the early eighties and was several years trapped in the Soviet printing bureaucracy, but it came out under completely normal Soviet censorship circumstances. But this obviously does not fit into the picture of contemporary history writing which still tends to be black-and-white (which might be still one of the main problems of post-Soviet historiography, by the way). Black until 1985, white from 1991, and a short transition period in between. It is this principal error which makes me so furious, because it reveals an attitude that denies the existence of good literature before the political change. As Linda Kaljundi made the same suggestion (i.e. that Gorbachev was a reason for the edition of *The Seventh Spring of Peace*) in an earlier article in 2009, I am afraid that this is not an accident, but a structural mistake.

This had to be said – though it in no way can distort the extraordinary importance and quality of the book.

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PETER STEIN LARSEN

## Studier i kvinnliga lyriker – med Kristeva som guide

*Tatjana Brandt: Livet mellan raderna. Revolt, tomrum och språkbrist i Agneta Enckells och Ann Jäderlunds tidiga poesi. Nordica Helsingensia 38. Helsingfors: Helsingfors universitet, 2014. 150 s.*

Om man bortser från Nordisk kvinnolitteraturhistoria (1993-98) råder det en brist på nordiska studier som tar sig an kvinnliga lyriker från olika nordiska länder och som ger ett helhetsperspektiv på ämnet. Tatjana Brandts artikelbaserade doktoravhandling om den svenska lyrikern Ann Jäderlund och den finlandssvenska lyrikern Agneta Enckell råder i hög grad bot på denna brist.

Huvudtesen i Tatjana Brandts artikelsamling är att den franska feminismens föreställning om en särskild kvinnlig motdiskurs, en *écriture féminine*, har haft betydande inflytande på en rad svenskspråkiga författarskap från 1980-talet framåt. Brandts artiklar undersöker de två författarnas, Jäderlunds och Enckells, poesi med Julia Kristeva som teoretisk ram. Kristevas kungstanke är att det existerar en unik emancipatorisk diskurs som bryter mot alla accepterade sociala diskurser, och mot den maskulina symboliska ordningen – samt att denna diskurs återspeglas i tidens kvinnliga poesi, detta trots att Kristeva

i hög grad använder manliga författare i sina analyser. Brandt menar att Kristevas teorier är "en intertext" i de diktsamlingar hon analyserar.

Syftet är att undersöka "poesins obegriplighet och [...] poesins förmåga att uttrycka hittills outtryckta (och eventuellt kvinnliga) erfarenheter" med utgångspunkt i Jäderlunds och Enckells poesi. Där 1970-talets explicit politiska lyrik angrep samhällets maktstrukturer och -institutioner, vänder sig 1980-talets lyrik inåt, mot den semiotiska ordningen, dvs. mot individens eget språk och mot identitetens relation till kulturen. Språkets relation till det osägbara och kvinnliga samt språkets emancipatoriska potential är ett huvudmotiv i den nya 1980-talslyriken, i avhandlingen representerad av de två ovan nämnda författarna som debuterade på 1980-talet – men, som Brandt påpekar, förekommer samma motiv också hos svenska poeter som Katarina Frostenson och Eva Christina Olsson samt finlandssvenska Eva-Stina Byggmästar. Brandt understryker ändå att *écriture féminine* är bara en av flera synvinklar ur vilka Jäderlunds och Enckells författarskap kan betraktas.

I sin avhandling redogör Tatjana Brandt inledningsvis för huvudpoängerna i de fem artiklarna, som hon inordnat i en övergripande litteraturanalytisk, -teoretisk och -historisk ram. Inledningen i avhandlingen behandlar den litteraturhistoriska kontext mot vilken de två författarskapen kan betraktas. Denna kontextualisering berör den svenskspråkiga kvinnliga 1980-talslyriken och den därtill knutna "Jäderlunddebatten" där man diskuterade frågan om poesins obegriplighet och otillgänglighet samt Julia Kristevas teori om den semiotiska ordningen och emancipatoriska potentialen i en kvinnlig poesi. Därefter redogör Brandt för den tidigare forskningen och receptionen av Ann Jäderlunds och Agneta Enckells författarskap. I inledningen beskrivs den teori och metod som implicit och explicit används i artiklarna, samt slutligen artikelsamlingens uppbyggnad. Allt detta görs på ett synnerligen klart och instruktivt sätt.

Tatjana Brandt diskuterar grundligt och ingående forskningslitteraturen kring de två författarskapen, och hon positionerar sig på ett kvalificerat sätt i förhållande till såväl den ganska omfattande receptionen av Jäderlunds författarskap (Ebba Witt-Brattström, Staffan Bergsten, Anders Olsson, Daniel Birnbaum, Olle Nilsson, Lena Malmberg, Marianne Hörnström, Åsa Beckman m.fl.), som den mera sparsamma receptionen av Enckells författarskap (Peter Mickwitz, Åsa Beckman m.fl.). En särskilt central forskningsmässig inspirationskälla är Ebba Witt-Brattström som i sin bok *Ur könets mörker* (1993) är den första som sätter 1980-talets svenskspråkiga kvinnliga diktare i förbindelse med den franska feminismen. Brandts forskning är en självständig vidareutveckling av Witt-Brattströms samt Marianne Hörnströms och Åsa Beckmans läsningar av svenskspråkig poesi med utgångspunkt i en *écriture féminine*-optik. Speciellt Witt-Brattströms inflytande märks också på så sätt att den i artiklarna oftast citerade Kristeva-källan är *Stabat mater. Julia Kristeva i urval av Ebba Witt-Brattström* (1990).

Analyserna i de fem artiklarna tar utgångspunkt i en rad frågeställningar ur Kristevas teori och analysmaterialet för dem är i olika kombinationer Ann Jäderlunds tre diktsamlingar *Vimpelstaden* (1985),

Som en gång varit äng (1988) och Snart går jag i sommaren ut (1990) samt Agneta Enckells fyra diktsamlingar *Förvandlingar mot morgonen* (1983), *rum; berättelser* (1987), *Falla (Eurydike)* (1991) och *åter* (1994). De fem artiklarna är uppbyggda enligt ungefär samma princip med en uppdelning i tre faser, nämligen en kort litteraturhistorisk inramning och diskussion av Enckells eller Jäderlunds författarskap, en kort introduktion till grundbegrepp hos Kristeva samt en grundlig och insiktsfull närläsning av en rad dikter, med utgångspunkt i Kristevas teori.

I sina analyser av såväl Jäderlunds som Enckells lyrik fokuserar Brandt på tomrummet och pausen, som stilistiskt artikuleras genom stammande, uppbruten diktion, otraditionell interpunktion med frekvent bruk av semikolon och mellanrum i dikternas ortografi. Tematiskt förbinder Brandt, i pakt med Kristeva, tomrummet med upplevelser av identitetskris, sammanbrott och dödsdrift, men också med möjligheten till emancipation och återfödelse. En annan kategori som lyfts fram i läsningarna av Jäderlunds och Enckells poesi, är narcissusmotivet som teoretiskt knyts samman med Kristevas teori om den *tetiska* fasen, där subjektet skapas i övergången mellan den förspråkliga semiotiska ordningen och den språkligt samt identitetsmässigt medvetna symboliska ordningen. I de två diktarnas verk påvisas slutligen, med Kristevas begrepp, det *abjektala*, där individens upplevelse av att förlora sin identitet och subjekt-objekt-orientering medför ett upplöst poetiskt språk som artikulerar dödsångest och förnimmelser av äckel och av det sublima.

Tatjana Brandts avhandling är en originell och välgenomförd forskningsinsats som gäller två av samtidens viktigaste svenskspråkiga och lyriska författarskap. Vi har att göra med en mycket kompetent och klar dialog med den övriga forskningen på området och med en studie som på ett övertygande sätt kopplar ihop analyserna av Jäderlunds och Enckells dikter med teorier och begreppsbildning hos Kristeva. Särskilt anmärkningsvärda i Brandts forskningsarbete är de sensitiva, nyanserade, välargumenterade, grundliga och välformulerade diktanalyserna där Brandt visar sig som en skarpsinnig poesiläsare som förmår tolka texter av två komplexa och ofta svårtillgängliga författarskap.

En kritisk synpunkt på Brandts arbete är att den litteraturteoretiska utgångspunkten är tämligen snäv genom att den i hög grad bygger på Kristevas teorier samt forskare vars uppfattningar är förenliga med Kristevas tänkande (Witt-Brattström, Hörnström, Beckman). I vissa fall tenderar analyserna att vara appliceringar av Kristevas begreppsapparat snarare än en nyfiken och nyanserad utforskning av den poetiska texten. Också andra teoretiska referenser finns visserligen i artiklarna, så som Michail Bachtin, Martin Buber och Slavoj Žižek, men dessa spelar en klart sekundär roll i förhållande till Kristeva, och Kristevas teori utmanas eller bestrids aldrig i avhandlingen.

Vad gäller det teoretiska och metodiska tillvägagångssättet i artiklarna kunde analyserna också ha vunnit på att man tagit utgångspunkt i flera lyrikteoretiska och -analytiska förståelseramar än den återkommande Kristeva-referensen. Det saknas alltså lyrikteori som behandlar genre, diktformer, klang och rytm samt bildspråk. Man

kan dessutom efterlysa definitioner på en rad litteraturteoretiska och -historiska begrepp som nämns utan att det alltid är klart vad de betyder i sammanhanget. Det gäller begrepp som "centrallyrik", "romantik", "postmodern", "poetikdikt" och "prosalyrik".

Sammanfattningsvis måste man ändå säga att Tatjana Brandts avhandling utgör ett originellt, kompetent, välargumenterat och välformulerat forskningsarbete. Att ge ett samlande perspektiv på lyriska författarskap från olika nationella litteraturer är en alltför sällan använd optik i lyrikforskningen där ett nationellt fokus och författarmonografen är dominerande. Det är också uppfriskande och produktivt att anlägga denna synvinkel på ett så inspirerat och inspirerande sätt som Brandt gör i sin jakt på det särskilt kvinnliga poetiska språket. Låt oss hoppas att andra tar upp denna tråd och för vidare Brandts forskningsinsikter till andra litteraturer, författare och verk.

(Översättning från danskan: Anna Biström)

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SYLVAIN BRIENS

## En litteratur i samspel med sin tid

*Finlands svenska litteratur 1900-2012. Michel Ekman (red.) Helsingfors: SLS & Stockholm: Atlantis, 2014. 376 s.*

*Finlands svenska litteratur 1900-2012* skildrar och analyserar 1900-talets och det tidiga 2000-talets finländska litteratur skriven på svenska. I den väl komponerade boken integreras den kronologiska presentationen av litteraturen med en tematisk, där de stora estetiska rörelserna i epoken friläggs. *Finlands svenska litteratur* kan förvisso läsas och brukas som en lärobok för universiteten, men dess ambition är större: det handlar om att påvisa denna litteraturs specificitet, och originaliteten i ett litterärt skapande som är dubbelt marginaliserat (å ena sidan i Finland, å andra i Sverige). Litteraturhistorikerna har tidigare i huvudsak ägnat den svenskspråkiga finska litteraturen uppmärksamhet när det handlat om den tidiga modernismen under 1920- och 30-talen. Det finns flera monografier om enskilda författare i denna rörelse och vetenskapliga



artiklar som analyserar hur denna modernism, som utvecklades runt tidskrifter som *Ultra* eller *Quosego*, skapade ett nytt lyriska språk. Men i det här arbetet påvisas med kraft också den hundra år starka kontinuiteten. Boken är en förkortad och reviderad version av den andra delen av ett större bokprojekt, *Finlands svenska litteraturhistoria I. Åren 1400–1900* (red. Johan Wrede, 1999) och *Finlands svenska litteraturhistoria II. 1900-talet* (red. Clas Zilliacus, 2000).

I boken presenteras de ledande författarna hela tiden i sitt samspel med det omgivande samhället. Bokens fyra delar är visserligen kronologiskt organiserade men i varje del analyseras författarnas hållningar till 1900-talets stora samhällsförändringar. Första delen presenterar perioden mellan 1900-1917 under rubriken "Från förryskning till självständighet"; Andra delen handlar om självständighetens två första decennier, 1918-1939; i tredje delen står kriget och efterkrigstiden i centrum för en presentation som börjar år 1939 och slutar år 1974; fjärde och sista delen handlar om tiden mellan 1975 och fram till dags dato och ställer frågan om litteraturens utveckling i ett föränderligt Europa. Man kan förstås diskutera om inte denna kronologiska struktur med ett huvudtema per period ger en alltför för homogen bild av varje period. Fördelen med detta att varje del kopplas till en tematisk huvudlinje är att det går lätt för läsaren att skapa sig klara historiska bilder. Det kronologiska integreras väl med det tematiska, speciellt i de två första kapitlen. I tredje kapitel blir det kanske svårare att tematiskt fånga de olika strömningarna på ett systematiskt sätt. Man kan också diskutera varför sjuttioalet skall utgöra skiljelinjen mellan tredje och fjärde delen. Men det viktigast är att resultatet blivit en ambitiös bok som kan läsas som helhet och inte bara som en lärobok där man hittar information om specifika författare eller händelser. Urvalet av författare, så vitt jag som utländsk forskare kan bedöma, är i stora drag okontroversiell. Det speglar den litterära kanon samtidigt som det ger en balanserad bild av olika litterära språk.

I bokens prolog ("Uppkomsten av en minoritetslitteratur") och epilog ("Mellan finskt och svenskt. Den finlandssvenska litteraturen 1900-2012") förs ett resonemang om den svenskspråkiga finska litteraturens förhållande till såväl den svenska litteraturen som till den finskspråkiga. Eftersom relationerna till det svenska och till det finskspråkiga är så centrala kunde det här perspektivet med fördel ha fått löpa som ett ledmotiv genom hela boken. Kanske är den svenskspråkiga finska litteraturen inte fullt lika autonom som här antas, och gränserna till de båda grannlitteraturerna mer flytande.

En annan kritisk synpunkt rör sättet att behandla de svenskspråkiga författarnas relation till det internationella litteraturfältet. Det nordiska perspektivet är nämligen relativt frånvarande i framställningen, trots att den svenskspråkiga finska litteraturen är så djupt präglad av en nordisk kulturtradition. Så kunde kapitlet om modernismen på 1920- och 30-talen djupare ha undersökt hur de litterära texterna cirkulerat på ett nordiskt kulturellt fält. Edith Södergran, Elmer Diktonius, Hagar Olsson, Gunnar Björling, Rabbe Enckell och Henry Parland är ju banerförarna i det dåtida nordiska avantgardet. Och tidskrifter som *Ultra* (1922) och

*Quosego* (1928-29) förebådar intressant den nya poetik som skulle bli så viktig i Skandinavien. Deras appeller fann ett omedelbart eko i Sverige hos de *fem unga*, bland vilka flera just publicerade sig i *Quosego*. Detta interkulturella utbyte var centralt när avantgarde-estetiken fick sitt genombrott, och i det spelade de finlandssvenska poeterna en avgörande roll.

En av bokens stora förtjänster är försöket att genomgående lyfta fram frågor kring kulturell och språklig identitet, liksom kring författarnas politiska engagemang. Utöver den kronologiska framställningen analyseras också mer djupgående de centrala författarnas viktigaste verk. Resultatet av detta blir en berättelse om de litterära verken snarare än en berättelse över författarna, och detta står i fruktbar samklang med tendenserna inom den samtida litteraturhistorieforskningen.

*Finlands svenska litteratur* utgör ett försök att i den litteraturhistoriska framställningen dra in alla former av kreativt skrivande (teater, roman, poesi, novell, essä, artikel, TV-dramatik, etc.), inte bara strikt litterära genrer. Det visar hur författare har drivit litterära projekt som överskrider gränserna mellan olika genrer. Med det tillför boken en väsentlig dimension som klargör rikedomen och mångfalden i denna litteratur. Boken är i första hand skriven av Michel Ekman, litteraturforskare och kritiker, vilket bidrar till att ge hela boken en sammanhållen karaktär. Men också andra forskare – och författare – medverkar. Inte minst är det glädjande att se en italiensk och en svensk forskare medverka i studiet av en litteratur, där identitetsfrågor ständigt sätts i spel.

Det här är en bok vars vetenskapliga kvaliteter är höga. Stilen gör den dessutom tillgänglig för en intresserad publik som inte nödvändigtvis bara utgörs av universitetsstudenter. På så sätt får här den litteraturhistoriska forskningen över Finlands svenska litteratur en värdig summering och boken utgör ett givet avstamp för vidare studier. Det måste också sägas att bildmaterialet är strålande och hela tiden fördjupar och klargör textanalyserna.

*Finlands svenska litteratur 1900-2012* är sålunda en bok av hög kvalitet som fyller en lucka i den finska litteraturhistorieskrivningen och förstås också i den svenska och nordiska. Den är bok för alla studenter och forskare intresserade av finsk kultur och det vare sig de är verksamma i Finland eller i andra delar av världen. Boken är lättläst och kan med stor behållning läsas av alla som intresserar sig för litteratur. Det är därför glädjande att boken redan är översatt till tyska. Nästa naturliga steg är att den översätts till engelska och till andra europeiska språk så att bokens viktiga resultat kan nå den internationella publik som är intresserade av nordisk kultur.

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JUHANI SIPILÄ

## Nykykirjallisuuden lyhyt historia

*Mika Hallilla – Yrjö Hosiainluoma – Sanna Karkulehto – Leena Kirstinä – Jussi Ojajarvi (toim.): Suomen nykykirjallisuus 1–2. SKS, 2013. 408 + 308 s.*

*Suomen nykykirjallisuus* kuvaa nimensä mukaisesti nykykirjallisuutta mutta esittelee itsensä kuitenkin historiateoksena: ”*Suomen nykykirjallisuus* on aikalaisten kirjoittamaa historiaa oman aikansa suomalaisesta kirjallisuudesta.” Jos jätetään sikseen pohdinta siitä, voiko nykyajan ilmiöistä jo kirjoittaa historiaa, teoksen voi tulkita pyrkimykseksi hahmottaa kirjallisuutemme kehityskulkuja parinkymmenen vuoden ajalta sekä kontekstualisoida kirjalliset ilmiöt ja virtaukset yhteiskunnallisiin muutoksiin. Tekijöitä pitää kiittää siitä, että ovat näin isoon urakkaan ryhtyneet. Vaikka esitän seuraavassa muutamia kriittisiä huomautuksia, pidän teosta monelta osin ansiokkaana ja varsinkin opetuksen kannalta tervetulleena.

Teos on siis kiitettävän laaja ja monipuolinen: kaksi nidettä ja yli 700 kaksipalstaista sivua. Saatesanoissaan tekijät asettavat esityksensä taustaksi kolmiosaisen *Suomen kirjallisuushistorian* (SKS, 1999), jonka kattama aika päättyi 1990-luvulle. *Suomen nykykirjallisuus* jatkaa siitä suurin piirtein vuoteen 2012. Mainittu *Suomen kirjallisuushistoria* on laadullisesti epätasainen sisältäen erikoisia painotuksia ja poisjättöjä, mutta erityiskiitoksen se ansaitsee Päivi Vallisaaren toteuttamasta hienosta kuvituksesta ja Heikki Kalliomaan tyylikkäästä taitosta. *Suomen nykykirjallisuuden* kohdalla kustantaja on kuitenkin päätyynyt säästölinjalle: kuvia on vähän, niiden valinta vaikuttaa sattumanvaraiselta ja painojälkikin on apean harmaa kuin marraskuinen betonilähiö.

Toimittajatiimi ja suurin osa kirjoittajista on koottu sisä- ja itäsuomalaisista yliopistoista. Tämä lienee vaikuttanut siihen, mitä piirteitä ja ilmiöitä nykykirjallisuudessa pidetään tärkeinä, eri yliopistoissa kun on omat painoalueensa. Erikoiskysymyksistä kirjoittamaan on kuitenkin kelpuutettu muutamia tutkijoita myös syrjäisten rannikkoseutujen yliopistoista aivan eteläistä Suomea myöten. Tekijäjoukkoon mahtuu myös toimittajia, kritikoita ja kirjailijoita.

Ensimmäinen nide keskittyy kirjallisuuden lajeihin ja poetiikkaan, toinen kirjallisuuden ja yhteiskunnan suhteisiin sekä kirjallisuusinstituutioon. Jako ei kuitenkaan ole selväpiirteinen, tai ainakaan minä en päässyt pohjapiirustuksen logiikasta perille. Yksi esimerkki: Ensimmäisen niteen lajiartikkelien väliin on aseteltu artikkelit ruotsin- ja saamenkielisestä kirjallisuudesta sekä suomennoskirjallisuudesta. Luvun otsikkona on ”Monikielinen Suomi”. Romanien ja maahanmuuttajien kirjoittama sekä monikielinen kirjallisuus puolestaan löytyvät toisen niteen ”Monikulttuurinen Suomi” -luvusta. Jäsennyksen ongelmista kertoo sekin, että verkkokirjallisuutta ja kirjoittajafoorumeja käsitellään ”Lajit ja poetiikka” -osiossa.

Myös lajien esittely herättää kysymyksiä. Miksi esimerkiksi lyhyt aforismi-artikkeli on keskellä lyriikka-osastoa eikä ”Lajien rikkautta” -pääluvussa, jonne essee-artikkelikin on sijoitettu? Katsovatko toimittajat aforistiikan siis lyriikaksi? ”Lyriikassa tapahtuu” -otsikon alle mahtuu tietysti mitä vain (otsikon voi tulkita alluusioksi Kari Peitsamon kappaleeseen ”Orpokodissa tapahtuu”). Jotkut painopisteetkin ihmetyttävät: esitellään kyllä laajasti rock- ja poplyriikkaa (ja vielä erikseen naisten kirjoittamaa) mutta ei sitten muita laululyriikoita, esimerkiksi gospelia, joka on elävä, kehittyvä ja laajoja kansanosia koskettava genre.

Kirjan pääartikkelit ovat pääosin toimittajien itsensä tai heidän kollegoidensa kirjoittamia. Kun kyse on kehityskulkujen hahmottamisesta, jotkut luvut muodostuvat hengästyttäväiksi aihe-, tekijä- ja teosluetteloiksi, joissa kovin moneen teokseen tai teemaan ei ehditä syventyä. Moni ansiokas ja omaehtoinen teos tulee vain kuitatuksi ja joskus hiukan marginaalisessa yhteydessä. Esimerkiksi Juha Itkosen temaattisesti rikas ja rakenteellisesti taitava esikoisteos *Myöhempien aikojen pyhiä* (2003) esitellään teoksena, jossa Suomea tarkastellaan ”vieraan silmin”, ja siinä kaikki.

Joissain kohdin herää epäily, onko kirjoittaja mainitsemiaan teoksia edes avannut, saati lukenut. Esimerkiksi romaanien filmatisointeja käsittelevässä luvussa nostetaan esiin Olli Saarelan *Rukajärven tie* -elokuva ja sanotaan, että se perustuu Antti Tuurin romaanisarjaan. Tämä on selvä asiavirhe: elokuvan käsikirjoitus pohjautuu yhteen melko lyhyeen episodiin dokumentaarisessa Rukajärvi-trilogiassa, jonka kirjailija on koostanut 600 sotaveteraanin kertomuksista. Antti Jokisen *Kättilö*-elokuvasta puolestaan sanotaan, että se kertoo tarinoita hämmentävistä, ristiriitaisista ja vaietuista asioista Suomen sotahistoriassa. Sitä se ei tee, mutta mistäpä kirjoittaja sen olisi voinut tietääkään, koska kyseinen elokuva tuli ensi-iltaansa kaksi vuotta *Suomen kirjallisuushistorian* ilmestymisen jälkeen. Tosin asiayhteydestä ei käy ilmi, puhutaanko tulevasta elokuvasta vai sille aiheen antaneesta romaanista, joka ei historiakuvansa suhteen ole erityisen hämmentävä tai uusia näköaloja avaava, jos on lukenut edes vähän muutakin kuin lukion pakolliset historiankurssit.

Vaikka jotkut pääluvut ovatkin yleistäviä ja luettelomaisia, monet erityisartikkelit korjaavat puutteita. Teos sisältääkin runsain määrin tarpeellista faktatietoa, samoin hyviä näkökulmia kirjallisen kentän ja kulttuurin ilmiöihin. Esimerkkeinä voi mainita vaikkapa Kai Häggmanin pienoisartikkelin kustannustoiminnan muutoksista ja Päivi Heikkilä-Halttusen laajan esityksen lasten- ja nuortenkirjallisuuden muuttumisesta kohti lapsilähtöistä ja lasta kunnioittavaa näkemystä ”yhteiskunnallisesti tiedostavan kirjallisuuden” sijaan. Myös esseistiikka tulee hyvin esitellyksi (Kuisma Korhonen), samoin proosaruno (Vesa Haapala) ja omaelämäkerrallinen fiktio (Päivi Koivisto) sekä kirjallisuuspalkinnot ja niiden yllättävätkin vaikutukset (Mervi Kantokorpi) vain muutamia artikkeleja mainitakseni.

Moni erikoiskysymyksiin keskittyvä artikkeli on myös paremmin kirjoitettu kuin laajat yleisesitykset. Esimerkiksi toimittaja ja kirjailija Leif Salmén kirjoittaa sananvapaudesta, politiikasta ja etiikasta esimerkillisen selkeästi ja kiinnostavasti kytkien teemat nykykirjallisuuteen muutaman

osuvan esimerkin kautta. Moni kirjallisuudentutkija voisi ottaa oppia Salménista niin sanomisen selkeydessä kuin käsittelytavan johdonmukaisuudessa.

Esimerkiksi Jussi Ojajärven laaja ”Kapitalismista tulee ongelma” -luku on toivotonta luettavaa jo pelkästään siksi, että kapitalismi otetaan annettuna ja sille kehitellään lisämääreitä ja synonyymejä (globaali kapitalismi, nykykapitalismi, finanssikapitalismi, jälkiteollinen kapitalismi, jälkiteollinen elämys- ja esityskapitalismi, uusliberalismi, uusi markkinaliberalismi, globaali uusliberalismi). Kaikista käsitellyistä romaaneista osoitetaan pelkästään kapitalismin kritiikki ottamatta mitenkään huomioon teosten mahdollista moniäänisyyttä tai muita temaattisia tasoja, joita hyvissä romaaneissa aina on.

”Kapitalismin käytäntöjä problematisoivan proosan” lisäksi tekijät nostavat esiin uudenlaisen monikulttuurisuuden, ”sukupuolten suhteet” ja sukupuoli-identiteettiin liittyvät kysymykset, ilmastonmuutokseen ja ekologisuuteen liittyvät aiheet, mutta nimenomaan kapitalismin kritiikki korostuu. ”Kapitalismi on nykykirjallisuutemme, etenkin romaanin, laajimpia aihepiirejä, siinä missä sukupuolen ja kansallisen itseymmärryksen kysymykset”, Ojajärvi väittää.

Rakkaus ja kuolema, elämän tarkoituksen etsintä ja eksistentiaaliset kysymykset eivät ehkä ole tekijöiden mielestä nykykirjallisuudessa keskeisiä tai enää kiinnostavia. Ehkä rakkaus kuulostaakin liian vanhanaikaiselta, ja siksi se on korvattu ”sukupuolten suhteilla”. Uskontoon liittyvät teemat on kuitattu Yrjö Hosiaisuoman parisivuisella esseellä, jossa hän ilmoittaa, että ”uskonnollisiin ideologioihin [...] liittynyt kriittinen pohdinta on lisääntynyt parina viime vuosikymmenenä”. Sitten hän esittelee Raamattua ironisesti käsittelevän Erik Wahlströmin *Jumala*-romaanin ja Ville Rannan sarjakuvia. Siinä siis kaikki, vaikka uskoon ja hengellisyyteen liittyvät kysymykset ovat nykykirjallisuudessa monin tavoin esillä myös ei-ironisessa mielessä – esimerkkeinä vaikkapa Kari Hotakaisen *lisakin kirkko* ja Juha Seppälän *Mitä sähkö on?*, samoin jo manitsemani Juha Itkosen esikoisromaani.

Etiikasta ja moraalista sentään puhutaan jo mainituksa Salménin artikkelissa mutta myös Leena Krohnia käsittelevän artikkelin yhteydessä. Kirjoittaja Juha Raipola kohottaa Krohnin jo otsikossa ”valtakunnan eetikoksi” (ei sentään *valtakunnaneetikoksi...*), mutta perustelee arvonimen kirjailijan julkisilla kannanotoilla; Krohnin teoksiin hän viittaa vain ohimennen. Onko niin, että nykykirjallisuudessa kirjailijan persoona ja hänen julkinen esiintymisensä ovat tärkeämpiä kuin hänen teoksensa ja niiden tematiikka?

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KUISMA KORHONEN

## Leena Krohn materiaalisen ekokritiikin näkökulmasta

Juha Raipola. *Ihmisen rajoilla. Epävarma tulevaisuus ja ei-inhimilliset toimijuudet Leena Krohnin Pereat munduksessa*. Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2015. 220 s.

Leena Krohnin tuotanto on viime vuosina saanut niin kansallista kuin kansainvälistäkin huomiota. Viime vuonna julkaistu *Collected Fiction* toi Krohnin tuotantoa englanninkielisen yleisön saataville laajemmin kuin koskaan aiemmin. Pirjo Lyytikäisen odotettu *Leena Krohn ja allegorian kaupungit* (2013) taas loi vaikuttavan syväluotauksen Krohnin varhaisempaan tuotantoon modernin allegorian käsitteen kautta. Samalla humanistisen tutkimuksen piirissä on viime vuosina puhuttu yhä enemmän erilaisista uusmaterialistisista ja ekokriittisistä suuntauksista.

Juha Raipola on siis vähintäänkin ajan hermolla materiaaliseen ekokritiikkiin perustuvalla väitöstutkimuksellaan *Ihmisen rajoilla. Epävarma tulevaisuus ja ei-inhimilliset toimijuudet Leena Krohnin Pereat munduksessa* (2015). Siinä missä Lyytikäisen otanta Krohnin alkutuotannosta päättyy *Umraan* (1990), ottaa Raipola tutkimuksensa kohteeksi myöhemmän *Pereat munduksen* (1998), jota voi pitää eräänlaisena käännekohtana Krohnin tuotannossa. Vaikka monet teemat ja rakenneratkaisut säilyvätkin tunnistettavina, *Pereat munduksen* myötä Krohnin tuotanto alkaa siirtyä allegorisesta fantasiasta kohti satiirista aikalais- ja tulevaisuusanalyysiä.

Vaikka tutkimukset käsittelevätkin eri vaiheita Krohnin tuotannossa, ei Raipola pyri mitenkään peittelemään velkaansa Lyytikäiselle. Monet Lyytikäisen tekemät huomiot Krohnin tuotannon toistuvista teemoista ja allegorisista rakenteista toimivat luontevana alustana Raipolan argumenteille. Krohnin tuotannossa *Pereat munduksen* myötä tapahtuva muutos kuitenkin mahdollistaa sen, että Raipola voi omassa työssään edetä Lyytikäisen hermeneuttis-allegorisesta lukutavasta kohti posthumanismin ja materiaalisen ekokritiikin avaamia näköaloja. Ajattomien filosofisten teemojen sijasta painotus on teknologisen kehityksen synnyttämässä, enemmän tai vähemmän mahdollisissa tulevaisuudenkuvissa. Siinä missä Lyytikäinen lukee huolella Krohnin alkutuotannon mittavia intertekstuaalisia kytkentöjä aiempaan kirjalliseen perintöön, muodostuu Raipolan tutkimuksessa tärkeimmäksi intertekstiksi 1990-luvun posthumanistinen keskustelu, etenkin tietotekniikan ja bioteknisen kehityksen luomat utopiat ja dystopiat.

*Pereat munduksen* lyhyet kertomukset luovat monia keskenään ristiriitaisiakin tulevaisuudenkuvia, joiden levottomuutta herättävin piirre Raipolan mukaan on se, että ne kaikki ovat jossain määrin mahdollisuuksien rajoissa. Inhimillinen tietoisuus ei näissä tulevaisuudenkuvissa ole etuoikeutetussa asemassa ei-inhimillisiin toimijoihin nähden: esimerkiksi kertomuksessa ”Kylmää puuroa” ihminen on lähinnä välvaihe kehityksessä, jossa materia itseorganisoituu kohti yhä kompleksisempia itsensä tiedostavia systeemejä.



Raipola perustaa omat teoreettiset lähtökohtansa etenkin Serenella lovinon ja Serpil Oppermannin toimittamaan teokseen *Material Ecocriticism* (2014), jossa nämä tulkitsevat materian aktiivisena, uutta luovana toimintakenttänä. Inhimillinen tietoisuus on tästä näkökulmasta vain yksi materiaalsen emergenssin tuottama mahdollisuus – kokonaisuus, joka on laadullisesti oleellisesti erilainen kuin osiensa summa.

Raipola viittaa varsin monipuolisesti niin ekokritiikin ja posthumanismin keskeisiin teksteihin, mutta materiaalsen ekokritiikin filosofisen taustan kartoitus jää turhan ohueksi. lovinon ja Oppermannin velka esimerkiksi Whiteheadin prosessifilosofialle, David Bohmin holismille, Gregory Batesonin systeemiteorialle, sekä paljolti myös Deleuzen ja Guattarin inspiroimalle uusmaterialismille (ja sitä kautta Spinozan monismille) jää nyt tunnistamatta. Näiden taustojen selvittäminen olisi linkittänyt paremmin Krohnin ajattelua länsimaisen ajattelun pitkään perinteeseen, ei vain viime vuosikymmenten keskusteluun.

Metodiaan Raipola kuvaa Brian McHalen ”deskriptiivisen poetiikan” termein, jossa teoriaa testataan tutkittavan teoksen kautta. Vaikka kyse ei olekaan genretutkimuksesta, hyödyntää Raipola teosta analysoidessaan jonkin verran myös lajien poetiikkaa, etenkin novellin teoriaa. Tämän avulla Raipola pystyy siirtymään puhtaasti temaattisesta tarkastelusta kohti muodon tematisointia. Krohnin kohdalla esseiden teoriakin olisi kyllä voinut olla hyödyllistä – useat hänen teksteistään kun liikkuvat esseiden ja fiktion välimaastossa.

*Pereat mundus* –teos on alaotsikoltaan *Romaani, eräänlainen*. Käytännössä teos ei kuitenkaan muistuta juurikaan perinteistä romaania, pikemminkin novellisikermää. Jokaisessa teoksen kolmessakymmenessä kuudessa luvussa esiintyy Håkan – mutta useimmiten eri Håkan. Temaattisten yhteyksien lisäksi joitain lukuja sitoo toisiinsa tohtori Keinolempi, joka joutuu asiakkaansa pakkomielteiden mukana miettimään erilaisia maailmanlopun skenaarioita. Tämän rakenneratkaisun Raipola tulkitsee heijastavan Krohnin teoksen emergenssin teemoja: pienemmistä osista muodostuu kokonaisuuksia, joissa säilyy kuitenkin aina jännite yksittäisen osan itsenäisyyden ja kokonaisuuden holistisuuden välillä.

Eräs työn haasteista on ollut se, että monet Raipolan esiin nostamista yhteyksistä Krohnin ja 1990-luvun posthumanistisen keskustelun välillä ovat esillä jo Krohnin omissa teksteissä, niin fiktiossa kuin esseissä. Raipola kuitenkin avaa ja laajentaa näitä yhteyksiä ansiokkaasti, ja kuten sanottua, pystyy yhdistämään ne myös Krohnin teosten muodollisten ratkaisujen analyysiin. Argumentointi on läpi työn ihailtavan selkeää ja helppolukuista. Sen sijaan hakemiston puuttuminen hieman harmitti, vaikka väitöskirjan sähköisestä versiosta Tampereen yliopiston sivuilla asiasanojen haku toki onnistuu.

Raipola keskittyy muutamaaan *Pereat munduksen* kertomukseen jättäen monet luvuista korkeintaan maininnan tasolle. Eniten huomiota saavat luvut ”Kylmää puuroa”, ”Ennen singulariteettia”, ”Kimeeran poika” ja ”Vita nuova”. Niiden kautta Raipola pääsee hyvin analysoimaan keskeisiä tutkimuskysymyksiään, mutta kokonaiskuvaa ne eivät kokoelmasta muodosta.

Kun itsessään rikkaan ja moniulotteisen väitöskirjan jälkeen tartuin uudelleen *Pereat mundukseen*, saatoin hämmästyneenä todeta, miten monia teoksen kertomuksia ja niiden avaamia tulkintamahdollisuuksia Raipola oli rajannut työnsä ulkopuolelle. Tämä ei ole niinkään moite – Raipola on viisaasti rajannut työnsä tiettyyn näkökulmaan, tiettyyn problematiikkaan – vaan osoitus Krohnin teosten moniulotteisuudesta.

Krohnin teoksissa riittää tutkittavaa, myös epävarmassa tulevaisuudessa.

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