

Was Folklore Studies Finlandized? Changing Scholarly Trends in Finnish Folklore Studies in the Cold War

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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of the Cold War on Finnish folklore studies as an academic discipline. Drawing on the university curricula of folklore studies at the University of Helsinki, the article seeks to trace disciplinary shifts from 1943 to 1979. The era coincided with a period of Finlandization—that is, a political culture subservient to the Soviet Union. The research strategies that the leading folklorists took continued concentrating on ethno-historically important Finnish- or Swedish-speaking oral traditions. International orientation consisted of balancing between the East and West scholarship. Among the academics, Finlandization often meant simply ignoring topics that dealt with the USSR.

Keywords: History of ethnological sciences; Finnish folklore studies; Theoretical trends in folklore studies; The Cold War; Finlandization

Introduction

We often tend to think that the study of folklore represents a political tool that once belonged to either Romantic nationalism in the nineteenth century or to the ideologies of Nazism and Socialism in the twentieth. Given the fact that the use and study of folklore have played an essential role in many ideologies and political agendas, it is surprising that the field has been criticized for lacking a proper theory of its own and for borrowing ideas from other fields—from sociology, for example (Dundes 2005, 385; Oring 2019, 137). At least in Europe, folklore and its study carry a political burden, which alone ought to compel us to keep examining our disciplinary legacy, different regimes of the past exploited folklore collections, and folklore studies to benefit and further their political agendas. Consequently, our scholarship of today or the recent history is not free from ideologies or political agendas either, since, regardless of globalization, nation-states continue to exist and boundaries between ethnic cultures continue to be maintained as well as created (Bendix 2002, 112; Noyes 2007).

Throughout the Cold War and until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the term self-censorship in the Finnish language had only one meaning: the conscious silence about and ignorance of problems related to or within the Soviet Union. Self-censorship in this regard pertained to publications as well as to public debates (Hentilä 2016). The term Finlandization has been used to describe Finland's status as a neutral buffer state during the Cold War. For the Finns, it meant accepting a significant measure of Soviet influence on their domestic governance and foreign policy and not

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openly making efforts to align with the West. Practices associated with Finlandization appeared at the level of public discourse—that is, politics and mass media. Such discourses shifted attitudes to correspond with values believed to be favored and approved by the Soviets. As a result, there was a thoroughgoing practice of silence, use of indirect expressions, and reading between the lines in Finnish society during the Cold War (Salminen 1999, 17). The Finnish version of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (“struggle to overcome the negatives of the past”) includes interpretations of the Soviet influence over Finland and aspects of Finlandization and self-censorship.

Can folklore studies be considered a field of study that mirrors the political climate of a given country at a specific time? This article aims to analyze in more detail what kinds of scholarly turns occurred in Finnish folklore studies during the Cold War era. It also asks how geopolitical changes influenced research topics, theories, and methodologies in folklore studies in Finland. The article seeks to answer this question by exploring the university curricula of folklore studies at the University of Helsinki in the 1943–1979 period. The objective is to highlight significant elements underlying the history of scientific knowledge in the specific disciplinary context. Focusing on the academic curricula, I will define the context and circumstances in which academic rationales were at work. Additional questions posed in this article are thus closely tied to the history of power relations in ethnological disciplines at large and among the academic elite. Arguably, such ties continue to effect on contemporary debates and concerns about the role of “the national sciences” in multicultural societies.¹

What Was the Historical Context of Postwar Folklore Studies in Finland?

Finland, a military ally of Nazi Germany, lost the Second World War to the Soviet Union. In the following years, the fear of Finland allying with a revitalized Germany, and later the West, was an essential part of motivating Soviet reservations. The Allied Control Commission (ACC) that consisted mainly of Soviet members began monitoring Finnish society. All anti-Soviet literature was removed from bookstores and libraries. Moreover, a particular institution started to censor textbooks and chapters of Finnish school history books that dealt with, for example, the Sovietization of the Baltic States (Kaljundi et al. 2015, 69). A new Finnish foreign policy embraced the assumption that to achieve peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union, Finland had to acknowledge and consider Soviet security interests and accommodate them whenever necessary. The Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance signed in 1948 (“the Finno-Soviet Treaty”) expressed explicitly this principle. Via the treaty, Finnish politicians pledged neutrality and friendship with the Soviet Union. However, unlike the treaties signed by the Soviet Union with the East European countries, the Finno-Soviet treaty applied only to Finnish territory, making Finland responsible for the defense of its borders and not obligating it to participate military action outside this area. In the following years, neutrality became the core understanding, not only of Finnish foreign policy but also of a widely shared national ethos (Aunesluoma and Rainio-Niemi 2017, 53–54). For the Finns, neutrality meant a careful existence between the two superpowers.

In subsequent years, the practice of Finlandization—that is, a political culture subservient to the Soviet Union—evolved. Although Finland remained a multiparty, parliamentary society, it had to cope with the Soviets, who exerted a profound influence on both the foreign and the internal politics of Finland. For example, public media remained silent about Soviet atrocities, the USSR was never openly criticized, and the Finnish government curtailed some nationalist groups. Later, especially from the 1970s onward, the policy of neutrality expanded into a government-owned public broadcasting corporation, one that practiced self-censorship. Common broadcast themes included, on the one hand, praise and embellishment of the USSR, and on the other, criticism and condemnation of the US (e.g., Hilson 2008). Although newspapers were more independent when it came to reporting Western news and had thus more liberal views, they, too, were under pressure from the Soviet side. Nevertheless, the Soviets did not censor Finland. Its censorship was conducted from within.

Although the political and media elite were deferential, the remainder or the grassroots of Finnish society was not Finlandized (Hilson 2008). Indeed, American popular culture had a powerful hold on the Finnish imagination. The influence of TV-series, movies, for example, Walt Disney's films, *Reader's Digest*, not to mention products such as Levi's jeans and Coca Cola, were deeply felt in day-to-day life. Moreover, unlike the Eastern bloc countries that restricted their citizens' travels abroad, residents of Finland were free to take trips overseas. Furthermore, although the state-owned office revised Finnish schoolbooks, nationalistic view of Finland as a historically predetermined nation-state maintained dominant. For that matter, history textbooks, for example, presented recent global history in opportune neutrality through refraining from political standpoints (Ahonen 2008, 251). In terms of freedom of choice, individuals could make decisions about and allocate their funds as they wished. Although there were public silences concerning critical attitudes toward the Soviet Union, everyday talk often consisted of openly pro-Western sentiments.

Finlandization has often been regarded as synonymous with the presidency of Urho Kekkonen (time in office: 1956–1981). Kekkonen personally fostered good relations with Soviet leaders. Still, at the same time, he used his powerful position to rail against his opponents and to quell criticism considered to be anti-Soviet. Folklorist Martti Haavio and especially ethnologist Kustaa Vilkuna were both friends of President Kekkonen. Interestingly enough, Kekkonen was godfather to both Haavio and Vilkuna's sons. (e.g., Majamaa 1997). Vilkuna actively collaborated with the Soviets, and because of his friendship with President Kekkonen, he was able to promote cooperation between the Finnish and Soviet-Estonian folklore archives (Häggman 2015, 104). Kustaa Vilkuna's activities in the Finnish Literature Society evidence his artful practice of Finlandization: For instance, he once publicly praised the Soviets but could pursue his own scholarly and national aims (Häggman 2015, 88). Close relations to state power occurred on many levels, as the Academy of Finland appointed Vilkuna, Haavio, and later Matti Kuusi to its members. Awarded by the president, *Academician* is the highest honorary scientific title in Finland.

Not only did personal connections to the president increase the number of folklore studies departments, but they also influenced governmental policies regarding higher education. On the national level, folklore studies as a postgraduate-level subject expanded in the era of Finlandization. Besides professorships at the University of Helsinki and the Swedish-speaking university Åbo Akademi in Turku (established in 1926), folklore studies was founded at the University of Turku in 1963 and with the combination of ethnology and folklore studies at the University of Jyväskylä in 1964. The ethnological sciences were probably the most successful disciplines in Cold War Finland because, in addition to the increased number of professor chairs in the field, they actively contributed to policy-making for humanistic studies (see KTK 1965).

Historically, folklife studies in Finland consisted of two different disciplines, folklore studies, and ethnology, with the former traditionally concentrating on oral culture and the latter focusing on material culture. Based on eight curricula of Finnish folklore studies at the University of Helsinki (1943–1978),² this article examines the disciplinary shifts that took place between them, contextualizing them within accompanying patterns of political history. The focus is on the materials—that is, books, articles, and research papers—that *the students of folklore* studied from the basic to the advanced levels. The teaching staff of the discipline, professors, docents, and assistant teachers, constructed the folklore curricula. As Konrad Kuhn has pointed out, the small size of the discipline in various European countries meant that the personality, interests, and positions influenced the content, strategies and effects of disciplinary knowledge (Kuhn 2015, 83).

Teaching, research, archival work, and collecting folklore from the mouths of “the folk” were conducted under the aegis of Finnish folklore studies. The Finnish Literature Society formed the focal point of folklore studies. The building was the site of the departmental office where lectures and seminars took place, and archival internships carried out until 1970. During their student years, all undergraduate folklore students wrote 2-3 theses based on actual archival work. Generations of folklorists became acquainted with archived folklore collections by surveying an unprocessed collection of materials that had started to grow substantially from the 1930s onward. The close relationship between academic research and the place of the primary source materials, the Finnish Literature Society, has been a hallmark of Finnish folklore scholarship. For over a century, the Finnish Literature Society, which houses vast collections of materials on magic, epics, charms, proverbs, tales, and oral histories, served as the locus of the formation of disciplinary core ideas, student instruction, and other activities fundamental to the field. It is thus fair to argue that teaching and the reading lists reflected the contents of Finnish folklore research explicitly.

Until today, Finnish humanistic scholars have ignored the influences and silences of contemporary history within the field. They have been reluctant to study the Cold War era and Finlandization in their particular research areas (Hentilä 2016). The same applies to the Finnish folklore scholarship conducted in the second half of the twentieth century. Previous studies have generally failed to acknowledge the influence of foreign politics and have approached past research with a sense of homage (e.g., Har-

vilahti 2012; Lehtipuro 1983),³ with only a few exceptions (e.g., Anttonen 2005; Wilson 1976). In contrast to the apolitical stance of Finnish folklorists regarding their field of study, Baltic researchers have demonstrated increasing interest in the interwar era and the Soviet period. For instance, focusing on the history of Estonian or Latvian ethnography as it progressed through various political regimes, researchers have made visible the constraints on scholarship regarding powerful political institutions (Jääts and Metslaid 2017; Bula and Laime 2017). Baltic researchers reflect upon their disciplinary history and identity against the backdrop of Soviet rule that, of course, was the different from what the Finnish context was.

In this article, disciplinary movements in Finnish folklore scholarship between 1943–1978 involved three approaches: folklore as the national and patriotic discipline; folklore studies as an international field of study, and finally folklore as a mixed bag of approaches connected to social awareness. Although the analysis deals with the leading folklorists of that time, I also occasionally mention Kustaa Vilkuna, professor of ethnology during the years 1950–1959. He had a direct connection not only to Finnish academia and to the Finnish Literature Society but also, above all, to the President of the Republic, Urho Kekkonen, the orchestrator of Finlandization.

National and Patriotic Discipline

From the first professor chair 1898 until the end of the 1960s, the basics of folklore studies consisted almost solely of the *Kalevala* and epic poetry. This legacy constituted the backbone of the discipline. The post-war scholarship hence continued the *Kalevala* and the text-critical approach to epic poems.⁴ The *Kalevala*, a collection of folk poems compiled by Elias Lönnrot, had been published in two editions (1835/1849). Folklore studies as the field of study concentrated on the original folklore texts that were once the source material of Elias Lönnrot in his compilation. From the late nineteenth century onward, folklorists had recognized that Lönnrot's intuitive recombination of lines from different variants, different poems, and even other types of poems had created characters and situations that did not occur at all in the vast folklore sources (Wilson 1976, 41; Sawin 1988, 187; Anttonen 2005). During the first decades of the Cold War, the old paradigm of oral traditions of the Finns was a safe phenomenon to examine. Because many of the epic poems were initially collected from geographical areas belonging to the USSR, from the Soviet perspective, Finnish folklore scholarship was probably not a suspicious science. In this sense, being "a neutral" created a context in which philology-based verse inquiries as a standard science could continue.

The disciplinary legacy consisted of a view of "literary folklore studies" in which folklore texts were interpreted as a part of the unlettered tradition within a literate society. Scholars studied folklore as it existed within the literate (or semi-literate) civilization (see Zumwalt 1988, 99), although modernization with the rise of literacy and the standard of living had already profoundly affected the lives of rural commoners. Apparently, the discipline was "the celebration of a national", in other words, folklorists positioned the object of study so that the Finnish national point of view constituted the starting point of everything. As the sign of being a very national disci-

pline, the language of the readings was more and more frequently in Finnish, which only further enshrined the field as one of the core “national sciences” in Finland. The idea of authentically national comprised of shared language, mind, and everyday life, which, despite the increasing elements of geopolitical bipolarity, industrial development with a high level of education, was considered as the peasant. Although this was a part of the European scholarly axiom, it was not unfamiliar to US folklore scholarship either.⁵

Changes in the curricula occurred especially at the intermediate and advanced levels—that is, at the levels at which students began broadening their disciplinary knowledge. A significant number of books, articles, and other readings as the framework of folklore studies increased. Moreover, the reading list became more extensively international (see Moilanen 1961). At the intermediate level in 1968, for example, the total amount of material consisted of 34 items, out of which 21 were in Finnish, 5 in Swedish, 5 in English, 3 in German, and 1 in Estonian. Since Russian was not popular in the Finnish upper secondary education, students and researchers, in general, did not have the requisite knowledge of Russian (e.g., Mikkonen 2016, 166). Therefore, Y. M. Socolov’s “Russian folklore” in the curricula was in English. Moreover, as a voluntary foreign language in Finnish grammar school, German retained its status as the most popular foreign language until the beginning of the 1960s, when English overtook it (Kaarninen and Kaarninen 2002, 264).

The political influence the Soviet Union sought to pursue was not explicit at the beginning of the Cold War. On the contrary, curricula changes in the early 1950s coincided with strong anti-communist sentiments not only in the West but also in Finland. Prevailing anti-communist attitudes combined with the glorification of those who fought in the Second World War were sentiments shared by professors and university students alike, most of whom came from an upper-middle-class background (Virtanen M. 2007, 93). Historically, the Finnish intelligentsia, including ethnologists and folklorists, used to be conservative nationalists. For them, German intellectual and cultural influences had been of considerable importance from the early nineteenth century onward. The Second World War made no difference. Professors Martti Haavio (years of service: 1949–1956) and Matti Kuusi (1959–1977) served in the Second World War. As was typical at that time, both were politically conservative and had strong ties to German-speaking scholarship.

Later, Matti Kuusi pondered his role as professor of folklore studies. He stated that, above all, his duty was “to work for the Finnish nation.” For him, studying Finnish folk culture was a pursuit inspired by sincere love for his nation—and for that matter, as he argued, science should be tendentious (Krogerus 2014, 680). Among academics, Finlandization often meant simply ignoring topics that dealt with the USSR. Therefore, most humanists chose to study issues that had nothing to do with Soviet history, culture, or society (see Hentilä 2016). In practice, this led to a concentration on either research involving old materials already preserved in the Folklore Archives or on non-political aspects of Finnish culture, such as children’s lore, working-class, or lumberjack traditions.

Matti Kuusi's view above resembled the national ethos of the time known as *henkinen maanpuolustus* that emphasized neutrality, democracy, and love of fatherland as the core values of the nation. It was a direct translation of *Geistige Landesverteidigung*, the term used in Switzerland since the 1930s, referring to spiritual national defense. In Finland, inspiration was also drawn from the Swedish concept of psychological defense (*psykologiskt försvar*) when the select committee started to work in 1960 (Aunesluoma and Rainio-Niemi 2017, 63). The core idea was to deepen the lay understanding of democracy and the Finnish way of neutrality.

Due to the official doctrine of neutrality, cooperation between the Nordic states intensified in Cold War Finland. Nordic collaboration occurred on many social levels—for example, establishing a common labor market and the creation of the Nordic Passport Union, which allowed Nordic citizens to freely travel to and reside in another Nordic country indefinitely (Hilson 2008, 66). Communication between Nordic folklorists had been established already in 1907 when Kaarle Krohn, together with Axel Olrik and Carl von Sydow, founded *Folklore Fellows*. Turbulent war years, as well as the deaths of the central figures, ceased active communication. After the Second World War, contacts gradually increased, and consequently, Sigurd Erixon with his Danish and Norwegian colleagues established the *Nordic Institute of Folklore* (NIF) in 1959 (Rogan 2013, 96). It is fair to say that this institute and its purpose appeared to be the Western-oriented internationalism in Cold War Finland. Via the NIF, Finnish scholars could facilitate international meetings and debates on the latest paradigms, such as genre analysis or the nature of oral tradition (Lehtipuro 1983, 208–209). For the Finnish folklorists and ethnologists, cooperation between colleagues in proximal countries was relatively easy due to shared orientation toward national cultures in each of the Nordic countries, i.e., Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. As Dan Ben-Amos has argued, a significant motivation for such studies was their national significance (see Ben-Amos 1989), and the NIF worked actively to promote it.

Up until the Second World War, the curricula of folklore studies had included multiple readings on neighboring nations or kindred peoples, such as Estonians, Votians, and Latvians. The majority of Finno-Ugric ethnic groups, which had been a focus of folklore studies, lived in the territory of the Soviet Union. In the decades following the war, however, this focus decreased. Moreover, at the same time, language instruction in Estonian and Karelian, both of which were once considered necessary skills of Finnish folklorists, gradually disappeared among younger generation folklorists (Häggman 2015, 215). The Soviet version of the history and national identity of Estonia and the other Baltic States was prevalent and official in Finland. In an academic address in 1964, President Urho Kekkonen advised against maintaining contacts with exiled Estonians. According to him, Finland should pursue neutrality and therefore avoid communication or collaboration with any community of which the official Soviet regime disapproved (Krogerus 2014, 691). However, folklorists did not completely agree. Despite the president's advice, the curricula until the early 1970s included a study by Oscar Loorits, an Estonian exile living in Uppsala, Sweden.

Regardless of official politics and despite advice to refrain from open contacts with exiled Estonians, Estonian culture, language, and scholarship retained a special place in the minds of Finnish folklorists. Throughout the Cold War era, the curricula included readings on Estonian folk traditions and language although conducted by the Finnish scholars or Soviet-Estonian folklorists aligned with Soviet Estonia, such as Eduard Laugaste and August Annist. Official state formation in the Soviet Union comprised ethnically based republics, and as such, Soviet-Estonian folklorists were the only Estonians with whom it was appropriate or advisable to work. The co-operation between the Finnish and Estonian folklorists had been made possible due to the official Finnish–Soviet Scientific and Technical Cooperation agreement signed in 1955 (Mikkonen 2016). Aside from endorsing technical achievements and innovations, the deal included cooperation in the humanities and social sciences. Surprisingly enough, cooperation in this regard operated in the Finnish Literature Society house and by folklorist Väinö Kaukonen, who became Soviet-minded after the war. Because of this, the majority of the folklorist community regarded Kaukonen suspiciously. Generally, the scientific cooperation within the folklore studies meant several fieldwork trips to Soviet Karelia and short visits to Tartu, the closed town in the Soviet Union from the 1960s onward (Häggman 2015, 88).

In general, few in the Finnish Literature Society embraced the Soviet proposal for scientific and technical cooperation with enthusiasm (Mikkonen 2016, 153). Suspicion and mistrust reigned supreme, and leading folklorists seldom praised the USSR. It took time to learn the discourses and maneuvers needed to negotiate with the Soviet side. One of the most crucial aspects for folklorists to master was to, in every situation, emphasize the supremacy of the Soviet Union, even when the actual research purpose was, for instance, to examine Estonian folklore (Krogerus 2014, 692–694). For folklorists, however, scientific cooperation entailed the potential to establish a new connection to the Finno-Ugric peoples (Estonians, Karelians, and others) who had stayed behind the Iron Curtain ever since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 (Mikkonen 2016, 154).

Due to the impact of the political situation during the 1950s and 1960s, the overall importance of the folklore of kindred nations and peoples decreased. Likewise, global geopolitical flows affected the use of the works of Will-Erich Peuckert (1895–1969). His studies were incorporated into the Finnish curriculum beginning in 1951 but were removed only a few years later. Peuckert was a folklorist specialized in German working-class folklore. However, from the viewpoint of the Nazi regime before the Second World War, Peuckert was considered “unreliable.” Consequently, in 1935, he was forced to leave his position by the Nazis. After the war, however, Peuckert was among the few surviving folklorists who had not been in the service of the Nazis (Jacobsen 2007), and he returned to German academia, eventually becoming the first professor to be reassigned folklore teaching and duties (Dow and Lixfeld 1994, 271). Thereafter, Peuckert’s studies obtained more recognition, and as the result, it included in the Finnish curricula for few years. Later, Peuckert published a study on Lenore by the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters (1955). Undoubtedly, the sudden emergence

of Will-Erich Peuckert's research in Finnish folklore studies stemmed from his politically untarnished scholarly reputation (e.g., Fenske 2010, 63).

Compared to German and Swedish ethnology, which were both interested in encyclopedias and folk culture atlases—that is, in “the wholes” (Garberding 2011; Fenske 2010)—Finnish folklore studies continued to date individual folklore texts composed by Finns (or by Karelians) to assign them a place in an established historical line. With its strong emphasis on the text-critical approach—that is, verse—Finnish folklore studies collaborated closely with linguists. Students whose primary subject was Finnish were obliged to study folklore until the intermediate level, and vice versa—a rule came to an end at the beginning of the 1970s (Häggman 2015, 215). Folklore studies' implicit hierarchy usually placed versed folkore in trochaid tetrameter (epics, spells, charms, proverbs) first, followed by fairytales and folksongs, which, besides the early works of Antti Aarne and Kaarle Krohn, had a smaller role in the curricula. Moreover, the Aarne–Thompson Index (AT-Index) (1928, expanded 1961), a catalog of folktale types, was not included in the curricula of Finnish folklore studies at all. One educated guess to explain its exclusion could affect the field's strong emphasis on reading the latest studies, which in turn led many Finnish folklorists to doubt the total value of the book. The AT-Index is scientific in that it is systematic and concentrates on the organization of knowledge, yet it lacks testable explanations. By early 1960, Finnish folklorists became increasingly interested in folk beliefs and forms of vernacular religion, both of which I will discuss in the following chapter.

Folk Belief Studies and New International Orientations

Within the post-war curricula, the emphasis on mythology increased first in the reading list and then as a separate line within the folklore program. Folklore scholarship in Finland has a long history of the questions of vernacular religions and paganism. This preoccupation harkens back to the first decades of the twentieth century at the University of Helsinki's Faculty of Arts. Then many students became familiar with the teachings of Kaarle Krohn as well as those of Edward Westermarck, an internationally trained anthropologist interested in marriage life, incest taboo and moral values. One notable scholar who began as a protégé of Krohn and Westermarck was Uno Harva, who, as a scholar of Siberian shamanism and mythology, made quite an impression on the young Martti Haavio, who in turn became interested in folk beliefs (Anttonen V. 2012). Later, as a professor of folklore studies, Haavio continued studying pagan forms of religions and assigned several studies carried out by Uno Harva as required readings to his students. Hence, to understand the extent to which folk religion specialists directed the course of folklore studies, one must note the academic genealogy and works of several leading researchers.

Why was the comparative study of religion included in Finnish folklore studies? The humanistic disciplines at the University of Helsinki considered the religious dimensions of folk culture as a central feature of Finnish oral tradition. Further, Finnish scholarship on Christianity and religious thought were early on interested in its vernacular forms—in other words, in (folk) forms and expressions of religion distinct

from the official doctrines and practices of organized Christianity. While theoretical approach to the study of epics, spells, and charms was philological, more and more it was also possible to approach folklore as sets of beliefs and mythical traditions. Both approaches used the same sources—that is, verse (Herlin 2000, 164). Over the decades, folklore studies constituted the only academic program that gave teaching in folk religion until the first established graduate program in comparative religion began at the University of Turku in 1963.

The new discipline in Turku comprised both comparative religion and folklore studies, and its first professor was Lauri Honko, who, one year earlier, had published a study on spirit beliefs. In his work, *Geisterglaube in Ingermanland* (1962), Honko combined insights from social anthropology, the phenomenology of religion, social psychology, and sociology. He argued that the ability to receive and transmit beliefs about guardian spirits depended on in-group membership in terms of age, kinship, and occupation. According to Honko, folk religion manifested as a total worldview, one that included guardian spirits, the dead, as well as the Devil, Jesus, and the Christian saints (Anttonen V. 2012). He thus took a path different from those taken by proponents of the old historic-geographic approach and those taken by Finnish researchers in general, including Martti Haavio, and Matti Kuusi, and adjunct professor Jouko Hautala.

After a research visit to UC Berkeley in 1962, Honko first became acquainted with ideas that would soon become known as the New Perspectives in Folklore. This “performance school” called attention to systematic features of folklore as expressive culture and communication. Unlike the European comparatist perspective, the New Perspectives in folklore regarded the study of folklore as examining the social uses of tradition and the features of performance. As Paredes and Bauman stated, folklore was now understood primarily in the context of expressive performance (see Paredes and Baumann 1972). Combining the archival-based legacy of Finnish folklore scholarship, which had relied heavily on archived verse materials, with the New Perspectives approach, Honko elaborated his theoretical views on genre analysis and the role-theory model (Anttonen V. 2012). Although he held a professorship in Turku, Honko occasionally gave lectures at the University of Helsinki. In 1966, Honko developed a course on the methodologies of folklore. Unlike Matti Kuusi and Jouko Hautala, who preferred their students to read Finnish (historic-geographic epic) studies, Honko assigned readings composed mainly by American or Nordic authors.

Why, then, was Honko so different from his predecessors in Finnish folklore scholarship? One apparent reason is his Western orientation. Honko was one of the first to travel to the US due to the ASLA (Fulbright) grant program, which the US government created in 1949. Accepted applicants to this exchange program had to undergo a CIA background check. Left-oriented thinkers or those openly critical of the US were typically not those who ultimately became US exchange scholars. Often those who were approved and were able to perform one-year research in the West were later in their career assigned to professorships in Finnish academia (Tarkka 2013, 4–5). The official policy of neutrality enabled Fulbright grants and thus, US-visits and influences of American popular culture. This kind of mental impact was the US strategy within Finland against the Soviets (Fields 2020, 10).

Another central figure in Finnish folklore scholarship with a comparative religion orientation was Jouko Hautala. He is likely not well known to international readers since the language of his most cited book on Finnish and comparative folklore studies was Finnish (1954). This book contains a collection of studies made in Finnish folklore scholarship. Although the book did not include a robust theoretical approach nor even a methodology, it was widely studied among many generations of Finnish folklorists, remaining in the curricula until 1995. Hautala taught at the University of Helsinki's folklore studies in 1947–1971, first as an adjunct professor, then as a deputy professor, and finally (after losing a permanent professorship to Matti Kuusi) as an extra professor specializing in comparative religion. Usually, it was Hautala who was responsible for advanced-level studies, and because of his personal orientation on folk beliefs, he argued that folk religion is a prerequisite for understanding folklore (Kinnunen 1991, 39). Hautala's courses on the methodology of folklore typically contained text-critical studies. In a broad sense, changes in methodology courses depended on who was in charge. In sum, besides the epics and text-critical approach, comparative religion had become a secondary mainstream means by which to study commoners' culture.

As leaders in their field of folklore and as respected members of their departments, Haavio, Hautala, and Honko were all in a position to encourage young students and to orientate them in folk religion. In effect, then, a body of students continued to research and to elaborate on the concerns and ideas of their mentors. The Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society paid special attention to folk religion since questionnaires targeted assumed ancient belief systems. Because of Haavio and his interest in vernacular forms of religious thinking, folk beliefs were explicit from the beginning until the 1960s in the folklore collections. In 1962, for example, a series of questions dealt with the topics of death, the dead, and prohibitions concerning work and holy days (see Anttonen V. 2012).

Within folklore studies at the University of Helsinki, folk religion as a sub-field separated from the text-critical concentration in 1960. First-year studies consisted of the *Kalevala* and epic poetry as well as archival internships for all. Still, students then had to choose whether to specialize in oral traditions and speech genres, or in comparative religion. It is noteworthy that the comparative religion concentration included the works of Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, and Franz Boas—all classic anthropologists. However, before the specialization, which occurred approximately during the second year of study, the curriculum included readings from both text-critical and folk religion concentrations.

Often, the line between the fields was not strict because both aspects merged in the analysis. Textual analysis worked for the method and folk belief frame as the preliminary "theoretical" assumption. For example, Martti Haavio and Matti Kuusi based their empirical data on archived verse texts, but the interpretations dealt with the worldviews of ancient communities (Stark 2019). The divided orientation within folklore studies lasted until 1970 when the first department of comparative religion opened at the Faculty of Theology (Markkula 1997, 18–21). Within the folklore studies program at the University of Helsinki, the folk religion orientation remained until

early 1972. It was the mythological aspect that expanded the scholarly focus more globally. For example, Juha Pentikäinen's study of beliefs about the supranormality of a dead child that were found "throughout Nordic countries as an old tradition, as well as among the Sámi and even the Inuit of Greenland" (1968) represented a new generation of Finnish folklore studies which sought to understand the human condition at multiple levels. This kind of analysis was not typical in the long tradition of Finnish folklore studies.

In the broader view, the reasons for intellectual expansion within folklore studies were diverse. First, folklore studies was among the first disciplines to study culture(s) in Finnish academia. Not only anthropology but also comparative religion, as distinctive disciplines, emerged primarily out of Finnish and comparative folk poetry studies (i.e., folklore studies) because of the growing need for more nuanced knowledge on human communications and cultures. The Krohnian type of philology could thus no longer fulfill intellectual demand. It could not satisfactorily answer essential questions, such as how communities in the past used to think about their neighbors, the environment, and the supranormal, as well as why people recite certain rhymes, and in which situations.

The paradigm shifted as new questions about communal communication and mentality, as well as collective psychologies, emerged. The historic-geographic method became incompatible with these new approaches, although it nonetheless still influenced archival practices. By the end of the 1960s, a reflexive turn took place in folklore studies, not only in the community of Finnish folklorists but all over the West. Drawing new insights from sociology and political sciences, senior undergraduates and graduates, that is, the generation born in the 1940s, began to address problems in folklore scholarship, and especially in folklore collection practices. The curricula of the 1970s responded to external and internal forces by offering students a mixture of intellectual opportunities that resulted from the social awareness throughout the 1970s. The 1970s curricula of Finnish folklore studies became a collection of heterogeneous approaches to humanistic scholarship.

A Mixed Bag: A Field of Study Connected to Social Awareness

After the Second World War, the US became the epicenter of global scientific knowledge, mainly due to the wartime collapse of European academia (Rossiter 1985). In Finnish folklore scholarship, US scientific influences significantly altered the sub-field of comparative religion and its readings within the curricula. Besides the Soviet Union's attempts to influence Finland and the existing Finnish-Soviet scientific agreement, Finnish folklore scholarship, much like the other humanist disciplines, was not very sympathetic toward official Soviet scholarship (see Hentilä 2016). Globally, this coincided with increasing intellectual pressure caused by the new modes of consciousness, which were infusing academic work. The collapse of colonialism in the South, civil rights movements in the West, and leftist student movements from the 1960s onward (see Noyes 2007) contributed to such pressure. This period has been argued as a time of "memory conflict," as new ideologies were beginning to challenge old na-

tionalistic paradigms (Kinnunen and Jokisipilä 2012, 446). Despite existing boundaries between different research fields and interests, young and old generations alike were now both living in a society in which preexisting geopolitical arrangements had to be reconsidered and ultimately questioned.

The intellectual shift also involved a generational gap. While Matti Kuusi had been a text-critical comparatist, his successor, Leea Virtanen (1979–1994), was as an expert in contemporary children's lore. Interestingly, however, the *Kalevala* and epic poetry continued to represent the scholarly canon, as both were not only accepted but also appreciated by the conservative right as well as by the left-oriented younger generation. The core curriculum requirements dealt with the *Kalevala* and Finnish epic poetry. At the same time, the field widened its disciplinary subject in terms of sub-fields and questions about modern times and pre-modern peasant times. In advanced-level studies in the 1971–1972 academic year, students could choose between three sub-fields: (1) folklore studies, (2) cultural anthropology, or (3) comparative religion;⁶ later, in 1978–1979, there were four options for intermediate-level studies and onward: (1) folklore studies, (2) field and archival work, (3) popular culture, and (4) cultural anthropology. The introductory text of the curriculum presented the discipline as “tradition studies” (in Finnish: *perinnetiede*; in Swedish: *tradition vetenskap*), i.e., a field of study that focused on the mental elements of folk culture, especially on collectively shared oral traditions.

The field's fragmentation coincided with the rise of sociology that had a central role in developing welfare state by satisfying the state's need for knowledge. In Finland, much like in the other Nordic countries, sociologists shared the view that they were social engineers in the service of society and were thus actively participating in the making of the welfare state (Hokka 2019, 359). Moreover, sociologists were active in planning the Finnish spiritual national defense (Aunesluoma and Rainio-Niemi 2017, 66). Sociology thus influenced the vocabulary and views of folklorists by, for example, increasing readings on gender studies and critical analyses of mass culture. In the early 1970s, folklorists' reading lists included, for instance, *Mass Culture*, by Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (1957), which stated modern communication had an isolating effect. Theodor Adorno, one of the leading members of the Frankfurt School of critical theory and whose article was in the book, argued that television enslaves people to repetition and robs them of aesthetic freedom (Adorno 1957, 482–483). This kind of academic thinking echoed the anti-American sentiments of the time that were perceived not only against American governments but also against movies and tv-series.

A new way to reformulate Finnish folklore studies at the University of Helsinki emerged, one that was connected to the social sciences and to politically engaging concepts and terms. One such term, which folklorists absorbed from journalism studies, was the “consciousness industry” (in Finnish: *tajuntateollisuus*), which referred mainly to mass media and education as the institutions of brain rot. According to the Marxist perspective, the ruling class seeks to control the content and output of the media to naturalize the status quo in the consciousness of subordinate classes. Interestingly, the

term consciousness industry began to appear in the field's curricula syllabus description in the 1970s.

These kinds of Marxist views incorporated into folklore studies curricula alongside traditional questions about the *Kalevala* and other traditional topics. Subject matter areas widened to include the working-class culture, thereby reflecting the existing civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1970s. Moreover, readings from related fields, such as sociology, increased throughout the 1970s. The field responded to and reflected changing political, socioeconomic, and contemporary problems, as it did everywhere in the folklore studies of the West (Kuhn 2015, 90–91). The curricula in focus were not openly anti-Soviet, but they were not entirely pro-American either. Presumably, practices of 'the folklore neutrality' were part of broader understandings of European neutrality, especially in Switzerland, Austria, and Sweden, which at the time no longer showed up as isolationism or exceptionalism but as a legitimate policy allowing small, developed countries to play a constructive role as mediators between the super-powers. Neutrality became a core value and a constitutive of Finns' self-perception, too, during the Cold War (Aunesluoma and Rainio-Niemi 2017, 56, 60). In the same manner, the curricula of the Finnish folklore studies consisted of, besides the studies of Finnish folk culture, a balanced combination of East and West scholarship.

The introductory texts of the field contributed to a broadened understanding of the various kinds of folk groups. The 1971–1972 curriculum stated that the object of study could either be "archived, mainly old peasant culture or contemporary, for example, popular culture, youth culture, and children's culture and other sub-cultures' traditions." Contrary to the increasing number of readings in Finnish, the reading list now included only a few books or articles written in German. By now, it was clear that the old intellectual connections to German-speaking scholarship had ceased. Publications by important international scholars, such as Margaret Mead and Bronislaw Malinowski, had been translated into Finnish, the preferred language in the 1970s curricula. Although folklore studies was intellectually expanding toward Western paradigms, and even though the English language had become standard among the exam books, the discipline still represented "a national science" in the way that readings were in Finnish. Furthermore, the primary national topics—that is, the folklore and folkways of the Finnish-speaking Finns—were by far the most popular themes among those enrolled in bachelor's and master's studies (see Järvinen & Saarikoski-Hyttinen 1987).

To gain a better understanding of foreign cultures meant studying other regions and nations that were European. In 1971–1972, students who chose folklore studies (instead of cultural anthropology or comparative religion) had to decide whether to specialize in Estonian (Soviet Estonians Otilie-Olga Kõiva and Eduard Laugaste), Swedish (Bengt R. Jonsson and Karl Ivar Hildeman), Russian (Y. M. Socolov, a Russian Academician) or American folklore (Jan Harold Brunvand). The 1971–1972 curriculum included *The Study of Folklore* by Alan Dundes (1965), although it was requested to study only partially. The book was a collection of several theoretical articles, including leading US scholars and few international classics, such as Axel Olrik and Carl von Sydow.

There are a few reasons why Finnish folklorists were excluded from the groundbreaking anthology by Alan Dundes. First, Finnish researchers had historically identified themselves toward German-speaking academia. In practice, many Finns, including some top Finnish scientists, did not have sufficient English skills. Second, the discipline had been mired in the historic-geographic paradigm in Finland longer than it had been elsewhere. Theoretically, Finnish folklore scholarship had not sufficiently developed, or if it was, the more recent studies were available only in Finnish. Third, higher education in Finland was the result of governmental politics, and as such, explicit eagerness to collaborate with the US academically was considered inappropriate.

Since the Finnish academic apparatus was unable to produce widely cited scholars in the Cold War era, it was the international—or more precise, American—university education and platform on scholarly debates that enabled new avenues of research on Finnish folklore. One example is Elli-Kaija Köngäs-Maranda, who received her Master's in folklore in Helsinki, but then left Finland to attend Indiana University to complete her doctoral education. Köngäs-Maranda was a structuralist who studied Finnish-American communities as well as the Solomon Island natives. In the US, she engaged in fieldwork in an area not usually considered a typical zone of interest in her native country (Virtanen L. 2000). Consequently, her writings were not studied in the 1970s Finnish folklore studies, although Finnish professors and researchers knew her very well. What were the reasons for not including Köngäs-Maranda in the curricula? One reason might be practical, such as the limitations of foreign books and articles in Finnish academic libraries and bookstores (e.g., Ekholm 2016). The other the fact that she had an unorthodox approach to her Finnish colleagues. It can, however, be presumed that the reason was not political, that is, her explicit US-orientation.

Another researcher with a Finnish orientation was William Wilson, who gained a broad audience with his study, *Folklore and Nationalism in Modern Finland* (1976). The Finnish translation of the book came out in 1985 when a group of ethnomusicology students undertook the endeavor. Surprisingly enough, it was the Workers' Educational Association of Finland (WEA), which published the Finnish version of Wilson's study, not the Finnish Literature Society. According to one of the translators, Vesa Kurkela, the group was not eager to publish the book in the Finnish Literature Society because, for them, the society represented old (nationalistic and patriotic) values. Therefore, the choice of the publisher was probably the continuum of the dichotomy that had entered the Finnish academic workforce already in the 1960s, causing a rift between a leftist younger generation of scholars and the conservative professors (Mikkonen 2016, 159).

Although Wilson's study was very explicit in its critique of folklorists' ethnonationalism and the right-wing legacy in Finland, *Folklore and nationalism in Modern Finland* became a success in terms of citations and book reviews. The study received criticism and vehement critiques, especially in Finland. Well into the 1990s, it continued to be excluded from the curricula of folklore studies at the University of Helsinki. Gradually, however, Wilson's notions gained a foothold in folklore studies' circles,

becoming a kind of disciplinary coup that stimulated important self-reflections among Finnish folklorists (e.g., Anttonen 2005, 155–156). There are at least two reasons for the relatively late breakthrough of *Folklore and Nationalism in Modern Finland*. First, it was an American who published it during the Cold War. Second, the main argument of the book was that Finnish folklorists from the 1930s onward were strongly pro-German, and this view referred to sensitive and potentially volatile areas of discourse that had thus far been silenced although it was common knowledge. It is clear that the arguments made by Wilson were too fundamental at that time, and they therefore needed more time to become accepted. Moreover, anti-American sentiments as a byproduct of the leftist movement were popular among Finnish students. For example, many of the folklore students were explicitly skeptical toward “the vulgar American” performance school (see Kinnunen 1991, 9). It was only as late as the early 2000s when the concept of performance shook off “the ideological West” label in the Finnish folklore scholarship.

Conclusion

When comparing eight curricula between 1943–1978, the most visible disciplinary move concerns the widening research focus. Although the discipline has continued to concentrate on varieties of oral traditions, especially in epics and other oral tradition mediums, expressed in Finnish, it has also expanded its target to social groups within Finnish society. Despite new theories, such as structural analysis or the socio-psychological understanding of folklore, that made breakthroughs since the end of the 1960s, the majority of works in Finnish folklore studies continued to focus on materials considered to be ethno-historically important, i.e., Finnish- (or Swedish-) speaking oral traditions.

For 35 years, the scope of Finnish folklore studies expanded to three distinctive orientations: the nationalistic one, which consisted of the readings on the *Kalevala* and the oral epics, internationally oriented comparative religion, and social awareness of the folklore studies. The first comprises the subject matter from which the independent discipline first evolved in the late nineteenth century. The core of Finnish folklore studies at the University of Helsinki consisted of inquiries of verse. The second, comparative religion orientation, was an approach that contributed true international breadth to Finnish folklore studies. Global perspective and human mind, not language itself, entailed in the academic study of comparative religion that made it internationally more orientated than the orientation on Finnish verse. However, Finnish folklore studies developed their version of comparative religion, one that combined text-critical inquiry with frameworks of the human (religious) mind. Comparative religion became an independent discipline in the Cold War era.

The last disciplinary move of Finnish folklore studies in the 1943–1978 was scattered topics of interest that had the perspective of and empathized with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Instead of a pro-Soviet attitude, the 1970s curricula were a mixed bag of everything having a slight anti-American bias. Changes in production and globalization challenged folklore studies that both transformed the

discipline from an institution concerned primarily with matters of one-culture communities, and nation-building to one in which more comprehensive understanding of human communities was a central research focus. In a broad sense, the miscellaneous nature of the 1970s curricula mirrors that era. The social movements of the 1960s and 1970s triggered transformations that resonated profoundly at all levels of society in the West. Culture was no longer something concerning “bygones” or “popular antiquities,” but instead served to indicate cultural communication by a group of any kind.

Within folklore studies, there were orientations toward comparative religion, cultural anthropology, contemporary culture, and finally, oral traditions. Overall, since oral traditions constituted the topic around which the discipline had initially revolved, they have remained the core of folklore studies. Despite the broad expansion of research topics, the discipline was still called “Finnish and comparative folk poetry studies” (in Finnish: *Suomalainen ja vertaileva kansanrunoudentutkimus*) until 1989, when it changed its name to “folklore studies.” Undoubtedly, the name change reflected the changes in topics of interest within the field, but it also mirrored “the glasnost” of the Cold War era.

Given the country’s status as a relatively small whose independent statehood has never been taken for granted, the role of the one-culture in the nation-state remained central to Finnish folklore studies after the Second World War. It is fair to say that the studies conducted by humanist researchers and the emergence of political and cultural institutions throughout the Cold War, were intertwined. The Cold War, as times of crisis, created a new and perpetually volatile geopolitical situation that sharpened the distinction between us concerning them. Although, officially, Finland could not ignore the existence of the Soviet Union, it could retain a kind of uncensored intellectual life. Various forms and uses of disciplinary knowledge, and many of the key terms in the field, multiplied in the Cold War era. Students learned Finnish, Scandinavian, European, Russian, and American folklore. In terms of a bipolar world, the Cold War folklore studies in Finland markedly transformed into neutrality. Was this because of Finlandization or despite it? Undoubtedly, critical approaches to this segment of disciplinary history are still very much underdeveloped.

Notes

- 1 The term “national sciences” (in Finnish: *kansalliset tieteeet*; in Swedish: *nationella vetenskaper*) was developed at the end of the nineteenth century to describe those disciplines that generated conceptions of history, homeland, and culture; in addition to folklore studies, they included disciplines such as history, archeology, and Finnish literature (see Aronsson et al. 2008).
- 2 The curricula are: 1943; 1951; 1958; 1960; 1963; 1968; 1971; 1978.
- 3 Concerning this, the argument of Elliott Oring that folklorists are often too romantic and sentimental toward their objects of study might sometimes be correct (Oring 2019, 138).
- 4 The number of studies that dealt with the *Kalevala* or Finnish epics in the basics of folklore studies were as follows: 7 out of 10 books in 1943; 12/18 in 1958; 7/13 in 1968; and 7/25 in 1978.

- 5 Simon Bronner has pointed out that although the US appeared to lack attributes associated with Romantic nationalism, such as peasants, consistent geography, ancient historical legacy, and common racial and religious stock, American folklorists adapted folklore to nation-building in the late nineteenth century with a mythology of the frontier heroes, one suggestive of a democratic individualist ethos (Bronner 2019, 18).
- 6 Within the folklore studies program, a separate line of folk religion remained although there already was the discipline of Comparative religion in the Faculty of Theology.

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