Editorial
Hope in Times of Crisis and Transformation
Viktorija L.A. Čeginskas, Maija Mäki &
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Global climate and ecological emergencies, biodiversity loss, societal polarisa-tion, war, hunger, soaring energy prices and inflation are some of the simulta-neous crises that humanity is facing today. The impacts of recent environmen-tal and macroeconomic developments have been aggravated by severe geopo-litical conflicts and social tensions (Bjerregaard & Kverndokk 2018; Jansen 2021). Demanding crises that need to be resolved also occur in everyday life. Burnout, unemployment, poverty, health problems and other existential ex-periences can all be considered personal crises, which makes it challenging for people to imagine a better future. Experiences of social injustice, inequality and societal transformations raise fears and cause emotional stress that often unleash a negative spiral (Turner 2020; Lockwood 2020).

It is often easier to engage with hope than to speak about the future or present solutions that can help tackle immediate challenges. Hope is both an emotional resource in difficult times and a power of agency that prompts action. The emotional content and idea of hope empowers individuals to act during critical situations and to channel their agency in a more resilient direction. Through hope, people aspire to bring about transformation and positive changes, whether in their own lives or in society, for tackling glob-al challenges and crises (Bryant & Knight 2019). Hope for positive change often translates into concrete actions, like with the Finnish students who opposed educational cuts planned by the Finnish government during Au-tumn of 2023. Student demonstrations took place all over Finland, and in Turku students took over a building shared by two universities, the Swed-ish-speaking Åbo Akademi University and Finnish-speaking University of Turku. The cover picture of this issue is from this occupation, which brought together students from different universities. The student activism has re-sulted in public discussion about the current problems in academic culture, such as mental health problems and burnout at the personal level, as well as structural problems, for instance under-funded departments and the

constant pressure to achieve measurable results. At the same time, student activism can be seen as a glimmer of hope when a large number of young adults seek to demonstrate the weaknesses of the system and the urgent need for changes.

In this theme issue (2/2023) of *Ethnologia Fennica*, we ask the following questions: Where can hope be found, and how? Under what circumstances does it emerge and flourish? What kinds of narratives are constructed based on hope? In what kinds of personally overwhelming or global crises and transformations can hope help people imagine new alternatives and become resilient and active? This issue contains three research articles that contribute, from different perspectives, to the theme of hope in times of crisis and transformation. Galina Kallio introduce us to her intensive ethnographic fieldwork with regeneratively oriented farmers, who have started to build a radically different life by pursuing livelihoods through diversified small-scale farming. Kallio uses the concept of 'hope as action' to show how hope is manifested in the work and everyday lives of the farmers. In her article, Kallio analyses both hope and hopelessness from the perspective of temporality, and by doing so, she manages to create a better understanding of whose hopes are being mobilised through regenerative agriculture and how and why they are being mobilised.

The article by Kristiina Korjonen-Kuusipuro and Sari Tuuva-Hongisto evaluates how hope is present in young people's lives in online environments and everyday practices. Korjonen-Kuusipuro and Tuuva-Hongisto have worked among Finnish ninth graders and noticed that some of them are acting as goodwill ambassadors by doing small things, like sending positive messages or hearts to important people in their lives. Korjonen-Kuusipuro and Tuuva-Hongisto analyse these tiny everyday online practices within the context of future-oriented hope. They conclude that these examples of small-scale agency can lead to more considerable results, well-being and friendships in the online environments. Jenni Rinne and Pia Olsson analyse in their article two rapid-response questionnaires by the Finnish Literature Society. The questionnaires were collected during the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's rapidly expanding war of aggression against Ukraine. The main idea in the article is to look at the affective practices that people adopt to negotiate the various emotions aroused by global crises. People have tried to keep their daily routines as normal as possible, they have produced and shared humorous materials via social media, and they have engaged in grassroots actions and activism. Rinne and Olsson discuss these practices as a way of allowing room for hope and engendering hopefulness for a better future.

This issue of *Ethnologia Fennica* also includes two research articles that fall outside the current theme of focus. The article by Neža Čebron Lipovec reflects on a participatory research initiative involving place attachment and heritage discourses. Local inhabitants of Koper/Capodistria, Slovenia, took part in memory evenings. In the events, locals shared their personal and collective memories of sites in the city´s old town. According to Lipovec, the current theory and practice of built heritage conservation must engage more with people-centred approaches, particularly in contested spaces. The facilitators of the group meetings, in this case memory evenings, learned about possibilities to share the hidden and silenced memories of marginalised groups; the evenings made it possible for those people to be heard by the majority population of the city.

Studying the history of European ethnology is essential for understanding the current issues and developments of our discipline. In the second article outside the current theme, Marleen Metslaid explores the work of the Estonian ethnologist Ilmar Talve and how he adapted to Swedish academia while working at the Institute of Folklife Research in 1945–1959. Later, Talve was known as a professor of ethnology at the University of Turku in Finland. Metslaid focuses on the complex nature of an émigré position in the academic world and its influences. Also, the ways in which Sigurd Erixon, the director of the Institute of Folklife Research, influenced the work of Ilmar Talve and Finnish ethnology are interesting subjects in this article.

The issue includes two book reviews. Linda Huldén has written a review of Karin Sandell's doctoral thesis. The extremely timely and relevant topic of study is online hate speech directed at Swedish speakers in Finland. In a second book review, Art Leete reviews Ulla Kallberg's doctoral thesis. The topic of Kallberg's thesis is the self-image of sailors, viewed from the perspective of their everyday practices. Kallberg has used as archival data written questionnaire responses from the 1960s, collected by Professor Ilmar Talve at the University of Turku. It is interesting how the old archival materials can be used for the purposes of current research.

Finally, this issue includes three conference reports. Sanna Karimäki-Nuutinen has written a report on the IX Finnish Conference on Cultural Policy Research, held in Rovaniemi in April 2023. Päivi Leinonen shares her impressions of the 16th SIEF Congress, held in Brno, Czech Republic, in June 2023. Finally, Alicja Staniszewska reports on the Biennial Conference of the Finnish Anthropological Society, held in Rovaniemi in March 2023.

With this issue focusing on hope, we wish to contribute to scholarship on societal transform in times where many feel hopeless and in need of positive

change. We see hope as a powerful tool for agency and acknowledge the need for research focusing on the prospects of our discipline to grow and be an advocate for hope in troubled times.

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Cover photo: Maija Mäki 2023. *Representation of the student activism at the University of Turku, Finland. "University is occupied. University is not a corporation."*

Galina Kallio

Hope beyond Hope
Farming One's Way into a Better Today

Abstract

Hope for a better future has become a survival strategy within contemporary Western societies that are drifting through polycrises. The concept of hope evokes future orientedness, suggests positive emotions and creates spaces for dreaming. But what if, instead of hope, it is hopelessness that moves people to strive for living a better life and leads to, in the words of Macy and Johnstone, the *great turning*? In this article, I draw on my ethnographic fieldwork to bring forth journeys of regeneratively oriented farmers who (have started to) build a radically different life by pursuing livelihoods through diversified small-scale farming. By analysing how hope is manifested in the work and everyday lives of the farmers, I introduce an understanding of *hope as action* and show how hope in the context of the studied farming practices materialized through *cultivating the lands*, *inspiring others*, and *reciprocating the hope of other species*. I argue that conceptualizing hope as action suggests a different kind of temporality, one that is (literally) grounded in intergenerational farming landscapes: hope as action brings into play both the hope(s) and the hopelessness(es) of *the past* that impacts the actions of the present and of *the future* that orients the actions of today. As farmers and (their) soils are being rapidly mobilized into vessels of hope for their potential to sequester atmospheric carbon, understanding the kind of action hope materializes into (or doesn't) is important to better understand *whose* hopes are being mobilized through regenerative agriculture and *how* and *why* these hopes are mobilized.

Keywords: hope as action, diversified farming, regenerative orientation, regenerative agriculture, intergenerational landscapes, false hope, ethnography

Matters of hope

"Because losing hope might not be the end, but the beginning."
(Lehtinen 2019, translated by the author)

In a world of limited Earth resources, hope has been made a limitless resource. Despite the growing evidence of elevated burnouts and climate anxiety (Macy and Johnstone 2012; Sangervo, Jylhä, and Pihkala 2022; Työterveyslaitos 2022), maintaining optimism regarding a better future — that science and technology, regulation, or activism will resolve ongoing crises, that sanctions will end wars, that economic growth can be decoupled from environmental destruction — appears to ground societal discourse. But what would happen if one stopped speaking with the language of hope? What if hanging on to hope for a better future is a mirage that prevents people from starting to build and live a radically new life in the present?

In his essay "In Defence of Hopelessness", Ilja Lehtinen (2019) argues for the right to give up hope and learn to live in a world of recurrent crises. Instead of chasing salvation-to-come Lehtinen (ibid.) calls for valuing *earthly experiences*, for living here and now, without a continuous belief in the end of histories and times, suffering and death. But (how) can the present be detached from the future? Drawing on the work of practice theoretician Theodor Schatzki, Bryant and Knight (2019) postulate that living in the present is "always and inevitably shaped by the ends for which we strive" (p. 20). Hope then, the authors suggest, is one kind of *an orientation* towards the future (ibid.). It is a particular state that enables people to believe in *a better* future, be that future a future without suffering (Lehtinen 2019), a future of progress (Kingsnorth 2023), or a future of yet unrealized, enticing potential (Bryant and Knight 2019).

But that feeling which keeps haunting me, which — in a place were two ghosts,[1] one from the ruins of the future and the other from the destruction of the past, meet — makes me ask: what happens when the present is shaped with the loss of hope for a better future?

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1   I use the metaphor of ghosts introduced in the book *Arts of living on a damaged planet: Ghosts and monsters of the Anthropocene* (Tsing et al. 2017) to refer to tangible traces in landscapes that are visible to those who know where to look and how to interpret them, to those who, in the words of Christina Grasseni (2004), have learned to view skilfully.

For the past four years, I have been working at diversified small-scale farms,[2] market and forest gardens, and other types of farmdens[3] and have encountered different stories through which people have journeyed into regenerative farming and ended up living off and with the land. These were stories of escaping meaninglessness and searching for a meaning, of seeking to work for the benefit of nature and of refusing to be part of destroying it, of taking responsibility and of giving (it) up.

These were stories of change and continuity, of empowerment and burnouts.

Stories of liberty and sacrifice…

…of hopelessness and hope.

The more I dove into the lives of people engaged in small-scale diversified farming, which I have elsewhere identified as regenerative agriculture[4] (Kallio 2022; Kallio and LaFleur 2023), and the further I followed the developments in the field of regenerative agriculture, the more discomfited I became. While regenerative agriculture has rapidly become a powerful political discourse, a major domain of research and a growing field of development, it is primarily being addressed as a pathway for transitioning so-called conventional agriculture to carbon farming (IPES-Food 2022). This reduction not only disregards other, much broader meanings in farming (Silvasti 2002; Vlasov 2020, see also Kallio 2022; Kallio & LaFleur 2023), but also fails to acknowledge how and why new farmer generations set out to work with and regenerate the land.
More crucially, however, I noticed that this reduction is founded on the production of hope that relies on farmers to contribute to taking care of the

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2   By diversified small-scale farms I refer to the kinds of farms that focus on diversified organic production (though not always certified), as in contrast to (techno-industrial or organic) monocrop farming and often integrate animals while also engaging in crop and vegetable production. I acknowledge that 'small-scale' is relative and might be an ambiguous way to categorize farms. In the Finnish context, a medium-sized farm is 50ha   and a small-scale farm in this context would be a farm cultivating anything from 1ha—40ha and having animals from a few up to 30.

3   Farmden is a term coined by a regenerative farmer Lee Reich, who defines it as more than a garden and less than a farm. (https://leereich.com)

4   There is no uniform definition of regenerative agriculture. Most commonly the concept is used in reference to principles and methods of improving soil health and other ecological capacities of agricultural lands. I have argued elsewhere (Kallio 2022; Kallio and LaFleur 2023) that this focus neglects other, equally important dimensions of regeneration, such as community empowerment, resilience and self-determination, and questions of livelihoods. For definitions of regenerative agriculture, see e.g. (Giller et al. 2021; Rhodes 2017; Schreefel et al. 2020).

'carbon problem' — a hope that has made policy makers and scientists alike captivated by the potential of carbon farming (Heinonsalo 2020; IPES-Food 2022). But while regenerative farmers and (their) soils are being rapidly mobilized into vessels of hope, it is paradoxically often the lack of hope concerning strongly sustainable[5] societal transformations as well as the anxiety aroused by the great unravelling (Macy & Johnstone 2012, see also Jensen 2006) that are moving people (back) to the land to practise regenerative farming — a movement that also my findings support. It is from this kind of ambiguity that this article emerges.

My aim is to explore hope through an ethnographic account by which I wish to make visible the stories and lived experiences of regeneratively oriented small-scale farmers and bring forth an understanding of *hope as action*. Drawing on the work of Macy & Johnstone (2012) and a relational practice-based research approach (Ingold 2000; Räsänen and Trux 2012), I ask: how is hope manifested in the work of diversified small-scale farmers? Based on a sensory, emplaced and narrative analysis (Pink 2015; Riessman 1993), I show that hope as action, in the context of the studied small-scale diversified farmers, is manifested through *cultivating the lands*, *inspiring others*, and *reciprocating the hope of other species*. I argue that conceptualizing hope as action suggests an essentially different temporal orientation than that of future-orientedness (Bryant & Knight 2019), one that is (literally) grounded in intergenerational farming landscapes (Ingold 1993). Hope as action mobilizes *both* the past and the future and intertwines them into the present by opening up a pathway to noticing the traces (Tsing 2012) into which hope(s) and hopelessness(es) materialize through the work and dwelling of farmers, who together with other beings shape, sustain, and steward intergenerational farming landscapes.

I suggest that reflecting on both the differences in *meanings* and in *beliefs* (Abend 2008) related to the concept of hope, and ultimately, understanding the kind of action it materializes into (or doesn't) is important for a better understanding of *whose* hopes are being mobilized through regenerative agriculture and *how* and *why* these hopes are mobilized. It may well turn out that giving up false hope towards the future of progress (Kingsnorth 2021; 2023; Lehtinen 2019; Jensen 2006) might not only be necessary, but prove to be

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5   By 'strong sustainability' I refer to an understanding that natural capital is not substitutable by human-made capital (Gutés 1996), and hence, all practices are bound by acting in ways that sustain and regenerate, rather than degrade and degenerate, the living web of life for future generations (see also Houbeckers and Kallio 2022). The counterpart of strong sustainability, namely weak sustainability, then, refers to an understanding of sustainability based on the substitutability of natural capital (i.e., believing in the ability to replace ecological resources), hence allowing an endless extraction from the web of life.

the only way to give birth to action that connects humans with the wider web of life and orients them towards regenerating it.

Hope as action

While my aim is not to provide a theory of hope in the sense of any of the understandings of a *theory* as identified by Abend (2008), I do have a conceptual ambition, namely bringing forth an understanding of hope as action. In order to do this there is, however, a need to start from a completely different understanding of hope — like the one suggested by anthropologists Rebecca Bryant and Daniel Knight in their book *The Anthropology of the Future* — and start unpacking both the *meaning(s)* and *belief(s)* (Davidson 1984:142, cited in Abend 2008) underlying different conceptualizations of hope.

Bryant and Knight (2019), building on an understanding of "temporality as inherently teleological" (ibid. 17), suggest that hope is one of seven orientations towards the future. Based on two examples from political spheres where new chosen leaders arrive with powerful words that awaken people's hope, the authors identify hope as "a swell of emotion, an affect of positivity, appearing to push the crowds toward a better future. This is not the future of dream, but rather the future of blocked or unrealized potential" (ibid., 134). Hope, in this sense, is depicted as a *shared positive emotion* — that is *not* a dream — that orients people *towards the future*. In characterizing hope in this way, the authors further argue that:

> hope emerges in the gap between the potential and the actual, between matter and its not-yet form. Hope is about something that doesn't presently exist but potentially could; hope is based on more than a possibility and less than a probability. In that sense, hope is a way of virtually pushing potentiality into actuality. (ibid., 134)

It is this abstract, future-oriented understanding of hope — an image of hope as floating-in-the-air — that leaves me puzzled. *How* does hope, as something caught between the present and the future, relate to action, as something happening here and now?

Looking into the historical trajectories of the production of hope, the playwright and free thinker Ilja Lehtinen (2019) not only departs from the positive connotations of hope but appears critical towards the whole concept. "*Speaking in the language of hope*" (emphasis original, np.), asserts Lehtinen, happens in the name of false promise of progress and does not appear reasonable in an era where ecological crises and collapse of current civilizations meet. In fact, it is both optimism and future orientedness that Lehtinen criticizes.

In his assessment, the production of hopefulness towards the future is not so much characterized through the linearity of time but rather by "*explicitness, controllability and surveyability*" of it (ibid., emphasis original, np.). In contrast, Lehtinen suggests, approaching time as "inevitable, destined, and unknown" would make hanging on to immaterial promises of continuing business-as-usual, and promises of salvation through technological solutions, meaningless. Giving up hope for a better future, the future of progress would enable one to ground one's experiences in the present, and teach one to live in the midst of unfolding crises, suggests Lehtinen.

Similarly to Lehtinen, Mariame Kaba, a grassroots organizer and educator, refuses to connect hope to optimism or the future (Scahill 2021; Sonenstein and Wilson 2020), but unlike Lehtinen continues to believe in the possibility of having hope. As a person actively working in and for Black communities to dismantle what she calls the Prison Industrial Complex, Kaba contests the idea of hope being *an emotion* and advocates for an understanding of hope as *a discipline*. This understanding came to her from an encounter with a nun and is deeply rooted in religious practice. Thus, for Kaba, hope is produced in action and requires disciplined work: "It is work to be hopeful," she states (Scahill 2021, np.). In this sense, instead of giving up the concept of hope, like Lehtinen suggests, Kaba seems to redefine its *meaning*. For her, hope does not assume optimism and future orientedness, but rather, as a discipline it "always [carries] a potential for transformation and for change. And that is in any direction, good or bad" (Sonenstein & Wilson 2020, np.).

While for Kaba, (repetitive) action (re)produces hope, for Macy and Johnstone (2012) it seems to be the other way around. In their book *Active Hope*, ecophilosopher Joanna Macy and resilience specialist Chris Johnstone bring forth an understanding of hope as becoming active through enabling and prompting action. For Macy and Johnstone the word 'hope' has two different meanings:

> The first involves hopefulness, where our preferred outcome seems reasonably likely to happen. […] The second meaning is about desire. It is what we do with [this] hope that really makes the difference. Passive hope is about waiting for external agencies to bring about what we desire. Active Hope is about becoming active participants in bringing about what we hope for. (Macy & Johnstone 2012: 3.)

In other words, Macy and Johnstone suggest that the future that is hoped for — that is desired — is brought about through actions in the present. It is, then, about *activating* hope through the empowerment of people to work towards what they desire, a phenomenon the authors call the Great Turning.

The great turning is a part of a larger story in which, as the authors state, "we live in extraordinary times, and [we] can be caught between contrasting versions of reality" (2012, 64). The reality that Macy and Johnstone describe is one in which an increasing number of people and other living beings suffer — a reality acknowledged by some people — but which the mainstream culture views as "depressing news, gloomy thoughts, and feelings of distress as 'negative experiences' from which we need to protect ourselves" (68). What is interesting in their analysis is that, similarly to what Lehtinen suggests, subjecting oneself to gloomy images of reality, the authors suggest, can actually mobilize rather than paralyze the desired action.

As it turns out, the conceptualizations of hope by Bryant and Knight, Lehtinen, Kaba, and Macy and Johnstone not only differ in terms of the meanings and beliefs attached to (the concept of) hope, but also in terms of temporality; namely, in how the authors define the relationship between hope, action (as something happening in the present), and the future (as something yet to come). In connecting action to hope or hope to action I will next move to presenting my fieldwork and methods of studying and analysing hope in the context of diversified small-scale farming.

Soil under the fingernails, or: fieldwork and methods

I started my fieldwork in Finland at the beginning of 2019. At that time the term regenerative agriculture was barely known to people outside the 'pioneering', or 'alternative' farming communities that I studied. Among these people, it was a concept used to refer to farming in a holistic and an organic manner with conscious reflection on the sustainability and ethics of the practices applied to produce food. Quite soon, I came to observe, the concept of regenerative agriculture became co-opted by food industry actors and started to be used in the context of conventional agriculture and in reference to 'regenerative practices' such as sowing cover crops to keep soils green as long as possible, using low-or-no-till methods, or reducing (but not necessarily giving up) the use of pesticides. Moreover, regenerative agriculture came to be rapidly reduced to what has now become known as carbon farming. Therefore, it has become difficult, if not impossible, to use this concept to refer to farming practices arising from a completely different paradigm than that of conventional farming in a transition that is deeply connected to the techno-industrial agrifood complex. Hence, I speak of a regenerative *orientation* and diversified small-scale farming.

The farms that I worked on included farms practising organic farming, biodynamic farming, market gardening and forest gardening. Some followed permaculture and agroecological principles, others referred more explicitly to regenerative farming methods (and a few more explicitly to carbon farming)

that they were learning from practitioner books, peer-to-peer networks, You-Tube videos and by following ongoing scientific research. Altogether, I visited 16 farms and worked at 10 farms for varying periods of time throughout different seasons.

My tasks included almost everything except driving tractors and helping with the birth of animals. I sowed seeds and prepared beds, I did weeding and transplanting, I harvested and prepared vegetables for sales or for food bags to be delivered to CSA[6] members, I fed animals and cleaned their barns, I cleaned farm spaces and prepared lunches, and I did many other things that came up as part of the farmers' everyday lives whenever I was present.

In addition to recording many of the spontaneous conversations happening alongside work and other activities at the farms, taking photos and writing notes in my field diary, I conducted ten semi-structured interviews that I co-designed together with the farmers. These were video recorded and published in NÄKYMÄ[7]. While hope was not a concept I explicitly inquired into, or a topic that was often addressed during the fieldwork, I started to *sense* the presence of something resembling hope the more time I spent on the farms. I used my sensory experiences to try, as Pink (2015, 54) describes, "to access areas of embodied, emplaced knowing and [to] use these as a basis from which to understand human environments, activities, perception, experience, action and meaning". To my surprise, this method allowed me to notice how, in many of our conversations at the farms, we kept returning to staying with the trouble(s)[8] rather than spending our time envisioning a more hopeful future.

Drawing on a relational approach (Ingold 2000) and the framework of practical activity (FPA) (Räsänen and Trux 2012), as well as on an understanding that practices are always more-than-human[9] and unfold through the temporalities of the landscapes (Ingold 1993), my analysis of hope proceeded in two stages. In the first part of the analysis, I focused on the *stories* of how people went into farming, analysing *how* and *why* people ended up practising diversified regenerative farming. The stories that I compiled from my fieldnotes,

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6   CSA is an acronym for Community Supported Agriculture. For more information about CSA's in Finland, see e.g. (Kallio 2018; Ruralia 2023)

7   NÄKYMÄ is a website that presents research results on the project *Invisible work in regenerative agriculture* funded by the Kone Foundation. Link to the site: www.naky-matontyo.fi

8   I use this expression from Donna Haraway's book *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, to refer to a collective reflection of troubling times and efforts to think-with multispecies communities (Haraway 2016).

9   I position my work within relational-material practice ontoepistemology, which situates humans as part of the biosphere and acknowledges that human interaction is always intimately entwined with the dwelling and activities of species and more-than-human materiality (see e.g. Ingold 2000, Kimmerer 2003).

interview transcripts and transcripts of everyday conversations during the fieldwork revealed how the coexistence of hope and hopelessness encompassed both the past and the future of the farmers' journeys. I describe these findings in the next section titled 'Thus called the land'.

The second part of the analysis included two phases. First, in inquiring more deeply into the actual practices of regeneration, I specifically focused on what regeneration meant at each farm, and (hence) what were the things farmers and land stewards were working towards, analysing both the how and the why. Second, I made a word search for *hope* in all the written and transcribed research material. This search brought me hits from six different farms out of 16. When going through the parts where hope was explicitly mentioned I realized that most of the excerpts were extremely mundane, in parts even dull, mentioning hope as part of and connecting it to *concrete action*. Analysing excerpts with mentions of hope together with accounts of the hows and whys of regenerative farming resulted in identifying hope as action characterized as *cultivating the lands, inspiring others* and *reciprocating the hopes of other beings*. I describe these findings in the section titled '*Be* the change'.

Thus called the land

In bare feet and hands covered in soil she meets me with a warm hug. We have never met before and yet it feels like we've known each other for a long time. As we walk through a wooden arch- shaped entrance into a path surrounded by plants of different shapes, colours and heights, most of which I do not recognize, Ulrika[10] tells me how she ended up living on this piece of land far from where she grew up. Neither of her parents have a farming background, but Ulrika declares that she can't imagine doing anything else than, as she puts it, serving this land. "My story probably begins from college. I didn't have much direction at that time, but I knew that my hands belong to [be in] the earth, and that was the direction towards which I started to journey," she reminisces. (Field diary[11], 2020)

This was one of the many stories that I encountered in my fieldwork. I found two kinds of storylines: the stories of those people who did not grow up on a farm and did not have a farming background through family —whom some scholars refer to as back-to-the landers (Halfacree 2007; Vlasov 2020; Wilbur 2013) — and the stories of those who did. What these storylines had in common was that in both cases people journeyed *towards* something they considered meaningful and *away from* action that appeared to be contributing

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10 All the names of the farmers have been anonymized and pseudonyms are used instead.
11 The field notes have primarily been written in Finnish, and have been translated into English by the author.

to the ongoing ecological crises. In the words of Macy and Johnstone (2012), it was the great transformation that I was witnessing.

Some of the people whom I encountered were career changers who had never farmed before, but were drawn to the work as small-scale farmers. Ahti was one of these people. He did not wish to enter the academic world, as it did not seem to him to have a purpose, but neither did his chosen profession as a technician that he worked at for ten years feel meaningful on a deeper level. Consequently, he ended up quitting his job and moved into farming.

Anthony, on the other hand, received an academic education and began working as a key account manager at a large tech company. However, like Ahti, Anthony felt that the work that he did at that time was not meaningful, but rather the contrary; his work contributed to the climate change that he was becoming increasingly aware of and anxious about:

> Absolutely not [no background in farming]. I grew up in cities all over the world. […] At some point, I realized that I wanted to create a world in which I was able to live in accordance with my ethics […] the real crisis of our time was global warming. And I sort of became more and more aware of that […] I'm just not going to… I don't want to be a part of that karma or that cycle of destruction […] and so I started moving more towards working with ecosystems. (Transcripts, 2019)

Indeed, many urbanites who were drawn to small-scale and sustenance farming were well aware of global warming and felt the need to do something about it, something concrete, as Joonas did:

> I was studying [at university] and I learned about climate change and a number of other issues facing people everywhere and tried to figure out something concrete that I could do beyond typical activism. […] I wanted to eat better food and so I became interested in gardening. So, gardening became an interest in what is organic farming? Is there anything better than organic farming, what can we do? And so I just found that path to be extremely gratifying, working outside with plants and nature and compost… (Interview 7)

Other people also drifted into farming through becoming interested in the origins of food. Also, communal living in the countryside was an attraction to some, like Iris, her partner, and their friends:

> I don't have an agricultural background at all. I have grown up in a suburban area in a town. […] Many [of us participating in a food collective] had a dream of living [more sustainably] in the countryside and we were interested in the origins of our food. (Transcripts, 2019)

People without a farming background moving from urban to rural areas needed to acquire a piece of land and often started building gardens from scratch — on "waste lands", "deserted fields", or "plots occupied by trees" — with the hope of being able to regenerate these landscapes.

I observed similar aspirations among people who grew up on a farm and wanted to continue farming on the lands that had been cultivated by their families for decades, if not for centuries. This younger generation of farmers seemed to have in common an impulse to take care of the landscape and improve the overall condition of the soils and the surrounding ecosystems. One farm was run by siblings who continued in the footsteps of their grandfather:

> The girls' father started to reflect on the condition of the fields here at our family farm, and he has a connection to biodynamic farming through his background and so he somehow wanted, felt the need for us, to start taking care of the land… (Transcripts, 2021)

Environmentally conscious farming also guided Jyrki, who continued his old family farm, and converted it into an organic farm that nowadays operates as a community supported agricultural cooperative:

> I was born and grew up here at this farm and have been participating in the work as much as I could since I was little. […] And then also environmental issues have gained prominence and were already important when I was little. So, going organic was quite self-evident for me. […] And now we also have this farmer cooperative and CSA here. (Interview 8 & transcripts, 2019)

Many of the stories that I heard made visible future-oriented aspirations to *move towards* what people found desirable, namely working on and with the lands and producing food in a regenerative manner. At the same time, reflecting on the past was intrinsic to regeneratively oriented farming, which provided a path for *moving away* from the trajectories of degeneration that people were witnessing.

In the many different places where I worked, I encountered a similar viewpoint: that the actions of the past generations had had a severe negative impact on farming lands and on the living environment more broadly. Things were heading in the wrong direction and that not enough was being done to reverse the ongoing environmental destruction. I recall one conversation with Jyrki about what would "locally adapted ecological farming", as he called it, be like. He said in passing: "I don't believe that any significant changes will happen in the society by that time [when the next generation takes over this farm]." This notion encapsulated many conversations to come.

Some farmers felt that not only were things bad but that they were getting much worse, and through regenerative farming they were preparing for what Bendell (2018) identifies as a societal collapse. In one conversation with Anthony, we were discussing the power of corporations to control seed supply. And while he was saving seeds as an intrinsic part of farming, and participating in various seed-saving communities, he was not optimistic about the future of indigenous, non-patented seeds:

> We don't know what follows. […] It's a code that's evolved, and there's all these checks and balances that have been built into the [seed] structure, for literally billions of years, and now, suddenly, one species and only a very small percentage of that one species has a shitload of power and money, and technology, they're gonna go in and they're gonna decide how that code is gonna evolve. […] So, if these people have the means of reproduction, they can out-compete anyone else in reproduction, because they can firstly manipulate, then they also patent it. […] They have a huge advantage. Huge advantage. And they will probably use it to fuck everything up. We have no idea what kind of crazy shit we're gonna get out of that. (Transcript 2019)

Some even expressed the idea that regeneratively oriented diversified farming and engaging in self-reliant food economies[12] was a potential threat to established institutions, and hence this way of farming had been made very difficult. By listening to these concerns, I realized that for these farmers, when judging the actions of the past and the present, there was simply not enough evidence for any kinds of strongly sustainable improvements — neither in the political nor in the market spheres — to take place in the near future.

The stories of how and why people were called to work on the lands revealed the entangled temporalities of the landscapes (Ingold 1993) that farming activities evoked. Loss of faith in the current system, or the story of the Great Unravelling as Macy and Johnstone (2012) put it, was as deeply attached to the *past and present* traces in the landscapes as it was connected to *creating new traces* through farming. As hopelessness unravelled in the lives of the farmers, space for another kind of trajectory, one that was deeply connected to today's actions, began to unfold.

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12 By 'self-reliant food economies' I refer to practices of food provisioning that are organized independently at grassroots level, and which are not subordinated to the rules and regulations of the conventional market-based economies and food (safety) regulations (see Houtbeckers and Kallio 2019; Kallio and Houtbeckers 2022 for the conceptualization and use of the concept of self-reliant food economies).

Be the change

At the end of a long day, I sit in the car and drive home with my notebook, camera and a bag of food that has been given to me. During the day I've fed the cows by carrying them hay bales, I've carried vegetable bags of 20kg into the cellar and out of it, I've washed, weighed and packed hundreds of kilos of root vegetables to be delivered to customers, I've filled the shelves of the farm store, helped to make lunch and set and cleaned the table for a crew of nearly ten people. When I leave, I know that the farmer continues the day by delivering the vegetables we've prepared for sales, by orienting for and scheduling the next day's to-do list, by participating in taking care of the family needs, by feeding the cows twice more that evening, and by doing some accounting before eventually falling dead tired into bed. (Fieldnotes 2022)

This farm was not the only farm with days requiring more hours than there are in a day. As the main growing season only lasted for some three months, particularly on those farms that primarily focused on seasonal annual vegetables, the work during this time was very intensive. Nearly all farmers, gardeners and servants of the land appeared on the verge of burnout, and there was always much more that could have been done but couldn't be. It was exactly this kind of everyday, recurrent physical labour that embodied hope for building a better future on the one hand and complete loss of faith for any true change to happen in the society at large on the other. But this ambiguity, the mutual constitution of these two incommensurable dimensions of hope, turned dirt into soil, grass deserts into pollinators' paradises, hundreds of hectares of solitude into community-supported agriculture.

Taking action into one's own hands and practising diversified agriculture, market and forest gardening in a self-determined manner provided the farmers a counter force to the lack of hope that they were experiencing regarding a larger societal change. In the landscapes that I visited, I found, as Macy & Johnstone (2012) put it, that hope was *active*. In the following I describe how hope was manifested through i) cultivating the lands, ii) inspiring others, and iii) reciprocating the hope of other species.

Cultivating the lands

Soil and the condition in which it was inherited played an important role in the work of the farmers. What united all farmers, gardeners and servants of the lands was stewardship, as they were all working to improve the health of the soil and the surrounding landscapes in order to bring them more to life.

Some soil was approached with ploughs, other soil with bare hands. Some farms were turned into perennial forest gardens, some into animal pastures and traditional biotopes, some were converted into oases of diversified annual

vegetable gardens, and some became experimental sites for carbon farming. All these different landscapes unfolded through active shaping of different species, including humans, that inhabited, worked at, or passed through the landscapes. As part of applying different regenerative practices, the farmers actively monitored their landscapes and many reported that they could sense the vitality of soils and observe improved plant growth and the appearance of diverse insects, birds and animals. Marika described their observations as follows:

> We have this experience [here] and a sensation about how our ways of farming and [increasing] biodiversity has changed the soil, the land, into a totally different form, and how being in the fields feels [now] completely different from when we started. (Transcripts 2021)

Harri also observed the concrete results of his farming efforts as he worked in synchronicity with nature's rhythms: "When I work together with nature and in this amazingly diverse and tangible farm organism, I see very concretely every day how nature's metamorphosis works, and I can join it, because I'm in the same location." (Interview 5).

Some farmers told stories about other people who had been applying regenerative agricultural practices consciously for decades, or even just for a few years, and who were "turning things around". Being able to learn from others that it was possible to transform a piece of land to have "the best soil in the county", even where chemicals had previously been used, even where the soils had been "poisoned" and converted to "dirt", and wastelands, gave a lot of hope to continue one's own regenerative work.

Being able to take care of the lands and produce 'good food' (Kallio 2020) in an autonomous manner and in accordance with one's beliefs, and witnessing the concrete material results of one's own work empowered the farmers and generated hope. Many considered that farming had a lot of potential to make an impact on other people and to make a change in the proximate environment, as Iris stated: "These kinds of farms impact hundreds of people." (Fieldnotes 2020).

The fruits of one's labour came in many different forms, but what seemed to ground them was a very special temporal orientation, namely, intergenerationality:

> For me this [regenerative work] is very hopeful. I am extremely touched when I plant a tree, which is so intergenerational. (Interview 2)

> So that we can cultivate these lands for the next thousands of years we need to take care of them as well as we can. (Interview 6)

These hopes for intergenerational care and continuity were infused into concrete action, and most of all, hope was planted and replanted in the mundane, everyday farming work, guided by pursuing self-reliant and autonomous ways of regeneration, where the means of (re)production stayed under the control of the farmers and (other) stewards of the lands. The ambiguity of hope was present in every seed sowed, plant planted, animal reproduced or killed, harvest sold or unsold, as Anthony states:

> And it's not like I'm under any kind of illusion that this is going to save the world. It isn't. But if everybody went in this direction or some kind of similar direction where they're relating with biology, relating with ecosystem, then … (Interview 3)

Something very essential was captured in Anthony's words. Hope was planted in and through concrete action, but there needed to be someone to acknowledge the impacts of that which was sowed and cultivated.

Inspiring others

At the very core of the practices of regenerative farmers and stewards of the land was a desire to demonstrate that these kinds of ways of farming and (re)producing food were viable. Similar to being inspired by other regenerative farmers, whose books some people had been reading or whom they were following on the social media, many wished to be able to inspire others — farmers of today and of tomorrow — through the work they were doing and through the landscapes they were (co)creating and shaping.

The underlying hope of many farmers was to facilitate more regenerative farms in the future. They hoped that they could provide guidance and support the learning needed for this kind of development, despite the fact that some felt that regenerative agriculture was a threat to the broader market-based society, as noted by some farmers: "this [diversified small-scale regenerative farming] is not wanted in the bigger picture, that's for sure. The global monetary economy is driving in a completely opposite direction, the direction of control." (Transcript 2021).

Many seemed to want to validate diversified small-scale farming, as Joonas put it: "what I'm trying to do is just have a small-scale business that's profitable enough that it's going to hopefully inspire more, especially young people, to see that farming in Finland is a viable option" (Interview 7). For many, the concrete farming work was in itself inspirational and empowering. Many described how it gave them strength and a sense of autonomy, provided meaning and continuous inspiration. People working on farms and at homestead gardens generally saw that regenerative farming had a lot of potential for bring-

ing about change, and even for providing a totally different paradigm of live-lihoods compared to what the dominant consumption-driven society offered.

For many farmers, doing things together and enabling communities to form around and support small-scale farming was at the core of the required paradigm shift. Indeed, on some farms I observed a continuous flow of people who came to work, help or visit. These were friends and acquaintances, trainees and volunteers, school groups and political delegations, other farmers and researchers like myself. These were the people who had the potential to be inspired. Particular farms were known for their successful regenerative work and admiring appraisals of them circulated by word of mouth. Some farmers, however, were rather humble, underestimating the impact they might have as a source of inspiration. Ahti was one of them.

After working periodically at Ahti's farm for one year we sat down to record a video interview. Our conversations during our workdays had always flowed very well, but then, in front of the camera, it proved to be difficult for Ahti to articulate his achievements. When I asked why he finds regenerative farming important there was a long silence after the familiar answer he gave — namely, that it is important to take care of the soil, the animals and the local eco-systems. Then in a lowered and soft voice, he said: "That we can work together [here] and produce great results…maybe that gives people some hope. For me, an essential part of being regenerative is that *people* have a place in it." (Interview 6, author's emphasis, based on a contextual understanding of the conversation)

Again, there was something very concrete and material in the hope of be-ing able to inspire. Making a more liveable planet was not about talking and hoping that these beliefs would somehow magically materialize, but it was about *walking the talk*, about doing, observing and witnessing the impact of taking concrete action into one's own hands in the immediate environments. Hoping to be or to become an inspiration was also a hope to make other people experience the beauty and virtue of regenerative work. Juha described this as follows:

> But this planet is actually rather fragile and we need to do everything we can and then to find out that you can actually produce lots of food this way, you can clean the water, you can bring back biodiversity, you can bring back excitement, you can have healthy communities, people [would] want to become farmers again, they want to own land, they want to live out in the countryside where they can, when they're actually told they can interact with this miraculous thing… (Transcripts 2020)

Interacting with the miraculous thing called the Earth gave hope, but for some, at some point in their journey, it appeared to relocate hope and shift people's perspectives of *whose* hopes farming work was serving.

Reciprocating the hopes of other living beings

Hope did not merely exist for and because of humans, it also came in a form that departed from an understanding of hope as a characteristic of human behaviour alone. Working in multispecies environments, continually pursuing knowledge about how other species contributed to making and shaping landscapes enabled farmers to better understand — and be interested in learning more about — the needs and aspirations of other species. This made some people reflect on the hopes of living beings beyond humans, whom Barron and Hess (2020) call the "earth-others".

At a biodynamic farm, Iris was taking a group of students for a walk in some surrounding pastures where traditional biotopes had been revived and sustained. She explained how "plants and nature, actually, somehow await and hope for us to see them. Interaction is as much a gift for them as it is for us." (Transcripts 2020).

Acknowledging the needs and hopes of other living beings was embedded in farming, albeit in various ways. Despite the fact that the farmers worked within multiple ways of knowing the(ir) landscapes, they all seemed to share an understanding that they were not merely working for themselves, but for the land that had been degenerated and for the generations to come. Being able to work in intimate connection with the more-than-human world and towards acknowledging its silenced hopes helped some farmers to cope despite the hard work:

> What helps me manage and is significant on the personal level is my relationship with nature and particularly with animals, this continuous co-living and sensing in my proximate environment. I get [back] at least what I hope to be able to give, and these ties that we make are very strong. (Interview 2)

> Then with plants, I experience that it has a meaning that we do this work with our [bare] hands and with [conscious] presence. It is like the Earth wants to be touched... That's why I want to place my bare skin to her skin. (Fieldnotes 2021)

Indeed, in the midst of planting seedlings in muddy fields, "cleaning" vegetable beds of weeds, or shovelling manure in the cowhouses, many described how the concrete feeling of sticking one's hands into soil, meeting a wild animal in the garden at dawn, or tending the plants brought an 'authentic' feeling of being a human being out of them. But forming intimate relations with the soil, plants and animals and attending to the diverse rhythms of (re)production (Kallio and LaFleur 2023) not only enabled the farmers to recognize the hopes of other-than-humans, but also made them recognize and appreciate the reciprocity of more-than-human relations.

Reciprocal relations manifest themselves in many ways, but at the core was the ability of the farmers to acknowledge the hopes of other living beings. The hope of plants, animals, birds, fungi and sometimes even the hope of water — as Ulrika mentioned, "the water wants to flow freely, and not be captured in a static deposit" (Fieldnotes 2021) — would enter into the sphere of reciprocal relations.

Creating reciprocal relations with plants, animals and other living beings in the landscapes meant giving something back to them, not merely taking from them. Reciprocity was manifested, for instance, in the practice of composting. Making compost was an engagement which required a lot of work and time that could have been avoided by purchasing fertilizers or by outsourcing the making of compost. However, using one's own compost was an expression of caring for the soil (Puig De La Bellacasa 2015) and was considered an act of giving back the nutrients that were taken from the soil by the harvest.

These kinds of practices that emerged from the need to reciprocate brought the farmers and other carers of the land to reflect upon the connections between the wellbeing of people and of the land: "It's about human flourishing [...] what keeps our society going is the way we manage land, and you can see the soil health reflected in the health of the people, and [at the moment] people aren't happy." (Interview 6).

At the end of the day, recognizing the hopes of other living beings inhabiting and shaping the farming landscapes amounted to a recognition of one's own sources of illness and wellbeing, sorrow and happiness.

Hope and unfolding temporalities of intergenerational farming landscapes

> In its present form, a tree embodies the entire history of its development from the moment it first took root. And that history consists in the unfolding of its relations with the manifold components of its environment, including the people who have nurtured it, tilled the soil around it, pruned its branches, picked its fruit, and - as at present - use it as something to lean against. The people, in other words, are as much bound up in the life of a tree as is the tree in the lives of the people. (Ingold 1993, 197-198)

As a tree grows from a temporally unfolding landscape, the seed of this tree has been sown and the tree nurtured through hope. Motivated by developing an understanding of hope as something that people *do* (Macy and Johnstone 2012, see also Graeber 2001) rather than something that people *have* (Bryant & Knight 2019, Lehtinen 2019), my aim has been to make visible how hope is materialized in actions like those Ingold (ibid.) describes in the quote above

when analysing Bruegel's *The Harvesters*. Acts such as sowing seeds, nurturing plants and trees, caring for more-than-human communities, and harvesting I identified as *cultivating the lands*. Observing the growth, regeneration and the temporal unfolding of the landscapes and sharing this knowledge with others, is identified as *inspiring others*. Finally, leaning on a tree, looking at it, smelling its flowers and eating its fruits, and attending to the hopes of multiple other living beings who wish to be nurtured, is *reciprocating the hopes of other living beings*. All these activities emerge from hope.

In what follows, I discuss how hope as action, in the context of regeneratively oriented small-scale farming work, leaves tangible traces in farming landscapes that are always and inherently intergenerational and temporally unfolding. I argue that conceptualizing hope as action, or as Active Hope as Macy and Johnstone (2012) propose, suggests a different kind of temporality. This hope is (literally) grounded in *the past*, which impacts the actions of the present, and *the future,* which orients the actions of today. Furthermore, as active hope acknowledges the coexistence of hope and hopelessness, it also reveals that they are derived from totally different sources.

As I learned at the diversified small-scale farms where I worked, hope manifested through concrete everyday work and recurrent action. Farmers sow seeds in the hope that they germinate; they tend plants in the hope that there would be a good harvest; they care for soil in the hope that it becomes animate (Puig de La Bellacasa 2019). They observe, experiment and learn to farm better in the hope that others too became inspired and succeed. They learn to *notice* (Grasseni 2004; Tsing 2012: 17-26) the needs of plants, animals and (other) fellow workers in the hope that such generosity will be reciprocated (Kimmerer 2013).

It is here where acknowledging the larger view of time (Macy & Johnstone 2012) comes to play a significant role in abandoning the understanding of hope as merely a future-oriented *emotion* as proposed by Bryant & Knight (2019). Conceptualizing hope as action, I suggest, moves beyond the linear perception of time — beyond gazing forward into the future and seeking to catch the ever-escaping promise of unrealized potential (Byrant & Knight 2019) — but instead appears to be more truthful to the temporality of the landscape (Ingold 1993).

This kind of temporality discloses hopeful and hopeless traces of intergenerational pasts, presents and futures, and acknowledges the paces of soil (Puid de la Bellacasa 2015), plants (Kimmerer 2013) and animals. Indeed, working so closely with the manifold living beings that inhabited and shaped farming landscapes put a very particular kind of intergenerational temporality into play: farmers became cognizant of the different lifespans of diverse organ-

isms and materialities. For instance, by making compost they participated in different rhythmic cycles of animal reproduction and became subjected to the timely and time-consuming processes of decomposition emerging from the entwined rhythms of microbes, mycelia, plants, animals and humans (Kallio and LaFleur 2023). Ultimately, it was about recognizing the temporalities of enlivening or degrading soil, of nurturing or cutting down trees, and of helping plants, animals, birds and pollinators to adapt or become extinct in the changing conditions of their habitats.

Aiming to regenerate the landscapes of the present through diversified farming the farmers continued to shape landscape relations inherited from past generations and thereby ended up reconfiguring the trajectories of future generations. Through active hope (Macy & Johnston 2012), the farmers were *making* the future here and now rather than trying to control it (Lehtinen 2019) — by *acting* upon that what they desired and hoped for.

But while an understanding of hope as action — as residing in the reproduction of everyday farming life — is very close to an understanding of hope as a *disciplined work* (Scahill 2021; Sonenstein and Wilson 2020), contrary to what Kaba suggests, the kind of hope that I observed at the farms was activated not on account of its antithesis, hopelessness, but despite it. In other words, while some journeys had started from places of hopelessness, the farmers and other carers of agricultural lands were not pursuing livelihoods through regeneratively oriented small-scale farming because they were hopeless, but because they refused to contribute to ecological degeneration.

Instead, hope was transformed into action in the process of pursuing a completely different desired reality, one that acknowledged the possibilities of more-than-human livelihoods (Houbeckers and Kallio 2022) and one in which utopias were collectively put to work (Alhojärvi 2021). In this sense, conceptualizing hope as action requires re-examining *the relationship* between hope and action. Further, it calls for relinquishing an understanding of hope as something that is abstract, and instead warrants recognizing its materiality. Hence, speaking of the unfolding of hope through intergenerational farming landscapes is not possible without recognizing *how* hope(s) and hopelessness(es) of past generations materialize in the conditions of the agricultural lands, lands that have been inherited by the new farmer generations. Equally, recognizing the materiality of hope is to recognize the ways in which agricultural lands are farmed from the position of acting upon the anticipated hope(s) and hopelessness(es) of future generations.

This brings me to the last point that I wish to discuss, namely false hope. While arguing that both hope and hopelessness of past, present and future generations leaves traces in farming landscapes and mobilizes action, it is crucial

to point out that farmers' hope(s) and hopelessness(es) not only arose from different sources but that the hope(s) of farmers were also based on totally different beliefs and understandings of the desired future than those offered by politicians and market actors.

As other thinkers have pointed out more generally (Jensen 2006; Lehtinen 2019; Macy and Johnstone 2012) farmers' hopelessness also derived from the experience of not having any real agency to guide societal transformation in a desired, strongly sustainable direction. Engaging in farming enabled self-determination and thereby gave the farmers agency to act upon, and an ability to move towards, what they desired. However, what diversified small-scale farmers desired differed greatly from the dominant regenerative agricultural field. While the hope of politicians, financiers and industry actors has increasingly been characterized by the desire to reduce and balance carbon emissions through carbon markets (IPES-Food 2022), selling one's labour input and offering one's lands to serve carbon offsetting pursuits was not the hope of the farmers whose journeys I followed.

I would like to end this hope-full journey with the thoughts of Tim Ingold, who, in the preface to the 2021 reissue, discusses the collection of essays published in *The Perception of the Environment*. Ingold describes how "in the course of writing these essays I began to find renewed hope in a way of thinking that would see our relations with others nestled within the wider field of relations with the very earth on which we dwell, and all that lives and grows from it." (Ingold 2000: xiv). He then goes on to reflect on the critique he received for depicting the beauty of this world rather than its dissonance. To the critique, Ingold replies:

> My response was to say that you cannot tear apart what has not first been woven together; that coherence is a necessary condition for rupture. And it was the nature of this coherence that I wanted to understand. But as the skies darken overhead, I am no longer so sure. [...] I know I am not alone in intuiting this contradiction, as it is patently on show in all the debates, anthropological and otherwise, that are struggling with the question of how to live, in a way that would offer hope to future generations. We will have our work cut out, in coming years, to resolve it. (2021, xv)

Indeed, we are living in turbulent times. It remains to be seen what kinds of hopes and states of hopelessness the future generations will carry on and how they will end up resolving living off and with the lands that they inherit. Ultimately, the answer to the question of how to live in a way that would offer hope to future generations might well be giving in to hopelessness, contemplating the Great Unravelling, and giving up false hope (Jensen 2006; Lehtinen 2019; Macy and Johnstone 2012).

Then, what remains, is *hope as action*: acting *here and now* from within a "larger view of time" (Macy & Johnstone 2012) and situating oneself within shared stories of our times and unfolding temporalities of intergenerational landscapes. Then, maybe, hope as action can guide us through the world of loss, ruins and extinction (Tsing et al. 2017; Van Dooren 2014) and mark paths towards a world of beauty, miracles and awe.

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SOURCES

Fieldwork material

Interview material published on [webpage]:

–Interview 1. October, 2021, Southern Finland. Females, 30-50 years. Interviewer Galina Kallio

–Interview 2. October, 2020, Southern Finland. Female, 40 years. Interviewer Galina Kallio

–Interview 3. June, 2019, Norway. Male, 40-50 years. Interviewer Galina Kallio

–Interview 4. November, 2019, Central Finland. Female & Male, 50 years. Interviewer Galina Kallio

–Interview 5. December, 2019, Central Finland. Male, 40 years. Interviewer Galina Kallio

–Interview 6. October, 2019, Southern Finland. Male, 40 years. Interviewer Galina Kallio

–Interview 7. November, 2019, Southern Finland. Male, 40 years. Interviewer Galina Kallio

–Interview 8. November, 2019, Southern Finland. Male, 40 years. Interviewer Galina Kallio

Interview material, in the possession of the author, stored at the University of Helsinki project group folder:

–Transcripts. Recorded conversations during the fieldwork, 2019. Interviewers Galina Kallio & Risto Musta.

–Transcripts. Recorded conversations during the fieldwork, 2020—2022. Interviewer Galina Kallio.

–Field diaries, 2019–2022.

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**Kristiina Korjonen-Kuusipuro &
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Landscapes of Hope
Youths' Small Agencies of Online Futures in Finland

Abstract

Our article aims to offer counter-narratives to the risks and hardships of digital youth by scrutinizing how hope is present in youth's lives in different online environments and everyday practices. We trace young people's landscapes of hope by asking what kind of hopes and ideas of the digital future young people have about online environments and how they practice and cherish hope. To achieve these objectives, we draw on both qualitative and quantitative data produced in 2021–2022 among Finnish ninth graders. Our findings emphasize that young people's online landscapes of hope are oriented toward the future, and they are in a constant state of co-becoming with different kinds of contexts, agencies, practices, and intensities.

Keywords: digital youth, hope, affect, digital landscapes, digital ethnography, Finland

Introduction

Digitalisation has rapidly changed our everyday lives. New technologies have been loaded with plenty of positive expectations and negative fears (Boyd 2014). They are considered helpful, but many studies also reinforce a pessimistic view of digital technologies as harmful, addictive, and even toxic for young people (Drotner 1999; Lavis & Winter 2020; Henzel & Håkansson 2021; Childs & Holland 2022). In current media narratives, particularly social media usage has been considered dangerous and is often seen through the lenses of moral panic (Seland & Hyggen 2021).

Young people's digital everyday life is complicated, diverse, and in constant transformation. According to previous research on digital youth and our empirical findings, the online practices of youth and ways of participation and belonging vary significantly (Boyd 2014; Literat et al. 2018; Korjonen-Kuusipuro et al. 2022). However, young people's digital everyday is often seen as a problem: too much time is spent online, and plenty of imagined and real dangers and hardships are connected to the digital lives of teens (Drotner 1999; Boyd 2014; Livingstone & Sefton-Green 2016; Henzel & Håkansson 2021). "Landscapes of hope" refer to sociologist Andrew Webster et al.'s (2020, 1100) concept of digital landscapes which discusses the "complex and overlapping contours of off- and on-line information flows, exchanges and meanings, and how these embody cultural, political and epistemic processes". It is important to know how digital information is accessed, used and understood, but it is even more necessary to understand how young people make sense of it and how digital landscapes shape and frame their agency.

Our article offers a novel approach to digital youth. We don't just expand the knowledge base of youth studies but also propose a renewed lens through which we might understand and engage with the multifaceted worlds of young individuals today. Young people need hope as the future makers of the world, and therefore, we concentrate on how hope is present in youth's lives in different online environments and everyday practices. Even though hope is often connected with the future, we also concentrate on things already happening in the present. Ergo, the starting point of our article is anthropologist Sherry Ortner's (2016) suggestion that to understand the foundations of well-being and a good life, we need to study more than just the "harsh dimensions of social lives" (see also Willow 2023). Our two main research questions are 1) what kind of hopes and ideas of digital future do young people have on online environments? and 2) how do young people practice and cherish hope?

We draw on quantitative and qualitative research material produced in 2021–2022 on the digital everyday life of young people in Finland born in 2005

and 2006[1]. The quantitative material consists of an online survey (n=418), and the qualitative material consists of individual interviews with 28 young people and two group interviews. We also conducted digital ethnography, which in this case were online observations of the people followed by the participants on social media, the Instagram behavior of some participants, and researchers' notes of this observation. We have read, analysed, and interpreted our research material with affective lenses concentrating on different dimensions of hope. Theoretically, we lean on multidisciplinary understanding of hope and theories of affect, where affects and emotions, such as hope, are seen as critical links between micro and macro levels of social reality and as the glue binding people together and generating connections to larger social and cultural structures (Turner and Stets 2005). Affects are "hotspots", showing us socially and culturally meaningful issues that need our attention (Ahmed 2004; MacLure 2013).

We begin our article by elaborating digital environments that are meaningful for young people and dismantling the concept of hope. Then we offer an overview of our research materials, methods, and ethical considerations. In our three empirical chapters, we analyse hope as part of digital futures, small practices and collective paths. We end the article with a discussion and a conclusion.

Understanding hope in young people's digital environments

According to research, youth's online practices and ways of participation and belonging vary significantly, and digital well-being is seen as a goal that needs to be addressed (Livingstone & Haddon 2009; Boyd 2014; Helsper 2021). There is copious literature on the benefits and harms of digitalization and social media on young people. The positive aspects include equity (Nikunen & Valtonen 2022), new opportunities for education and work (Barron et al. 2014) and improved mental health and well-being (Lavis & Winter 2020). Among the negative aspects of social media and other online hangouts, the power of algorithms and threats to mental well-being are themes stressed by many researchers (Maalsen 2023). Also, young people themselves talk significantly about the addictive nature and usefulness of online activities, as well as time spent online. This is not a new phenomenon. Danah Boyd (2014) wrote about

teens' complicated online lives almost a decade ago, and her interpretations are still valid in many respects.

Understanding the concept of hope requires a multidisciplinary approach. Psychologically hope – "the personal rainbow of the mind" – can be defined as "the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals and to motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways" (Snyder 2002, 249). Understood this way, the key aspects of hope are two kinds of ways to think. First, there is the process of thinking about one's goals and the motivation to move towards them (agency thinking), and second, pathway thinking in which the most important aspect is to plan ways to achieve one's goals (Snyder 2002).

Philosopher Stan van Hooft (2014) argues that hopes are oriented toward the future and can only refer to what is possible in the future. For van Hooft, there seems to be a connection between hopes and wishes, but hope differs from other wishes in that its object needs to be the future of the person who hopes for it. Even though hope has a role in individuals' recovery processes and effects on emotional health (Cohen 2016), hope is not entirely connected to the person's efforts. It is possible that what is hoped for never occurs. (van Hooft 2014).

Anthropologist Hirokazu Miyazaki (2004) conceptualizes hope in a more cultural frame as a method of knowing and connects hope analytically with desires arguing that these two are not necessarily distinguishable. In Miyazaki's research, hope is not an endpoint of a process. If you approach hope as an endpoint, "the newness or freshness of the prospective moment that defines that moment as 'hopeful' is immediately lost" (Miyazaki 2004, 8).

Hope and future expectations have a unique role in young people's lives and youth studies; youth are the makers of the future. (Sun & Shek 2012; Aapola-Kari & Wrede-Jäntti 2017.) In Finland, health researcher Kaija Tikkanen (2012, 7; 86) understands young people's sense of hope as the basic element of their everyday life. Hope relates to an awareness of continuity and trust in achieving one's goals. Hope is personal, and the intensity varies, but in general, hope encourages and moves young people forward. It can also be strengthened through concrete activities connected to one's creativity, culture, or relationship with another person and the environment.

Furthermore, Hannila et al. (2015) relate young peoples' hope with awareness of others' support and help they can get if needed. This way, hope becomes a collective and shared achievement or goal. Even minor actions can add and strengthen hope, and by focusing on small but significant actions, we may understand what hope means in everyday life context (see also Kotzé 2016). Hope is often connected with positivism because they both are future-oriented and future-minded. However, Bruininks and Malle (2005) have shown that people think about hope and positivity differently. Different interpretations

occur when considering features like importance, likelihood, and perceived personal control. These differences are likely to predict different behaviors. Hope is often connected with expectations, but Dowling & Rickwood (2016, 63) state that "hope is based on perceived personal agency, while expectations are based on the perceived probable outcome". Unlike naïve optimism, hope builds on the possibility that things might be okay (Reick 2023).

When thinking about young people's hope in digital environments, we need to consider who can act and who has agency. To understand agency, we lean on posthumanist and new materialist thinking where scholars argue that agency does not belong inherently to humans. Karen Barad (2007), a quantum physicist, philosopher of science, and feminist theorist, understands agency as "distributed" (Jackson and Mazzei 2012, 113), produced in an enactment. Thus, agency is not the property of a person or a thing but a matter of intra-acting; in which the social and material are entangled. In our research, this means that, for example, digital devices, algorithms, or places are also active agents in youth's digital landscapes of hope and interconnected with the social and material world.

From a collective and cultural viewpoint, hope is also about the sense of (digital) belonging. According to sociologist Nira Yuval-Davis (2011) belonging is about an emotional attachment, about feeling at home. She further refers to anthropologist Ghassan Hage who argues that "home is an ongoing project entailing a sense of hope for the future" (Hage 1997, 103 as cited in Yuval-Davis 2011, 10). Hage (2004) further stresses that the idea of a nation-state is to produce and distribute hope, and we are currently witnessing the distributional network of hope shrinking. Thus, a sense of safety and security are important features of hope. From our viewpoint, participation is often seen as participation in society (citizenship) or political participation. However, belonging refers to a broader, more nuanced understanding, including young people's individual experience of being part of a larger community or group. Belonging is fluid and relational; therefore, the process where hope is co-produced and woven together with everyday practices, agencies, intensities, and contexts is important.

Materials, methods, and ethical considerations
Our research focuses on ninth graders (born mainly in 2005/2006) in three different regions in Finland. The ninth graders were chosen as a target group because they are at the start of their transition years concerning education, growing up, and approaching emerging adulthood in economically and socio-culturally different environments. In Finland, ninth grade is the last year

of comprehensive school for all students. After that, the education paths of young people separate.

The production of the research material started with a survey on the use, inclusion, and place of residence of young people. The survey was planned to be conducted in collaboration with schools, but due to COVID-19, the collaboration was cancelled, and access to the field became challenging and difficult. Some schools, however, promised to share the link to our online questionnaire in Wilma, an online communication system between schools and homes in Finland. We received 418 responses to our survey with the contact information of some volunteer interviewees (see Table 1 for place of residence and Table 2 for gender of the participants). We also marketed the survey through social media, spawning a few respondents and one interviewee. In the questionnaire we asked for volunteers to participate our interviews.

Table 1. Number of participants according to the place of residence. (*12 people out of a total of 418 questionnaire respondents did not tell their place of residence.)

Place of residence	Questionnaire participants	Interviewees
Regiopolis	149	9
Stagnating industrial town	198	19
Sleepy village	59	--
TOTAL	406*	28

Our purpose was to meet young people face-to-face, chat with them, interview them and observe their use of digital media and devices, but because of COVID-19 pandemic our only option was to transfer the ethnographic study online. During autumn 2021–winter 2022, we interviewed 28 young people and conducted two group interviews (4 participants). The interviews were conducted with Teams or WhatsApp and recorded. Our interviews concentrated on three themes: agency, online practices, and place. We discussed, for example the kinds of online activities and daily rhythms they have. We explored how belonging to groups and friendships are created online, and what kind of pressures acting and being online has created. We asked our participants to choose and show us some of their online posts and who they follow online. Furthermore, we asked them about their hopes for the future: what they would change if they had the power to modify their online worlds.

We use hope as a concept and a method. In the analysis of our research material, we have read and re-read the material through an affective lens

Table 2. Participants according to gender.

	Female (N)	Male (N)	Non-binary/do not want to say (N)	All together (N)
Questionnaire respondents	222	175	10/11	418
Interviewees	14	13	1	28

and explored glimpses, agencies, practices, and contexts of hope. Following Miyazaki's (2004) framework understanding hope as a way of knowing, we interpret hope as something that is "not yet" but becoming. In the analysis, we searched for hopeful content in our interviews and other research material like field diaries and video recordings of the interviews. This holistic process of affective analysis demands a nuanced and empathetic attitude through careful reading. Affects can become visible in research material as emotions expressed in words like "it makes me happy to…" or this makes me feel sad" or just by stressing certain words in speech. Affective content can also be something like "I had this feeling…" or "It gives me vibes/shivers/ …" or expressed in facial expressions or bodily movements in video recordings of the interviews or laughter in interviews. (Zackariasson 2020.) Furthermore, the affective initiatives connected to hope can be a researcher's intuition that there is "something more" in this. Therefore, acquiring affective and embodied knowledge requires new kinds of means and tools and it demands sensitivity from a researcher (Koskinen-Koivisto & Lehtovaara 2020).

Our study has followed the principles of good scientific practice and general ethical guidelines of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (TENK), and the special ethical principles of youth research (see for example Rutanen & Vehkalahti 2019). Ethical permission for the project was granted by the Ethical Committee of the South-Eastern University of Applied Sciences (decision 28.1.2021).

The privacy statement and consent for the research were sent to interviewees beforehand by e-mail. The consent and privacy statements were also reviewed orally at the beginning of the interviews, and the young people were asked again if they wanted to participate in the study. We told our participants that even though we use direct quotations, individuals cannot be identified because we will use pseudonyms and placenames, and other possible identifiers will be removed. Our participants had a chance to ask questions about the research project during the interviews.

Everyday digital utopias

We start from the end: we concluded our interviews by asking our participants to imagine or dream of a better digital future or what they would change if they could. These dreams can be seen as a kind of everyday digital utopia experienced through the formation of new practices (Kiilakoski & Piispa 2023). Even though these everyday digital utopias are imagined, these are very closely tied to practices that challenge present injustices and enable thinking about the digital everyday in a different way. These illustrate how new social patterns can be formed in everyday lives. The task of thinking about the digital future was a difficult one for young people, and it was often followed by laughter, sighs, or silences. After a short moment of thinking, many of our participants answered that they wish or hope that people would be nicer to each other and that no one would get bullied anymore. This imagined future stemmed from the context of social media, which was considered somewhat "fake" and needed to be more realistic:

> Well [laughs], well like […] rather similar to what it is now […] but maybe more realistic, because for example, like TikTok shows, social media is like fake, like you could see what models look like in real life. These photos are so photoshopped. That could be more realistic. (Aino, H10s.)[2]

> Well, I don't know. I wish it would be less addictive or that it would have fewer disadvantages. And that people would not spend their time on social media or online or trust Google. (Sofia, H3s.)

> […] Well, something that would not guide people's lives too much. Of course, it brings possibilities, but then also the risks increase at the same time. (Matias, H4s.)

The wish for less addictive social media or online activities shows us how hopes for the future are closely entangled with the present, where change is needed. In the same way, issues of privacy and security were brought up in future hopes for the internet. This was mentioned by our study's more technically oriented participants, whose hobbies (e.g., gaming or coding) were more closely connected to online environments.

> Absolutely more private. Now it is normal for some companies to sell all your data to advertisers. I hope that there would be a solution at some point and that collecting

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2   All our quotes have been translated from Finnish to English by the authors. All names are pseudonyms. Young people have identified themselves as female, male or non-binary, and we have chosen pseudonyms according to this identification.

and selling this data would not be free or so cheap. Or was there something else that prevents companies from collecting this data. (Tuuli, H4a)

In some interviews, hopes were superseded by the ideas of a technological imperative (Talsi & Tuuva-Hongisto 2009) and technological imaginaries (Jasanoff & Kim 2009; Jasanoff 2015). For example, in a pair interview with Aleksi and Oskari (H8s and H9s), we heard how the internet was perfect from Aleksi's point of view. He talked about some irritating people, but changing the internet or digitalization in this respect was not important for him. "It's not important for me that I would take part in making laws or such. Oskari (H9s) agreed with him but stressed that "in principle, you cannot do anything. Whatever you say, you can't influence it. You just need to get used to it. Get used to it what it is." This points out two things: the first vision echoes the technological imperative: the online world seems to be perfect, and second, the notion that they are unable to take action. For these two young people, digitalization and digital technologies seem to be something you cannot change or influence. Hope seems to be missing here or is not needed to change the current situation.

Small practices and agencies of hope

Hope is central to individual well-being (Cohen 2016), and in creating hope, all actions count. Therefore, we want to highlight the small and mundane practices that can create hope. Among our interlocutors, we found some people who stressed the role of very small positive practices, like sending hearts on social media or other forms of positive feedback to others. These could be people they knew, friends or acquaintances, or people they did not know personally. For these participants, who mostly identified themselves as females, spreading a positive attitude was important, as is the good mood spread by those they followed. For some of our participants, being in a good mood was not a necessity, but they knew how a positive mood could save the day, as Inka explains:

> Researcher: Is being in a good mood important to you?
> Inka, H13a: Well, generally, being in a good mood is nice, but it isn't necessary. I mean, you can use media, be online or anywhere else even if you don't have a good mood, or even if you get in a bad mood. I think a good mood is a plus. But if you watch or follow certain people, you know that they will inspire a good mood in you. And this can brighten your whole day if you are having a bad day, for example.

The importance of positivity and the desire to make other people feel good might be connected to hopefulness as a way of being. According to van Hooft

(2014, 49), "hopefulness is not constituted as a set of hopes directed upon specific outcomes but is a way in which she apprehends the whole world and everything that happens in it". In the following excerpt, Aino ponders the meaning of positivity in her life, describing it as a choice and highlighting the desire to spread a positive attitude to others.

> I have a more positive attitude than some of my friends. Sometimes I need to encourage my friends so that they would have a more positive mood. I am tired of negativity and don't want negative energy in my life. I want to be as positive as possible and spread this feeling to others too. (Aino, H10s.)

Aino also explained that she always tries to comment on others' posts in friendly and encouraging ways. This kind of activity is often labeled as slactivism or clicktivism, which both refer to lazy and not-so-serious methods of citizen participation (Pandey et al. 2020). Still, it could be seen as a silent or everyday resistance to an existing culture where positive actions are not taken seriously, and various power relations prevail (for more on silent resistance, see Lehtola & Autti 2019). However, if you examine these practices through the lenses of hope, all emojis and reactions matter, especially to people like Aino, who are tired of the negativity in online environments. The following excerpt from Katriina clarifies how even the tiniest of practices are important while also describing the vulnerability of online agencies. Young people carefully consider what they post online as if they get negative feedback, they may not want to do it again.

> I usually post selfies of my face on Instagram, but then one day, I thought that maybe it would be the right time, and I posted a picture of my whole body through a mirror. A photo where I had nice clothes and such […] and, well, I got really positive feedback. I have felt insecure about myself, and it was really meaningful that some people came to tell me that it was nice that I was finally encouraged to post that photo and that my action encouraged others too. It really made me feel good. (Katriina, H7s)

The story is a good example of small agency as defined by Marja-Liisa Honkasalo (2009; 2013, 46). Small agencies include repetitiveness and reciprocal movement, where the actor's network and individuals change when they create their identities and actions. In all these movements, freedom is essential, but the beginning is always connected to what has been started before and the kind of existing actions. Furthermore, this is connected to one's future and how it is possible to do something for that future (see also Tikkanen 2012). Their practices are full of hope also because of the reverberations they create.

Positive actions tend to spread and have an effect. Sarah Ahmed (2004) has written about the movement of affects through bodies. Adi Kuntsman (2012, 2) has defined this kind of movement as a reverberation "that makes us attentive to the simultaneous presence of speed and stillness in online sites; to distortions and resonance, intensification and dissolution in the process of moving through various digital terrains". Reverberation invites us to think not only about the movement of affects in and out of cyberspace through bodies but also about the multiplicity of effects such movement might entail. Affects are also sticky, as Sarah Ahmed (2010) has pointed out. This stickiness can be noted, for example in an interview, after which the researcher wrote in her fieldwork diary that "the participant's face is very close to the camera, and she has an intensive gaze. This interview makes me feel happy" (Fieldnotes 7.5.2021). Young participant's hope to be nice to other people online is embodied, and it certainly impresses the interviewer in the online interview.

The other side of the coin is always present in the narratives of these kinds of small agencies and minor practices of hope. By this, we mean the possibility that young people do very little or nothing because they think their actions will not end in the desired result. This kind of affectual vacillation, constant movement, is typical for the online behavior of youth. In the following example, Viivi explains how cautious she is online:

> Well, if I think of my own online practices, I think very carefully about what I post online, if it, for example, is an image that I can get criticized or if I know that someone wants to follow me and that someone is maybe a mean person, I do not accept this person as my follower. (Viivi, H21a)

Positive intentions and hope for likes or new followers are superseded by more powerful feelings of fear and suspicion. Our example highlights that reverberation happens in very small actions and the assemblage of human and non-human actors.

Following popular content creators is one of the most common online practices among youth. Our empirical material shows how a positive and friendly attitude invited people to follow various content creators, who create the feeling of a good mood. In positive and friendly atmosphere hope was connected to a better and more friendly future of online environments.

> [PinkkuPinsku] is perhaps the one I like most. Maybe just because, how would I say it […] I somehow just get such good vibes because she is just her genuine self. And those videos are meant for the same age group, PinkkuPinsku is not much older than me. (Olivia, H5s)

Notably, our interviewee mentions embodied experiences - good vibes – as something that illuminates important issues. Even though these kinds of embodied notions were relatively rare in our research material, they demonstrate how affects "touch us", how bodies are entangled in affective processes, and how affects are not always so easy to express in words (see also Ahmed 2004; Blackman and Venn 2010; Kuntsman 2012).

Collective hopeful paths

Research has shown that social media and online communication are legitimate means of developing social connections and can foster a sense of belonging among youth (Boyd 2014; Smith et al. 2021). Being together and connecting with friends, family, and peers were very important for our participants. The most important online environments, according to our online questionnaire (n=418), were Snapchat (86.6%), TikTok (79.4%), Instagram (79.1%), YouTube (75.4%), and WhatsApp (73%). In these online environments, young people keep in touch, chat with their friends and peers, watch interesting content, and sometimes create content and post themselves. Our participants were very strict about their privacy, and many of our interviewers told us that they like to see what other people post, but they rarely post themselves. Décieux et al. (2019) have stressed how social interactions in online environments play a huge role and have changed the patterns of social interactions among peers. The apps young people chose confirm the importance of connecting as one of the most important youth online practices.

Young people's everyday life is becoming increasingly homebound, and some researchers have observed that their social landscape is shrinking (boyd 2014, 21.) For many, the home was a safe and secure place, and being on your own was valued: "I am a person who likes to be at home. I need tranquility. I like to be with my friends, but it is important for me to be on my own." (Viivi, H21a) However, online environments have made it possible for young people to be physically at home and still be together and socialize online. This kind of activity is very typical for our participants. Sometimes online environments offer more hope than real life. Jimi described this in the following way:

> Well, quite often you get such feelings that, for example if you are stressed by school or your friends irritate you or you feel bad, you can tell in that other place that, hey, now I feel bad, does anyone have time to talk with me? But if you do it in real life, you get the feeling that you cannot go to your friend and just say that you feel bad; it is more difficult in real life than on the internet. (Jimi, H12a)

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This is connected to the everyday well-being of young people, making new friends and connecting with new people. It is important that young people find people they can trust. Lotta (H24a) actively produces content online but do not want her Finnish schoolmates or even siblings to know about it. As described earlier by Viivi, Lotta feels uncomfortable with possibly receiving negative feedback and has therefore made a very tough decision. Luckily, she has found many positive people online:

> I don't want my schoolmates or other people in Finland to find me. I don't want to have any people who would recognize me or come somewhere else to tell me that, "hey, you suck as a person". Because Finns are so narrow-minded about these things, it is not a big deal here yet. As a content creator, I have found a kind of circle of my own where there are lots of nice people who are in similar life situations and think about similar issues. So, they are understanding, have experience, and have been extremely nice and supportive. (Lotta, H24a)

The excerpt above demonstrates how hope is entangled with more negative possible futures and is connected to Cohen's (2016) notion of the extent to which hope enables adolescents to experience positive affective responses (happiness) to counter detrimental personal functioning (feeling of pessimism).

Tuuli (H4a) is a very active person online and has been part of many online communities where they have gained new friends. Coding is Tuuli's hobby, and their father works in the field of digital technologies. Tuuli believes their future is in coding. Tuuli met one of her best friends online about 3–4 years ago who lives in Denmark. They both were members of the same online fan group. Tuuli describes that it was a coincidence that they met; they started sending memes to each other. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they have not been able to meet, but now they have started to phone each other and are planning to meet face-to-face. In Tuuli's words: "we have grown really close during this time".

Like Tuuli, Kristian has become friends with many people from online environments. Typically, friends met online can live far away:

> Yes, I have got lots of friends. And I think it is positive that I have found friends who have similar interests to me, and I have found my own kind of group that gives me a sense of security. I have lots of friends all over the world, even from Canada. (Kristian, H11s)

Tuuli and Kristian describe friendships formed online, but the sense of community in online environments is not always connected to reciprocal communication. Parasocial relationships are new kinds of emotional ties described as "nonreciprocal socioemotional connections with media figures such as celebrities or influencers" (Hoffner and Bond 2022, 1). Online environments and online platforms provide opportunities for parasocial relationships, and the connection of these to multiple dimensions of well-being among media users has been stated (Hoffner & Bond 2022). Parasocial relationships are related to the sense of belonging, security, and hope. In the following extract, Lotta describes why and when she likes to watch other people playing online games:

> And gaming has been a connecting factor in all of these because I like to watch gaming every now and then. You can find something that you really like to watch and spend time with during moments that you otherwise would do nothing than just lie in your bed and think of the meaning of your own life. You can just watch others doing something and living just the kind of life you once would have liked to have. (Lotta, H24a)

If we think of hope in youth online practices and environments, the wish that it is nice to watch people living the same kind of life you would like to have is worth noticing. It is clearly something you would like to have in the future, but at the same time, it is framed within "doing nothing" in a rather boring and hopeless moment (see also Ehn & Löfgren 2010). There is a slight moralizing tone present in their story: you should be doing something more useful than this. Thus, we argue that these kinds of moments are precisely where young people's hopes are expressed, but because these can easily be overlooked, a focus shift is needed.

Lotta also tells us about subathon which is short for "subscription marathon". A subathon is a popular mode of livestream which continues if the streamer receives a subscription from viewers. The stream ends when no one subscribes to it. (Turner 2022). At the time of the interview, Lotta watches Tubbo's subathon on YouTube (or Twitch) and checks it during the interview. Subathon can be interpreted as an example of hope because it shows the nature of digital everyday relationships while being a safe environment where young people can hang out. It is as if your friend were in the same room as you, even if you are alone in your own room. You know that there are plenty of others watching the same subathon who are purchasing additional time for it to continue. What differs from real life is that however critical these people might be, they cannot harm or hurt you in

any way you are safe. This way, watching a subathon can create a sense of belonging to an online community of parasocial relations (see also Boyd 2014; Eek-Karlsson 2021).

Discussion

"Hello guys, I love you", a smiling, soft voice begins a YouTube video. This video is favorited by one of our research participants, who says that the reason why she follows this content creator on social media is that it brings joy and good feelings: "it just makes me feel good. I like to watch them [videos]" (Maria, H1s). After watching these YouTube videos, we understand how nice it feels to hear that someone loves you. Our interpretation is that if you are a teenager whose parents probably do not start the day in a similar way, this must be intriguing, comforting and reassuring.

Hope is a multidisciplinary and multilayered concept and is empirically challenging to grasp. In our research material, hope was attached to future wishes for the internet and social media, small practices and agencies, and online friendships and other connections to peers. Hope was connected to wishes, positive thinking, and practices that seemed to increase positive feelings. In all these contexts, hope was vacillating; feelings of negativity, despair, and even hopelessness were always present in some way or another. Much of the negative discussion related to parents as they were the ones who controlled youth online practices most often and said that young people should do something more useful than just hanging out online.

Hope can be seen through the lenses of digital affect cultures, which Döveling, Harju and Sommer (2018, 1) have defined as "relational, contextual, globally emergent spaces in the digital environment where affective flows construct atmospheres of emotional and cultural belonging by way of emotional resonance and alignment". Similarly, we can interpret hope as a cultural practice as something people do instead of have. When we scrutinize how hope passes through the digital landscapes of youth, we see how it constructs "pockets of culture-specific communities of affective practices" (Döveling, Harju & Sommer 2018, 1).

Young people's small agencies and practices may be interpreted as a kind of everyday activism (Pink 2012) against the negative aspects of online platforms and social media. Some youth practices are tactical and aim to make others feel better. However, others do not interpret their actions this way even though they like to have positive vibes and wish that the online world would be different in the future: more friendly and non-toxic.

When thinking about hope, we need to ponder issues that are not discussed at all or are silenced or invisible. One such issue in our research was

things learned in online environments. Professor Emerita of Media Studies Kirsten Drotner (2008) has written that young people rarely define leisure activities as learning. However, they still learn a lot in online environments, for example, about digital literacy, societal roles, tolerance, and mutual respect. We discovered that it was difficult for young people to talk about the positive sides of digitalization and the use of digital platforms if it was not for "useful purposes". Further, in the interviews, young people often mentioned spending too much time using digital devices when they could do something more useful. When asked, they often could not tell what this "more useful" might be or mentioned things such as cleaning your room or going out. Although there are plenty of negative issues entangled with digital youth, we argue that young people should be encouraged to understand the deeper meaning of youth online cultures and elaborate new kinds of learner identities and ways to learn (see also Drotner 2008). Also in "doing nothing" there might be plenty of learning happening.

Conclusions

In this article, we examined young people and hope in digital environments. We asked what hope is and how young people practice and cherish hope in their online environments.

There is a connection between positivity and hope, even though these are separate issues, positivity is connected to hope in online practices of youth. At the same time, hope is woven together with more negative features like hopelessness, despair and fear. Hope is oriented toward the future, and digital technologies can work as an open-ended future-making tool for young people. Similarly, to the messy digital everyday of youth, hope is multidimensional, dynamic, contextual; individual and collective.

Alongside the negative views of digitalization, young people also see their digital participation from a somewhat negative viewpoint. Hope often becomes visible as a minor, even hidden counterforce. Many of our interviewees consume content they find positive or makes them feel good and energizes them. Some young people we have met act as goodwill ambassadors, doing small things like sending positive messages or hearts to the people they relate to. These are examples of small agency, which can lead to more considerable results. The aim of the goodwill ambassadors is to make online environments a better place for themselves and their peers.

Landscapes of hope are contextual sites where things are going to happen. Youth online landscapes of hope are oriented toward the future, and they are in a constant state of co-becoming with different kinds of contexts, agencies, practices, and intensities. As an affect, hope is important because

it identifies the hotspots that need to be supported to reach a good future. However, hope can remain invisible because it is often connected with small agencies or tiny practices connected to often invisible moments of "doing nothing". This makes grasping hope challenging but still worthwhile as a research subject.

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SOURCES

All the research material; online questionnaire, interviews, fieldwork diaries and notes and video recordings, are in the possession of the authors.

Research material:
- Online questionnaire (N= 418)
- Twenty-eight interviews of youth aged 14-16. All names are pseudonyms.
  - Spring 2021: H1s-H12s
  - Autumn 2021: H4a-H24a
  - Group interviews 1 & 2
- Fieldwork diaries and interview notes written by the authors.
- Video recordings of the interviews.

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Pia Olsson & Jenni Rinne

Hope in Hopelessness
Affective Practices in Times of Crisis

Abstract

The question we address in this article concerns the kind of affective practices that people adopt in order to negotiate the various emotions aroused by global crises, and how these negotiations allow room for hope. In doing so, we focus on two recent major upheavals, namely the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia's war in Ukraine, and on how they have affected people's everyday lives. Both crises were documented in two rapid-response questionnaires organised by the Finnish Literature Society.

Keeping daily routines as normal as possible, prepping and preparing, sending and receiving memes and other humorous materials via social media, and becoming involved in grass-roots actions and activism were incorporated into the descriptions of everyday life. As such, these actions gave people the feeling that they were doing something and that they had some control over what was happening around them. Here, we discuss these affective practices as a way of allowing room for hope and engendering hopefulness for a better future among those taking the action, and those in their sphere of influence. In acquiring agency, people were negotiating hope for a better future despite the uncertain situation.

Keywords: affect, affective practices, hope, crisis, COVID-19, war in Ukraine

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic became the reality in Finland in March 2020. People had been following the spread of the virus and its route to Northern Europe via the media for a couple of months. On 16 March, the Government together with the President of the Republic declared "that there is a state of emergency in the country as a result of the Coronavirus outbreak" (Valtioneuvosto 2020). This measure reflected the worsening situation, and it highlighted the seriousness of the pandemic. The state of emergency was in effect from 16 March until 15 June 2020, although the pandemic affected people's everyday lives until the autumn of 2022. Meanwhile, on 24 February 2022 Russia started a new phase in its planned invasion of Ukraine, which has affected the whole of Europe in various ways – economically, psychologically and in humanitarian terms. The war was still going on at the time this research was conducted. Consequently, both the pandemic and the war have been touching people's lives in Europe for more than three years now. Although the two crises affected Finland in very different ways, both brought with them a sense of uncertainty and insecurity that penetrated the lives of people. COVID-19 was experienced as an imminent threat to people's health and the health of those close to them, whereas the war in Ukraine aroused fears about the future and strong concern about the suffering being experienced in the country.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a life-changing experience both in people's personal lives and on the societal and global level (see e.g., Lupton & Willis (eds.) 2021; Lupton 2022). Data scientist Emile Aarts and others (2020, 2–3) point out that even though this was not the first pandemic to affect humankind, few people had strong memories of previous ones: most were not experienced first-hand by people who were now experiencing COVID-19. It changed the rhythms of everyday life, everyday routines and general perceptions of potential crises (Damsholt 2020; Mellander 2021; Nilsson & Marander-Eklund 2021).

Thus far, there has been less research on the effects of the war in Ukraine on people's everyday lives outside Ukraine, than on the corresponding effects of COVID-19. However, in Finland the war has re-kindled various collective memories about the Second World War. More than 90,000 Finns lost their lives, and Finland ceded significant parts of its territory to the Soviet Union during the wars in 1939–1945, the losses are still actively remembered in Finnish families. (see e.g., Kinnunen & Jokisipilä 2012; Vehkalahti 2015; Heimo 2022) Many people born in the 1930s and 1940s have recollected their own and their family histories in connection with the war in Ukraine: the bombardments, the evacuation of people from the ceded territories and the long-term traumatic effects on families are seen as experiences that parallel contemporary aggression in Ukraine (see the questionnaire Sota Ukrainassa). The sim-

ilarities between the historical events in Finland and the contemporary war in Ukraine have fundamentally changed individual people's sense of security, as well as the overall political atmosphere in Finland, most notably with its recent and swift accession to NATO after decades of political discussion.

In the following, we focus on these two recent upheavals in the everyday lives of people in Finland. To identify affective practices stemming from sudden crises we examined two sets of questionnaire responses supplied by the Finnish Literature Society by means of affective reading. The respondents had written freely about their everyday practices and feelings in times of global crisis with its tangible and mental effects on their lives. These descriptions are emotionally intense. Uncertainty may have ambiguous consequences, however: it gives rise to psychological distress, but also to more positive emotions such as hope, optimism and resilience when people navigate through the difficult experiences and find coping mechanisms (Smithson et al. 2022). Here, we focus on signs of hope in the responses. We look for direct expressions of hope as well as for its feasibility in situations in which people must deal with new kinds of insecurities and where feelings of hopelessness caused by anxiety and uncertainty constitute a considerable risk (Frumkin 2022; Saricali et al. 2020). We chose to focus on hope as a significant factor in generating belief in a better future. Among individuals, it could also serve to make their actions meaningful, giving a sense of purpose and the feeling of making a difference even in difficult situations. Thus, hope could be a generative power with the potential to change society.

We base our analyses on Margaret Wetherell's (2012) affect theory and the idea that emotions are active agents in understanding people's everyday lives (Ahmed 2004). Thus, we concentrate on the cultural and social layers of meaning-making in affective practices of creating hope. Theoretically, we do not distinguish between affect and emotion, as some studies do. For instance, one could study named emotions from the perspective of cultural history by looking at the long-term cultural constructions and shared meanings of particular emotions such as love or fear. Hence, some scholars distinguish emotion from affect as pre-social intensities felt through the body whereas emotions are cognitive and social, expressed through language (Massumi 1995, 88). We suggest that affect and emotion are experienced as both cognitive and embodied. Thus, both have a cultural context while being embodied (Wetherell 2012, 4; Ahmed 2004, 9). Our focus in this article is on emotion and affect as practices that have generative power. As Ahmed puts it, emotions do something, whereas according to Wetherell affects move people. In other words, emotions and affects are not innate psychological states but practices that create meaning and move people (Ahmed 2004, 9; Wetherell 2012, 2, 4).

Although we agree with Wetherell and Ahmed that is not productive to make a conceptual distinction between emotion and affect, for the sake of clarity we use "emotion" in the text to refer to specific named emotions such as hope or grief. When we use "affect" we refer to the affective practices that cover the different patterns defining our bodily and mental reactions and reflecting specific emotions. Practices comprise affective patterns of embodied experiences, discursive and narrative elements, and past societal and personal histories, as well as memories. They vary in duration from repetitive everyday routines to more spontaneous actions (Wetherell 2012).

Hope

In everyday use, hope is a concept that is quite easy to comprehend and define: it is directed to future events. Hope has positive connotations; it expresses a wish that something that is desired will happen soon, or at least eventually. It is about potentiality, about "futural momentum" (Bryant & Knight 2019, 134). The dictionary definition corresponds quite closely with this understanding. As a verb, *to hope* means "To want something to happen or to be true and usually have a good reason to think it might"; as a noun it means "[s]omething good that you want to happen in the future, or a confident feeling about what will happen in the future." (Cambridge Dictionary)

However, as conceptualised in research, hope is much more complex and ambivalent. It is directed towards the future: according to Sara Ahmed, "[h]ope is a feeling that is present (a pleasure in the mind) but is directed toward an object that is not yet present". As such, it is an indicator of possible causes of happiness. Ahmed also points out the connection between hope and anxiety. Having hope is anxiety-provoking in that one never knows if one achieves what one hopes for. One might wish that things had gone differently in the past, indicating "a stubborn attachment to a lost object" or "a form of melancholia". (Ahmed 2010, 181–183, 189) Hope comprises elements such as goals, pathways and agency to reach the goals, but also elements of expectation and probability. It is not only cognitive but also affective and emotional, and it is emphasised with action. (see e.g., Frumkin 2022)

However, not everything that is hoped for is positive (see e.g., Eagleton 2018): people may hope for bad things by way of retribution. Thus, hoping is not always altruistic, for something "good". Moreover, it is sometimes expressed when there are no grounds for it, in other words it is "false hope" (Frumkin 2022): there may be no good reason to suppose that the hoped-for-future will materialise. As Sara Ahmed (2010, 181, cites Zygmunt Bauman, 2008) points out, hope is a factor that can evoke feelings of both happiness and unhappiness. This could apply in acute crises when it may be difficult to

believe in a positive outcome, or it is not likely that things will get better, but these things are still hoped for. Expressions such as "hope against hope" and "hoping against all odds" are used in such instances. Hoping against hope may also be a "cruel experience" if there are no societal structures to support the hopes. Berlant writes about "false hope", which means that even through hard work and following the accepted pathway to a good life with a job and secure housing, life might not turn out as was hoped for in neoliberal societies. (Berlant 2011) Under these circumstances, hope is not necessarily a positive emotion (see Smithson et al. 2022, 11). The opposite of hopefulness is pessimism, an emotion that prepares people for disappointment when there appears to be no hope of achieving what they would like to achieve (Ahmed 2010, 178).

Our research material contains many examples of hope expressed in an ambivalent and complex manner described in the context of sudden societal turmoil: a worldwide pandemic and the war in Ukraine. In times of societal crises, it is difficult to know what will happen and where the world is going, and the first reaction may be to come to terms with what has already happened. Uncertainty and insecurity become shared experiences. However, a crisis could also open up the possibility or the hope of building a different kind of future. Some scholars have defined hope as "a way of virtually pushing potentiality to actuality" (Bryant and Knight 2019, 134). A crisis could make people act to secure a better future. Our focus in this article is on the possibility of hope in situations in which current societal conditions have profoundly shaken people's general sense of security. After all, the intensity of hope and the specific hopes people have, are shaped in specific circumstances (Jansen 2021).

Many earlier studies conducted in the fields of social science and humanities have focused on anticipation of the future, and on the philosophical and epistemological definitions of hope – meaning the ways in which the future is understood and imagined, and how hope can be defined in this context (e.g., Appadurai 2016). Alternatively, hope has been discussed and defined as a dissocialised trait in people's private lives instead of a societal-level wish for a better future for communities (e g., Thompson and Žižek 2013). Previous studies have also considered hope in the context of major developments, change and mood swings in the late capitalist society (Berlant 2011). These empirical studies have focused on specific formations of hope and anticipation in particular socio-historical settings, such as in various political and economic crises, and during the rise of inequality and globalisation. (For a more extensive listing, see Kleist & Jansen 2016, 373; see e.g., Jansen 2021.) Hope has been similarly covered in certain journal articles published in the 2016 *History and*

Anthropology of *Hope over time,* for example, including *Crises, Immobility and Future-Making.* Hopefulness is found in the most precarious contexts, in which another kind of future is difficult to see (Kleist & Jansen 2016).

Our study fits well into this latter body of work, given that it is about hope in times of crisis. Specifically, we understand hope as a product of embodied and emotional practice in the context of lived everyday life. Our interest is in the narrative leads of these processes, in the cultural and discursive patterns and the ways in which people describe their affective practices, their everyday strategies for living with them, and for controlling and using them – here, concentrating especially on the ambivalent and complex affective practices that can create hope. According to Wetherell (2012, 14), affective practices are based on patterns of narratives, interpretative repertoires, social relations, personal and social histories and ways of life, in addition to embodied and sensory experiences. Affective practices accumulate for different durations, from a few brief moments and episodes to a semi-continuous background feeling of recurrent activity over days, weeks or more (Wetherell 2012, 12). However, Wetherell emphasises the dynamism of affective processes and warns against simple lines of causation and neat emotional categories (Wetherell 2012, 4). Moreover, the patterns work together differently in different social and historical processes (Wetherell 2012; Wetherell, McConville & McCreanor 2019). Our aim is to seek and unveil practices that create hope in times of crisis, and to analyse how they are culturally and socially lived and defined. We ask what kind of affective practices are people adopting to negotiate the different kinds of emotions aroused by the crises, and how these practices open up the possibility for hope.

Research material and methodology

Both crises analysed here were actively documented by heritage institutions, both museums and archives. These activities were part of the rapid-response operations of the institutions, the aim being to document contemporary, rapidly appearing social phenomena as they are taking place (Tebeau 2021; see also Nilsson & Marander-Eklund 2021, 11; Matres 2022). Finnish heritage institutions have been collecting people's experiences of cultural phenomena and changes in society for over 100 years (Korkiakangas et al. 2016). This has resulted in the accumulation of a huge and meaningful body of texts documenting people's experiences of different events and phenomena over time, often as they unfold (ibid. 206, 17). We focus in our analyses on two questionnaires distributed by the Finnish Literature Society dealing with the most recent crises that have affected everyday life in the past few years. The first of these, entitled Corona spring [Koronakevät], was launched on 12 March

2020, one day before the Emergency Powers Act came into force, which required the closing of educational premises and cultural institutions and the limiting of other public gatherings, for example. As the pandemic continued, the response deadline was extended from April until 16 September. Examples of changes in everyday life caused by the pandemic were used to activate potential respondents:

> Spring 2020 has become Corona spring. The new form of the coronavirus, COVID-19, has developed into a global pandemic and has become a major topic in coffee-table discussions and news headlines. The pandemic originated in China at the turn of the year, and quickly spread around the world as people continued to travel. The number of infections rises every day in Finland, too. COVID-19 has caused a drop in stock-market prices, the cancelling of concerts and sporting events, the closing of borders and the extensive imposition of quarantine regulations all over the world.
>
> What feelings and thoughts has the spread of Coronavirus throughout the world and in Finland aroused in you? Tell us about your experiences and feelings!

The questionnaire concerning the war in Ukraine was launched on 9 March, and was open until the end of May 2022. The call for writing about the experiences initially highlighted the historical nature of the war and the concomitant changes in peoples' everyday actions:

> The date 24.2.2022 is denoted in history books as the day that Russia started its war against Ukraine. News flows were filled with war events, reports on emergencies and gestures of solidarity. The crisis has provoked demonstrations and aid-work. It has shaken the global economy and sense of security. How have you reacted to the events in Ukraine? Tell SKS [The Finnish Literature Society] about your thoughts, feelings and concrete actions.

The respondents to both questionnaires were given some questions to support their writing, mainly about changes in everyday life. In relation to the pandemic these concerned avoiding infection, testing, being in isolation, social relations and how COVID-19 affected their visions for the future. With regard to the war in Ukraine, they were asked about their reactions, thoughts and emotions, and about any practical actions they had taken. In the questionnaire material, the only context information elicited from the respondents was their year of birth, gender and occupation: responding to this was voluntary, and not all respondents gave the information. It is possible to infer some context information from the text, but this does not yield extensive information on the respondents.

When we were analysing this material, we had to keep in mind the fact that the questions directed the focus of the respondents' answers. However, they had the freedom to choose what kind of text to write, hence the responses varied in length and form. The shortest ones are a couple of sentences whereas the longer ones might include a detailed diary from the first days of the pandemic or the war. There are also poems and detailed media reporting with relevant links, as well as more traditional responses that directly address the questions presented. Almost all the responses are in Finnish, and most describe the situation in Finland during both crises. The respondents varied in age and occupation. In the case of the COVID-19 questionnaire, for example, some teachers encouraged their pupils to respond, and at the same time older respondents actively engaged in the process. Our focus in this article is on the responses that describe life in Helsinki, the Capital of Finland, on the assumption that changes caused by the pandemic have been most significant within the urban context. The collection includes a total of 96 responses from Helsinki, only 13 of which were written by men. There is also wide variation in age among the respondents to the war-in-Ukraine questionnaire, although they do not include school children. The Finnish Literature Society received 70 responses related to the war-in-Ukraine questionnaire, amounting to 209 pages. The most common length of a response was between two and three pages, and most were type-written. Five of the responses were written by hand and then scanned. Most of the War-in-Ukraine responses were authored by women, only 17 coming from men. We do not analyse the ways in which gender and age affected their experiences in this article, but in order to contextualise the quotations we have added the year-of-birth and gender information after each quotation when possible. The authors translated the quotations from Finnish into English. Both sets of questionnaire materials are accessible at the archives of The Finnish Literature Society, identified by the questionnaire title and number stated after each citation of the empirical material.

It is important to acknowledge that responses to this kind of material can be analysed from different perspectives or placed in different contexts. Our reading focused on expressions of hope and its feasibility, as well as on affective reactions to the crisis situation. The responses did indeed reflect a multitude of feelings and emotions that the changing situations aroused in people. Those in both situations were facing something very new and unexpected, and uncertainty about the future is the underlying emotion in the descriptions. The implication is that, even though affective practices are partially culturally structured, and even though people have a pre-understanding about possible affective practices (Edensor 2012; Wetherell 2012), one could

also argue that these new situations allowed for improvisation and creativity in finding new affective practices – or adapting them in new ways – to deal with the circumstances.

Pia Olsson read and organised the material related to the pandemic while Jenni Rinne focused on the War-in-Ukraine questionnaire. We approached the materials through the process of affective reading, focusing on descriptions of affective experiences and practices. For this, we looked for words and expressions of emotions, metaphors and other descriptions of the practices. Consequently, neither emotion nor affective practice of hope is named in the responses as such, but both are present in the "figures of speech" (Ahmed 2004, 12–13). After processing the respective materials individually, we joined forces to discuss and identify the common traits and themes in them, as well as to identify the theoretical starting points in our understanding of hope.

Methodologically, this process resonates with team ethnography whereby individual and shared processes of analysis are combined (Hine 2015, 189–190), although our focus is on written narratives. When we compared our observations we looked for aspects that were somewhat common in both sets of materials, the aim being to understand the mechanisms behind the affective practices. Accordingly, we created two narratives of practices aimed at creating hope: solidarity and adaptive everyday practices. These aspects are visible in both sets of materials, although with different emphases, and they are also present in the narratives both explicitly and implicitly. However, hope was not explicitly mentioned as something to be described in the responses. We therefore based our reading of practices of creating hope on the understanding of hope as goals, pathways and agency for the future.

Solidarity, aid work and escapism as affective practices of hope

Hope is not the first affective practice that is expected to appear in moments of crisis. This applies here, too: immediate reactions to the two crises cannot be characterised as initially hopeful. The most common reactions to the war in the narratives are grief, sadness, fear and anger, and to the pandemic also fear, as well as bafflement, disappointment and distress about the "correct" forms of action to take. The tone of the responses could rather be read as expressions of hopelessness than of hopefulness. One of the respondents commenting on the war explicitly writes about this: "The main feeling is hopelessness because I cannot understand. Hopelessness that people are warmongering animals, and hopelessness when I don't know what is true and what is not" (Sota Ukrainassa 50: woman, born 1991). The shock of the events seemed to evoke the sudden loss of a sense of security, as well as despair. Trust in people, in foreseeability and in knowing the truth had disappeared. Thus, it was

difficult if not impossible to find articulations of hope, especially in the context of the war. However, what we can focus on is how people navigate the unexpected difficult experiences through affective practices that might bring or maintain hope in crisis situations, such as signs of curiosity, which could be interpreted as a component of hope (Smithson et al. 2022).

As documented in both sets of materials, one way of responding to the distressing situation was to engage in activities aimed at making changes for the better. This highlights agency over situations that are difficult to bear instead of giving in to a passive take on events. Although agency is connected with hope, the direction of the causality is not clear (Smithson 2022, 3–4). However, hope has the power to motivate people into action (Bryant & Knight 2019, 157). One such action is giving aid to others. In the case of the war in Ukraine, one of the most common reactions was to help Ukrainian refugees in Finland and elsewhere. The respondents wrote about donating money, clothes and supplies to incoming refugees and people in the war areas. Some were also volunteering in help centres and aid organisations that were distributing clothes, supplies and furniture, and organising activities for children and other incomers. Many respondents described in detail the voluntary work they had done, and the strong need they felt to do so. One of the respondents described her reaction to the war and to voluntary work, emphasising the need to be personally involved in the practical aid-giving:

> In the spring I had a strong drive to DO something and not just to participate in the fundraising. I felt physical pain in my chest when I followed the desperate situation of refugees in Mariupol on the news, for example. (Sota Ukrainassa 38: woman, born 1954)

This affective response to the war and to people's suffering was described as physical, as the example also shows. It is notable that different kinds of bodily reactions were described as a driving force in terms of doing aid work, such as a pounding heart and constant tearfulness. Volunteering was also connected to psychological despair, in the form of anxiousness and a sense of being paralysed, as another respondent wrote:

> In the beginning the situation aroused a strong sense of insecurity and fear of loss. Because I have suddenly lost people close to me and to my home. I can relate to people who were in danger and had to leave their home quickly. I felt paralysed at first, but then I started to act. It relieved my anxiety. I could not give a lot of money, but I made a load of woollen socks, which I donated to refugees or sold and gave the money to the aid effort. I will continue the sock project during the autumn of 2022.

I managed to get some yarn as a donation, for which I am thankful. (Sota Ukrainassa 39: woman, born 1976)

It seems that affective reactions to the war made people participate in aid work. It is implied in many of the written narratives that the motivation to act was also connected to the idea that Finnish people could easily be in the same situation as the Ukrainians, Russia also being their neighbouring country. This is interesting in the context of events taking place in 2015, involving the forced dislocation of a vast number of people from outside the EU. The situation was understood as external to Europe due to the location of the crisis, even though one could argue that it was connected to Europe's power position (Picozza 2021). In the context of the war in Ukraine, the crisis is perceived to be closer to home, and the genealogical roots of the refugees are more acceptable and relatable (ibid.). In the Finnish case, too, a violent history of living next to Russia, albeit now after almost 80 years of peace, could be entangled with perceptions of and affective reactions to war. Even though the various ways of helping are universal, the knitting of warm socks and other items is also part of the Finnish collective war history from the Winter and Continuation Wars (Rauhala 2019, 188–193), and as such connects the aid work with the national history. An elderly lady recalls how she imagined herself as a Ukrainian:

> Once I started to wonder what if I were in the same situation as a woman in Ukraine who is the same age as I am. What would I feel, and what would I do, and how would I cope? Would I fall apart? Would I lose my ability to act? It is difficult to put myself in another person's position when I have never experienced anything like they are going through. It was clear to me from the beginning that I would help as much as I could. SPR [The Finnish Red Cross], Unicef, UN Woman, Finnish Church Aid and others set up donation collections really quickly. I donate money. I admire people who have the strength to do much more. To bring help to Ukraine and to transport refugees back to Finland. (--). I have donated money for the village club, which organised summer camps for kids living in the refugee centre. My small donation secured two camp days for one child, and that eased my conscience. (Sota Ukrainassa 4: woman, born 1958)

Help for the incomers was not always distributed through organisations, as individuals took the initiative to help as well, and some refugees were offered privately owned houses and rooms in which to stay. Such hospitality towards refugees was also visible in Finland and elsewhere when large numbers of people were seeking refuge in the EU in 2015 (e.g., Farahani 2021). However, at that time, hostility towards newcomers was also stronger throughout Europe. The idea of potential cultural and religious incompatibility was

the underlying thought fuelling the opposition to refugees back then, which was prevalent in Europe because of the colonial legacy that was behind the othering of non-European descendants (Yeğenoğlu 2012). Finns could relate better to Ukrainians and their situation, thus the refugees were easier to accept. The reflections of a woman in her forties shows how Ukrainian refugees were welcomed into a private home, but also the mixed emotions that unexpectedly arose afterwards:

> We want to help Ukrainians and because of that we have promised to let them stay in our Airbnb room for free for a period of time. I feel that I have to do something concrete. At the same time, I am worried about facing them. I am ashamed that I have started to regret my promise, but I know that I will look after them better than we are expected to. They have escaped war, and I am worried about my own wellbeing. These people somehow bring the threat of war too close. It reminds us too much that we are really worried about ourselves. That the same thing could be in front of us and then we would hope that others would help us. On the other hand, the help Ukrainians have received from all over Europe has restored my faith in people. (Sota Ukrainassa 53: woman, born 1977)

The above example reflects the thought that the help the Ukrainians received also rekindled hope for humankind. The act of helping those in need, in whatever form it is, could then be understood as something that generates hope and a belief in people's goodness in a situation in which hope for people is lost. This could also stretch beyond helpers to the receiving end. Perhaps generating hopefulness for others or generating hope for humanity through helping is one of the underlying motivations of people doing aid work. As such, aid work could be interpreted as an affective practice that generates hope (Wetherell 2012), even though in general it could be connected to many other affective practices such as altruism or fostering a sense of security that is historically and culturally layered. In the case of the war in Ukraine in particular, the cultural and historical aspects of affective practices became visible when people reflected on the current situation in the context of Finnish history and the histories of their own families.

As in the case of the war in Ukraine, the emotions aroused by the COVID-19 pandemic were mixed, focusing on both the physical health and the mental wellbeing of oneself and those in one's immediate circle. "I hope that I won't get COVID-19. I hope that we won't experience Covid deaths in Finland. There are too many of those abroad already", as one of the respondents wrote in her response dated 13 March (Koronakevät 11: woman, born 1975). The pandemic and the way people acted during the height of the crisis made some of the

respondents feel "ashamed" and "fucked-up", and COVID-19 was nominated "the world's biggest party-pooper" (Koronakevät 39: man, born 1988; Koronakevät 44: man, born 2004; Koronakevät 46: woman, born 2001). In other words, strong signs of hopelessness are present in many responses. Looking for signs of hopefulness is, to some extent, to read between the lines, although some respondents explicitly highlight experiences of goodness and solidarity, and also the signs of hope in them. In the COVID-19 case, too, people felt the need to help others. The urban landscape changed when people started to place teddy bears in their windows for children to see (Koronakevät 72: woman, born 1987).

> 29.3.
> The placing of teddy bears and rainbows in the windows for children to see feels like a nice idea.
> Together with my offspring we saw several stuffed animals in the windows of houses in our street. [--]
> In one of the windows there was a big heart.
> "Is that some kind of Valentine's Day thing?", the child wonders.
> "Oh, I think someone wants to share warmth and kindness at this time", I reply. (Koronakevät 221: woman, born 1977.)

The description ends when a place is found for a stuffed animal in a window of the family's own home, whereby they assumed agency in bringing hope to others. Some of the respondents also experienced the COVID-19 crisis as a time that positively brought people together – at least in the beginning. When things became difficult, solutions were sought jointly, not only by individuals in their everyday lives but also by political decision makers. As such, it constituted a breeding ground, at least for a moment, for social change and solidarity:

> I have always been quite a neurotic person, but suddenly no amount of neuroticism felt excessive. [--] At this time of post-truth and quarrelling it suddenly felt truly important to have everyone on the same side. I noticed a small item of news in the newspaper about the Finns Party [a right-wing political party, at that time in the opposition] had withdrawn an interpellation because of the situation, and it felt like a really meaningful thing. Now is not the time for challenging and quarrelling. (Koronakevät 72: woman, born 1987)

Here, the idea that politicians were working together towards a common goal, and not focusing on disputes based on party-politics, helped the narrator to see pathways for the future. Other respondents also highlighted the feeling of solidarity or a sense of togetherness, not only with their loved ones but also

"with the whole world" when experiencing the oddest time of their lives (Koronakevät 124: woman, born 1992). The need for support was recognised, and people were also ready to give it: "At times like this, you notice how everyone needs support and how well it is given" (Koronakevät 153: woman, born 2006). The crisis was experienced as shared: "I like the new saying that everyone is in the same storm but in different boats". (Koronakevät 251: woman, born 1991)

Social-media groups as well as aid organisations and NGOs also played an important role in forming temporary and more permanent communities to share emotions, and also in giving support to Ukrainians. The scale of the support varied from dedicating most of one's time to volunteer work to making small gestures as part of everyday life. Giving an example related to social media, one of the respondents wrote: "My sister bought me a Ukrainian flag. I put the flag next to a vase with yellow goldenrod and blue monkshoods. The picture of the setting received over twenty likes on Facebook." (Sota Ukrainassa 23: woman, born 1945) Another of these respondents wrote: "[e]specially in the spring it felt important to organise events that brought people together" (Sota Ukrainassa 18: woman, born 1963); and another that: "We watched the Eurovision song contest together with an 'international friends' group. The host of the evening was Ukrainian, and it was especially wonderful to see the people brought together showing support for her country." (Sota Ukrainassa 52: woman, born 1989) Helping others, showing solidarity, and sharing emotions seemed to relieve the anxiety raised on account of the war, and to create conditions for hope.

The agency these respondents assumed during the crises also reflects the nature of hope in the sense of a "short-term coping strategy" and a "gateway to a micro-utopia of 'otherwise'" (Bryant & Knight 2019, 153). The practices described here were not planned as permanent life changes, but were actions taken to cope with contemporary challenges (Berlant 2011; Bryant & Knight 2019, 153). Rebecca Bryant and Daniel M. Knight (2019, 155) refer to escapism when they write about sports events providing "'tasters of how things could be otherwise". For the respondents to the questionnaires analysed here, escapism was an affective practice of briefly taking control of events that seemed to pour down on one in an uncontrolled manner.

Creating everyday practices in new circumstances

I'm scared this will never normalise. I mean, will there ever really be a normal time anymore. I would like to not be in this time, where everything is connected with COVID-19 and everything is a state of emergency. I don't know if it is artificial, but I try to direct my own thoughts away from the panic to something positive. To something that makes this period of time exceptional in some good way or at least exceptional

in a non-frightening way. Tomorrow at 7 o'clock I have a weekly breakfast meeting via video call at home, because this every Tuesday [--] meeting will not be skipped. I agreed with my sister about a [--] painting soirée. Soon a [food delivery] driver will bring ice cream and nuggets from McDonald's to celebrate my husband's name day[1]. We'll tune into a Netflix Party auditorium with our friends so that we can watch the movie together each in our own quarantine. (Koronakevät 31: woman, born 1993)

COVID-19 changed everyone's life to some extent. For some, such as the woman born in 1993, the abnormality of the pandemic was frightening and made her actively look for reminders of everyday life when she felt safe and comfortable. We interpret this as arousing hopefulness by imitating "normal" life. Hoped-for life was life before the pandemic, and imitating it could be interpreted as an attempt to bring back what used to be. It was a way of coping with all the other feelings described as being present during the different phases of the pandemic: the respondent's emotions had fluctuated from indifference and arrogance to worry and anxiety. As Danish ethnologist Tine Damsholt (2020) points out, the pandemic comprehensively affected the everyday life rhythms and spatial dimensions of individuals. The "new normal" was present in small everyday actions such as following the guidelines for washing hands, but also in the shrinking environment whereby one's sphere of life diminished both socially and geographically, "to two kilometres from home" (Koronakevät 82: woman, born 1978).

Hope has also been described as movement towards something (Bloch 1986, as cited in Bryant & Knight 2019, 136), and on this basis, Bryant and Knight (2019, 137) define it as "the pursuit of materializing the otherwise-than-actual". Socialising, celebrating and holding on to everyday practices as normally as possible helped both the narrator and those close to her to maintain hopefulness. All this was based on creativity and problem-solving abilities that could be connected with hope (Fredrickson 2004, as cited in Smithson et al. 2022), which were also the things the respondent had control over when other things – such as the spread of the disease or the actions of other people or the state – were out of reach. She seemed to have a clear strategy for coping with the negative emotions aroused by the pandemic, thereby creating hope in a hopeless situation. This reflects emotional labour, namely "the act of selection and construction" meaning that affective meaning-making is not only "an act of natural expression", that was done by many of the respondents with regard to both COVID-19 and the ongoing war in Ukraine (see Wetherell 2012, 135).

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1   The Finnish calendar designates specific names to each day. It has been the tradition to celebrate these name days in different ways, previously by having a cup of coffee and some cake with family and friends, nowadays more modestly exchanging greetings.

Ethnologist Fredrik Nilsson and folklore researcher Lena Marander-Eklund (2021, 14) also analysed how new, everyday micro practices such as washing hands, using hand sanitiser and avoiding touching surfaces in public spaces served to create order in the changed everyday life. As such, creating the "new normal" could be interpreted as an affective practice.

Maintaining social relations with others and the world outside was the main coping strategy for many other respondents as well. One of the younger ones, an early teenager at the time, highlighted the role of social media in helping her to keep in touch with her friend:

> My friend was travelling during the corona virus and had to be quarantined for two weeks when she came back to Finland. I was so sorry, and I couldn't meet them afterwards either because of the home schooling. Luckily we have Skype and Whatsapp. (Koronakevät 69: born 2007)

In both cases, social media served as a channel for posting memes and jokes about the difficult situation, but also for offering social support. In relation to the war in Ukraine, for example, one respondent wrote:

> The humorous material on Twitter, especially different kinds of memes, gives me hope and faith that the war may eventually end. The official news, on the other hand, depresses me, frightens me, and makes me lose my faith in humankind. (Sota Ukrainassa 42: woman, born 1992)

It was evident in both sets of materials that the news was followed very intensively when the crises started. However, especially in the case of the war, as the situation worsened people started to avoid the news as a way of handling the difficult situation. Instead, they sought hope and peace in not following what was happening, as the response quoted above shows. As such, choosing not to do something can also be interpreted as an affective practice for coping in an emotionally hard situation. One of the respondents wrote that she had stopped sharing news in her social-media account because she did not want to upset people who were already distressed about the constant news flow (Sota Ukrainassa 43: woman, born 1955). On the other hand, digital humour, as mentioned in the above response, served to maintain relationships with like-minded people (see Löfgren & Tolgensbakk 2021).

Some of the respondents to the pandemic questionnaire wrote that they had quickly learned the new routines and found enjoyment in spending time in the countryside with their children and slowing their life down (Koronakevät 72: woman, born 1987). One student also described how cooking with friends

and taking long walks together enabled the tight-knit student community to survive the difficult time (see Damsholt 2020, 143–146):

> Now that everyday life has started to roll despite Corona, I have started to think about the positive sides of this. People's sense of community, caring has increased. I have contacted my friends all over the world, Europe, the Nordic Countries and Finland more than ever. (Koronakevät 124: woman, born 1992)

The last sentence in her response ends with an exclamation mark: "We will pull through this!" (Koronakevät 124; see also Koronakevät 155: woman, born 2004) These were the words President Sauli Niinistö used in his messages on social media and on his home page in March 2020, encouraging people to exercise caution (e.g., presidentti.fi 16.3.2020), and as such the above quotation shows both the intertextuality of the responses and the power of authorities to affect people's moods and emotions.

> We will pull through this, as well, was written on the ground with a crayon. As long as there is nothing else, all there is to believe in is tomorrow. (Koronakevät 125: woman, born 1983)

There were also people who seemed to remain calm in the face of changes they could not influence. One respondent, for example, started by describing the coming of spring, and the urban environment that seemed different in the absence of the hurrying masses. For her, these changes were not bad, but they were a sign of something special happening. She found comfort in the peacefulness of her own life, although in a somewhat melancholic way: "It is warm inside at home, and the soup is on the stove. The world may tumble down; nothing is that important." (Koronakevät 48: woman, born 1990) There were also others who found the situation intriguing: "I like this state, this situation. I like the fact that it feels odd. That I am moving in a world that is changing so fast [--]." (Koronakevät 233: woman, born 1974.) Here, the element of curiosity is emphasised again. Being actively curious and describing oneself as a spectator of the crisis is also an affective practice, but one that could be seen as privileged.

One means of taking an active role in the two crises was prepping, in other words being prepared, which was a strategy used by both sets of respondents to make everyday life more secure. Prepping could mean many things, varying from official recommendations to the work of underground movements and subcultures. In the case of COVID-19, it also became a source of jokes and memes as people started to hoard toilet paper. Many of these respondents pondered over the kind of choices they should make. On the one hand, prep-

ping could give some security in times of uncertainty, but on the other hand it seemed to carry some kind of stigma:

> Seeing other people do it, I also considered stockpiling goods, namely if I should also hoard canned food in the cupboard so that I could manage for a couple of weeks without going out. What I do not understand is that people are even hoarding toilet paper at the moment. Perhaps I'll skip the whole hoarding thing, I don't care about canned food normally anyway. And I suppose you get something somewhere if there is an emergency. (Koronakevät 11: woman, born 1975)

Similarly, with regard to the war in Ukraine, some respondents mentioned that they had checked the 72-hours home-preparedness guidance written by the authorities and NGOs (SPEK). There seemed to be some relief in doing something concrete, similar to the aid work discussed earlier:

> In case there is a crisis, I have realised that I need to put in order the home-preparedness plan. I have started to think about expanding subsistence farming and where to preserve the crop, so that the long power cuts would not make it go bad. The housing cooperative has thought about a safety plan and found the address of the closest civil-protection place. Women's preparedness education is also interesting. Handwringing does not help, taking action does. (Sota Ukrainassa 43: woman, born 1955)

There were respondents in both samples who did do some prepping with food despite feeling ambivalent about it, thereby bringing some kind of foreseeability into the uncertainty (see Mellander 2021, 5–6). This affective practice of anticipating the future reflects what the respondent quoted above mentioned with reference to COVID-19: only taking action helps. There were also those who, although sharing their ideas about prepping – or hoarding, as some of them put it – wanted to distance themselves from the culture. In the case of COVID-19, prepping and hoarding seemed to be a phenomenon that was connected to the very beginning of the crisis: as the "new normal" became a natural part of everyday life, new routines became established in people's lives: "Now we live one day at a time – something we can learn from our child" (Koronakevät 72). A respondent who wrote about her feelings when the restrictions started to be relaxed exemplifies how the "new normal" had become the "normal normal":

> I thought it would feel nice but it is actually distressing. [--] The pause button that has controlled the whole of life has been hit, and one has to start taking responsibility for things [--]. (Koronakevät 251: woman, born 1991)

In the case of the war in Ukraine, everyday lives became more political and intense, and people wanted to participate in various forms of activism. Many of the respondents had joined public demonstrations in cities all over Finland, or in front of the Russian Embassy in Helsinki. One of them had given a lecture to parents in schools about how to manage their children's exposure to war news: "I felt that lecturing at parents' evenings was my own small but still important way to participate in the crisis that touched each of us" (Sota Ukrainassa 52: woman, born 1989). Another respondent helped to raise funds in the streets, equipped with a Finnish Red Cross donation box, and wrote about the sharing and interaction between people helping in different roles:

> This morning is full of feeling and thanks! Because people had been asking for box collectors from the Red Cross there were a lot of eager people putting money into the boxes! In addition to the coins, paper money was also slipped in! Older people wanted to share their feelings and a lot of people were moved! [--] Some people looked deep into my eyes and thanked me for my work. (Sota Ukrainassa 47: woman, born 1966)

A third respondent wrote about a knitted graffiti event she organised: "Crocheted sunflowers, blue-and-yellow flags and other knitted and crocheted work beautified the streets for about three weeks. [--] The graffiti event was meant to remind people of the ongoing war." (Sota Ukrainassa 4: woman, born 1958) For these respondents, taking action in their everyday lives was an affective experience of meaningfulness that created conditions of hope. Agency, or "goal-directed determination", is one of two elements connected with hope, the other being pathways, namely the "planning of ways to meet the goals" (Snyder et al. 1991, as cited by Geragthy et al. 2010). Doing something to help is a hope-filled act aimed at influencing the present and the future. This also highlights the embodied aspect of affective practices, the need to be involved in actions not only mentally but also as concretely as possible. Emotions have the force to make people act (Ahmed 2004).

Conclusions: Hope in hopelessness

Hope is always related to the situation in which it occurs (Jansen 2021). The responses that we analysed for this article were written at the beginning of the pandemic and of the war in Ukraine. Thus, they strongly reflect the first shock of the events, and the emotional tone of the texts could be described as without hope rather than hopeful. However, we have shown in this article that by looking beyond the articulations of hope it is possible to identify practices that reflect optimism or facilitate hope. Hope is not an isolated emotion: it is intertwined in the spectrum of affective responses and emotional

articulations caused by crisis situations. The respondents recognised how they assumed agency to enable themselves and others to cope with the situation. They did not always clearly recognise or specify processes such as planning, taking action and defining goals, but their descriptions clearly reflect the need to achieve positive change for the future (Bryant & Knight 2019, 134).

Gestures of solidarity and sharing emotions were considered important in affective practices of aid-giving and community-building. We argue that within these practices a condition of hope – for a better future and for better humankind – was created. The emotional responses to the crises also shaped everyday practices in new ways. A future orientation became prevalent in the changed situation, hence hopefulness was also present in the descriptions of insecurity and emotions aroused by missing out on life as it used to be or as it was expected to be. Hope was not always positively oriented, but was sometimes rather an ambivalent sentiment of survival through the first months of the crisis. In both cases one navigation strategy in the affectively difficult situation was not to do something, such as not to read the news, or not to share posts in social media that might upset people's already stressful everyday being. Keeping everyday life as normal as possible, prepping, sending and receiving memes and other humorous materials via social media, taking grass-roots actions and activism were embedded in everyday life. As such, they gave people a sense of agency and of having some control over the events happening around them. We interpret these actions as ways of keeping up hopefulness and creating hope in hopeless situations.

The emotional first reactions to the crises – the flow of affect (see e.g., Wetherell 2012, 28–31) – made people take action that offered them some relief in a hopeless situation. Such action-orientation is also typical in situations where people experience "sharp bursts of affect" (Wetherell 2012, 29). In our case, these practices were fuelled by affective – embodied and mental – responses to the war and the pandemic. For instance, people reported bodily reactions such as a pounding heart or tearfulness, as well as a sense of anxiety, uncertainty, feeling sad for others and fear, which provoked various reactions. Indeed, we agree that affects and emotions drive people to do things, as Sarah Ahmed argues (2004). In our material, affective responses to the crises made people act to secure a better future. What they did varied, however. They may have self-isolated, which could be interpreted as non-action or passive inertia, but in fact, is emphasised in the responses as assuming agency in safeguarding not only oneself but also others. There may also have been active and activist deeds such as helping refugees and taking a stance on the streets. We argue that these affective practices are a way of producing possibilities for hope and hopefulness for a better future, among both those taking the action and those

in the sphere of influence of these practices. People were negotiating a better future by assuming agency over the uncertain situation.

We have shown that affective practices have an important role to play in creating conditions that foster hope for a better future. These practices were closely aligned to the onset of events that were quite surprising and had a strong impact on people in terms of making them take some kind of action. When crises such as wars are protracted people start to lose interest in following the events. They might feel too overwhelmed and become numbed to events, or feel that they cannot influence them for the better. Russia's war in Ukraine is still going on, but grand gestures of solidarity have started to fade. However, we have shown that affective practices of hope may also involve small everyday actions aimed at taking care of loved ones and exerting agency in a hopeless situation. Only time will tell how the patterning of affective practices will change and become entangled with the possibility of hopein the long term.

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Neža Čebron Lipovec

'Memory Talk' in a Museum in a Contested Land
A Platform for Mutual Understanding and a Potential Method for Built Heritage Conservation

Abstract

The article reflects on a participatory research initiative involving place attachment and heritage discourses, carried out in 2012–2014 in the multicultural and ethnically contested city of Koper/Capodistria (Slovenia). The initiative engaged local inhabitants in a set of 'memory evenings' dedicated to exploring personal and collective memories and place attachment to sites in the city's old town. Although it was meant to promote participatory approaches in the conservation of built heritage and stimulate inclusive heritage discourses, it also had a strong psychological effect for local inhabitants. Initially conceived as a combination of the group interview and focus group methods, it evolved into an approach comparable to the discourse of 'memory talk' (Degnen 2005). The article analyses the past experience, focusing particularly on its criticalities, and points to how it is currently being developed.
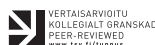
Keywords: memory talk, participatory methods, place attachment, heritage conservation, Koper/Capodistria

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Introduction

Contested borderland spaces represent a particular challenge for the heritage field, particularly for built heritage conservation. Heritage in contested contexts is often defined by very strong dissonances (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996; Smith 2006), mainly related to different power positions but also to different collective memories of the groups present in the territory. As such, heritage acts as a central instrument of power, and thus also of misrecognition and access to resources (Smith 2022). Consequently, such dissonance also affects, or should affect, the conservation practices and decision-making processes about the types of interventions in physical spaces, which derive, or should derive, from a thorough values assessment, via the so-called values-led approach (Wijesuriya, Thompson & Young 2013). Although the current international framework of conservation work has for some years now promoted an even more inclusive approach, the so-called people-centred approach (Wijesuriya, Thompson & Court 2017), which takes into account the critical view on heritage discourses (Smith 2006), the methods for acquiring better insight into the different values assessments, as well as how to translate them into practical work, have not yet been thoroughly elaborated.

One example of a contested borderland space is the region of northern Istria, in Slovenia, on the border with Italy. In the post-WWII period, after annexation by Yugoslavia, it was subject to the large-scale emigration of prewar inhabitants and the subsequent immigration of newcomers. The restructuring of the population and the creation of the region's new identity took shape through typical identity-building processes, such as a new architectural identity, landmarks or toponymy, all of which can collectively be termed *marquage symbolique* (Veschambre 2008). At present, the region is officially bilingual, with the Slovene and Italian languages both being used, but also by a strong multiculturality due to the many different ethnic groups of immigrants from the former Yugoslav republics; the remaining Italians now form an official minority. Over the last two decades, urban development and conservation projects have triggered questions about the different heritage discourses that are present within this diverse local population, their dissonances as well as shared elements.

These quests formed the basis for an informal initiative called 'I'm telling the story of the town' (*Pripovedujem zgodbo mesta*), established more than ten years ago, in 2012–2014, in the city of Koper, which consisted of a set of 'memory evenings'. Between 2021 and 2023, a two-year research project entitled 'Potential of ethnographic methods for the conservation of built heri-

tage in contested places, the case of Northern Istria',[1] was implemented based on the informal experience. As a result, a potential new method, with the working title 'group memory talk', was adapted from the concept of 'memory talk' proposed by Degnen (2005). In this paper, I first present the theoretical framework, then the case study area, offering critical reflections on the initial informal experience from 2012–2014 and focusing on the methodological aspect of the study and on its effect on the participants. Finally, I briefly outline how the experience has recently been upgraded and revised.

The Theoretical Framework

Scholarship in the field of critical heritage studies has emphasised the need to move beyond theories 'in' heritage and those 'of' heritage and focus more on theories 'for' heritage, on 'questions about the role played by the personal, the ordinary and the everyday, within spaces of heritage, whether they are physical, discursive or affective' (Waterton & Watson 2013, 551). The current focus in the heritage field on affective practices (Smith, Wetherell & Campbell 2018; Tolia-Kelly, Waterton & Watson 2016) highlights that paying attention to emotions and affect not only can give us opportunity to unravel how people develop attachments and commitments to the past, things, beliefs, places and so forth, but also 'can reveal the fractures and tensions that are both emotionally and discursively worked out as people reconsider and reassess their attachments to what was once common sense to them' (Wetherell, Smith, & Campbell 2018, 2). The point of focus makes affect a central topic for historically contested borderland contexts.

The theoretical framework on authorised heritage discourses (AHD) (Smith 2006), as well as more recent scholarly attention devoted to the affective dimension, resonates also in the practice-oriented field of built heritage conservation. Such a focus has helped advance the conservation field, which has started over the last ten years to abandon the narrow materialist-oriented paradigm in favour of values-based approaches and even more recently people-centred approaches (Avrami & Mason 2019; Wijesuriya et al. 2017, 13). The new paradigm shift in conservation is evident in the change in emphasis 'from the care of heritage to that of pursuing the well-being of both heritage and society as a whole' (Wijesuriya et al. 2017, 13). Yet, the shift is not only about increasing participation within a given management system; it addresses the core component of heritage management, this is, the people connected

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to heritage as an integral element of heritage-making, ensuring that 'heritage has a dynamic and mutually beneficial role in society today and far into the future' (Wijesuriya et al. 2017, 13). Recently, the topic of people-centred approaches has aided the reflections of architects and scholars (Wells & Stieffel 2019; Madgin & Lesh 2021) active in historic preservation and supportive of the critical heritage studies theory on AHD. According to this framework, 'people-centred approaches' are based on collective experiences, while the additional notion of 'human-centred approaches' departs from individual experiences and translates their role at a more collective level (Wells 2020, 1). The methodological framework most commonly employed as part of the paradigm shift is that of place attachment theory (Madgin & Lesh 2021, 5–8), which focuses on the 'symbolic relationship formed by people giving culturally shared affective meanings to a particular space that provides the basis for the individual's and group's understanding of and relation to the environment' (Altman & Low 1992, 165). The framework thus encapsulates both tangible and intangible dimensions of place attachment, in particular the dimension of emotions and affect, and in this way bridges the fundamental dichotomy between theory and practice in heritage conservation (Madgin & Lesh 2021, 3; Avrami & Mason 2019). However, the challenge of designing methodologies for built heritage conservation that would both trigger issues related to affect and place attachments and also contested topics remains open.

In the debate on the cultural significance of heritage, conservation advocates identified already two decades ago the need to adopt a broad set of methods that address the varied typologies of values, termed 'sociocultural values' by the different stakeholders but primarily the local community (Mason 2008). At the time, many participatory conservation methods borrowed from the vast experiences of community planning (Sanoff 2000), such as the charettes, fish-bowl planning, community action planning, participatory action research (PAR), largely adopting them to suit archaeological heritage projects (Wells 2015). The methods included several techniques (e.g. awareness walks, participation games, workshops, study circles, visual appraisals), namely used for values-eliciting and decision-making purposes in heritage management (Clark 2019, 2019a). However, a central objective of the planning sector methods was consensus building, and eventually conflict resolution. Scholars have criticised this aim (Rescher 1993, as cited in Sanoff 2000, 16) because it risks becoming a means to justify the position of a majority instead of identifying common interests. This claim more closely matches critical heritage studies' view of AHD: that it tends to silence alternative voices by selectively integrating and normalising them to reproduce established social hierarchies (Smith 2022).

Other methodological frameworks currently used in heritage conservation derive from traditional and newer ethnographic methodologies adapted to conservation needs. A central example is the Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedure (REAP) (Low 2002), and its shorter version, the Toolkit for the Ethnographic Study of Space (TESS) (Low et al. 2018), which combines a set of traditional ethnographic methods, such as mappings (e.g. physical traces, behavioural mapping), interviews, focus groups and participant observation, with archival research. Different types of established methods can be combined with, for example, cultural mapping (Avrami 2019) and counter-mapping (Schoefield 2014). A highly relevant source for identifying heritage-making processes and eliciting heritage values is visual material provided by the informants/participants, making the photovoice method (Wang & Burris 1997; Dedrick 2018) potentially useful when informants record images or search for historic images and explain their content. Digital technologies provide the context that brings together interaction, social learning and the collection of visual material (Wells et al. 2021); scholars have especially recognised social media in the last years as a central context for investigating perceptions of heritage and promoting participation in heritage conservation activities (Liang et al. 2021).

Contrary to the conservation field, in museology, with the new definition of museum, the issues of participation and inclusivity have become fundamentally important. The International Council of Museums defines the goal of museums as follows: 'open to the public, accessible and inclusive that foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing' (ICOM 2022). Several museum experts have underlined the need to frame museological work with insights from the field of psychology and psychotherapy, especially when dealing with difficult and sensitive histories (e.g. Simon 2011; Pabst 2019). In fact, meaning-making is a central objective of heritage interpretation (Uzzell 1998), but also of narrative therapy, which seeks to 'weave together personal narratives to offer a collective account of a community' (Yim 2022, 972) and looks for a shared sense of identity and continuity.

This dualism in the central interdisciplinary fields of heritage, conservation and museology raises the question of whether the engaged activities of museums can contribute anything to the conservation field, either as a methodological reference point or as a complementary context. The potential of this interaction framed the first, informal initiative of 'memory evenings' in Koper/Capodistria 11 years ago.

The Case Study: Northern Istria Koper/Capodistria

Heritage dissonance marks the multicultural region in the border area of Istria, set between Italy, Slovenia and Croatia. The dissonance is especially evident in the northern urban area, today part of Slovenia. Istria represents a particular and informative case study of a contested space since it highlights several issues in heritage conservation related to multicultural and multi-ethnic issues. Historically, the region had for 500 years been under the rule of the Venetian Republic, until the end of 18th century, when it was integrated with the Austrian Empire. In the 20th century, northern Istrian coastal towns underwent a strong 'ethnic metamorphose' as the area was a part of different states and state ideologies, stretching from the Austro-Hungarian empire (1814–1920), the Kingdom of Italy governed by the National Fascist Party (1920–1943), the Third Reich and Nazism (1943–1945), the buffer-zone multinational temporary state known as the Free Territory of Trieste (1947–1954), Yugoslavia and socialism (1954–1991), and lastly, Slovenia and liberal democracy (1991–today). A first cataclismic period was that of interwar Fascism and its violent politics of cultural and economic annihiliation of Slovenes. The most drastic demographic change took place in the decade after World War II, when 90% of pre-war, mainly Italian-speaking, inhabitants emigrated from the area, and the emptied coastal towns were resettled by newcomers from inner Slovenia and later from other Yugoslav republics (Kalc 2019; Hrobat Virloget 2021). This process took place at the same time as another fundamental socio-political change: socialism. The metamorphoses resulting from such rapid population change might be called 'Slovenisation' at first and 'Yugoslavisation' in the end (Hrobat Virloget 2021; Čebron Lipovec 2019), since – besides Slovenes from other regions – many newcomers came first from Croatia, then from Bosnia and Serbia, and lastly – still today – many from Albania. These newcomers settled mainly in the medieval historic centres of the three cities Koper/Capodistria, Izola/Isola and Piran/Pirano, on the northern Istrian coast, which today again form Slovenian coastal region. The population change also brought with it a fundamental switch in discourses since the former (Italian-speaking) majority in the towns became a minority and the former Slovene-speaking minority now became the majority and persons in positions of authority. Accordingly, the heritage discourses also changed based on ethnic grounds as well as ideological grounds: the pre-war Italian identity, but especially Fascist values, which oriented the discourses of the pre- and inter-war period, were replaced by a primarily socialist ideological framework, integrated with a Slovene-Yugoslav national discourse. The focus of heritage preservation moved along these lines as well: post-war approaches privileged the care of previously dismissed Slovene or Slavic heritage in the countryside, while the valorisation of monuments from the *ancien regime* in

the historic city centres was limited to their use for 'scenic effect' in tourism (Čebron Lipovec 2019, 207). At the same time, major economic developments took place with the establishment of an international port and a strong focus on industrialisation. As a result, the post-war period also entailed a major restructuring of the built environment of the historic towns, where modernist architecture thoroughly changed the image and identity of the towns, including the large-scale demolition of older building, mostly in the town of Koper/Capodistria. The new identity – primarily Slovene-Yugoslav but at the same time socialist – was established through major interventions in the historic core, where several historic buildings were also demolished as a gesture of *marquage symbolique* (Veschambre 2008).

The post-war architecture today has an ambivalent and contested value in northern Istria since it has gained heritage value due to its age and documentary evidence but also its architectural value. At the same time, it is negatively valued because of its negative visual impact on the historic core, often also because of its socialist origin, thus many view it as an unwanted heritage. On the other hand, the older historic buildings are also often neglected, left to decay or renovated without consideration of their heritage and societal values, or else they are even demolished despite their status as listed monuments. However, in the last two decades, influenced by the neoliberal doctrine, a new wave of development and demolishing of the historic core has taken place. The buildings in danger belong to both the pre-war period (dating back to medieval times) as well as to the quality modernist complexes of the socialist period. Contrary to what one may expect, not much public criticism was heard even ten years ago, nor did heritage officials try to prevent the destruction particularly of the modernist buildings.

Such a situation has raised several questions about the identity, place attachment, values and affective practices of the current population. Recent ethnographic research on collective memory in this part of Istria (Hrobat Virloget 2021) indicates that the difference in attitude is linked to ethnic background: inhabitants of pre-war origin have a stronger link with the historic environment due to trans-generational links and tradition, which is not necessarily the case with the newcomers, who represent the majority of population. The perspective of the Italian population has been lately more in focus: many of the 'remaining' Italians consider the Venetian heritage a prominent symbol of their presence, and the neglect of it a sign of silenced memory (Hrobat Virloget 2021, 52) and 'disregard for Italian and Venetian memories' (Milič 2012, 169), thus a symbolic negation of the Other (Veschambre 2008). Nevertheless, as the various ethnic groups of post-war newcomers have integrated and intermarried new identities have formed, and with them new affective practice and place attachments. Today, Koper/Capodistria is a port city, reputed

as the capital of the Coastal-Karstic Region of Slovenia. It is a municipality of 53,000 inhabitants, approximately 7,000 of whom live in the central historic core, with most being the descendants of post-WWII newcomers. Yet, already in the late 1990s a sort of 'crisis' has been identified among the 'newcomer' community, as neatly presented in an essay by a reputed local artist:

> [G]rowing crowds in the coastal cities and satellite settlements are suffering from American West Syndrome. It reads: we came here from all winds, piled block to block, got back on our feet economically – but we don't know exactly where we are and who these people are next to us. […] In short, it is a classic identity crisis of all immigrants. […] The culture shock is actually twofold: modern-day coastal inhabitants have barely half a century of common history… (Šav 1996, 286; translation by author)

Istria is certainly not an idiosyncratic place, as similar sentiments of root-lessness have been identified in different areas that underwent major population changes, especially in relation to the Cold War Iron Curtain, such as in Kaliningrad (Sezneva 2003) or Wroclaw (Lewicka 2008). It thus raises a fundamental question about the place attachment of the current population, one that underpins recent heritage discourses and the resulting conservation interventions, or lack thereof. The question at stake thus is as follows: How can one research and identify elements of the place attachment of a diverse population living in 'Slovene coastal towns' in relation to the historic environment, including dissonances among the different groups of inhabitants (of different ethnic origin or age)? What can be the effects of a participatory approach?

Initiative: 'I´m telling the Story of a Town'

The above questions triggered my professional interest as an architectural historian and conservation scholar as well as my personal interest as a third-generation 'postwar newcomer', born in Koper/Capodistria and raised in the city's socialist suburbs. To address the questions, an ad-hoc, participatory, heritage assessment initiative entitled 'I'm telling the story of the town' (*Pripovedujem zgodbo mesta*) (Čebron Lipovec 2015) was carried out in 2012–2014 in the historic town of Koper-Capodistria in collaboration with two local experts.[2] It encompassed a set of public events that took place in the Regional Museum of Koper and aimed to identify facts as well as the attitudes and perceptions of members of the local community about selected sites. The initiative comprised a total of nine events, including one introductory mapping activ-

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2   The key collaborators were the museum curator Maša Saccara, PhD, an archaeologist and heritage interpretation specialist, and the photographer and collector Zdenko Bombek, both of whom I would like to thank very much for the collaboration.

ity, seven 'memory evenings' and a final exhibition. The initiative had a rather intuitive setup, as it was conceived on an ad-hoc basis; the project did not have a formal framework and started as a response to large redevelopment plans by the local authorities.

In terms of methods, the 'memory evenings' approach followed the principle of multivocality, combining an impromptu group interview technique (Low 2002) with a photo-voice method using historic images. It was namely based on the idea of different levels of participation, situated in-between contributory and co-collaborative types of participation (Van Mensch & Mejier-Van Mensch 2015, 56–59). Participants/visitors were informed about the event through various media (newspaper, radio, web news, social media, emailing). So, the initiative consisted of a set of debate or 'memory talk' events where local inhabitants were invited to share their knowledge and memories about certain local topics from the recent past, mainly local built sites. Prior to the event, a set of individual 'introductory' interviews were conducted with inhabitants identified as being strongly connected with the sites (e.g. living there for a longer period or working there). Their responses and visual material served as a starting point for the public events. All the events followed a basic model where the organisers (author of the present paper and a collaborator from the Koper Regional Museum) acted as moderators of a group discussion. The debate was usually opened by a set of historic images (collected during the introductory interviews), accompanied by a short introduction, after which the visitors were invited to start talking. Any participant could talk in the language that he/she felt most comfortable with, while the moderators strictly spoke at least in Slovenian and Italian – as the entire coastal zone is officially bilingual – and at times also using a local dialect. Usually, the interlocutors from the introductory interview started. So, in the spirit of an 'open microphone', one participant often incited another to add his/her views or memories, or to contrast them. In this sense, we also tried to address the general stand that museums should be sites of learning, including through interactions among visitors, based on the social nature of learning concept. In retrospect, we can identify the approach as a combination of impromptu group interviews and focus group and participatory observations (Low 2002) that mainly took the form of 'memory talk' (Degnen 2005). Degnen defines 'villagers' memory talk' as the 'discourse in which social memories become lodged in places (both present and erased) and people (both alive and deceased) outside intentionally commemorative and ritual contexts' (2005, 736), or as the 'social memory /…/ woven into the fabric of daily talk and gossip in all its variety, contradiction and everydayness' (2005, 737), such that it 'reveals a profoundly meaningful way of relating to the surrounding world, both physical and social' (2005, 731). Within the framework of the 'memory evenings' held

Image 1. '(In)Visible City' (*Nevidno mesto/Città invisible*), cultural mapping. Photo: Zdenko Bombek 2012.

a decade ago, the concept of 'memory talk' is what actually happened among the members of the local population, but in a public and semi-formal setting. Below, I provide a brief overview of the topics and how locals responded to the events, followed by a more in-depth analysis of the key insights.

The first event, named '(In)Visible City' (*Nevidno mesto/Città invisible*), took place in May 2012. It was a classic exploratory activity of cultural mapping, in which inhabitants were invited to mark with pins on a map of the town those sites in the historic centre of Koper that they considered to be representative of its history (green pins) as well as those sites that they believed of particular importance on a more personal level (red pins) (Image 1) in a notebook; they could then explain their choices. The map was installed in the central hall of the museum, right at the entrance to the building, right next to an ongoing photo exhibition entitled 'Faces of Koper' (*Obrazi Kopra/Visi di Capodistria*) by the local photographer Zdenko Bombek. His exhibition was extremely well received by the local community since the author presented diptychs of local inhabitants – in their earlier age on the one side, and at present, in the same spot, on the other side. The presence of the exhibition contributed importantly to the desire of the visitors to participate in the mapping activity. The activity helped us identify what locations could serve as a good starting point for a group discussion.

Image 2. Participatory exhibition accompanying the memory evening entitled 'Birthplace', November 2012. Photo: Zdenko Bombek 2012.

The second event, which took place in September 2012, was in fact the first 'memory talk' event described above, entitled 'Urban legends and anecdotes' (*Urbane legende in anekdote/Leggende e aneddoti urbani*). It was one of the most successful events, with more than 90 visitors, several of whom brought photographs or other material to support their recollections. This event was also the most 'confronting' since members of different groups present in the city participated and spoke with one another, and also at times disagreed quite strongly (as explained later in the text). The third event, held in October and November 2012, was entitled 'Birthplace' (*Rojstna hiša/Casa natale*) and dealt with the former medieval Servite convent, which had been the local hospital since the 19th century, but specifically a regional maternity hospital from the early post-war years until 1996, so most of the local population had been born there. With this event, we sought to investigate the inhabitants' shared values but also to promote the more remote history of the city (the convent) by linking it to the city's more recent history. In addition to the main event (November 2012), we also organised a participatory, or 'growing', exhibition about the convent/hospital site. A few panels presented short histories of the site, while also leaving empty boards where people could attach their own material (Image 2). Several visitors brought or sent pictures and written papers telling of their memories, or even photos of their newborns' bracelets.
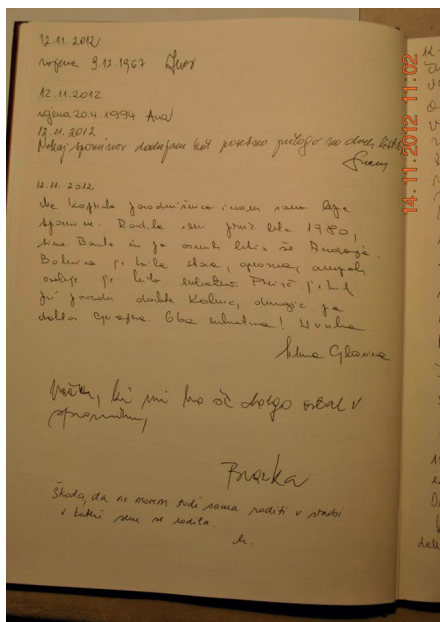
Image 3. Page from the 'memory book' of the participatory exhibition accompanying the memory evening 'Birthplace', November 2012.

However, the most effective of all the tools was the 'memory book' (Image 3): an empty notebook was left open where all visitors who were in any way connected with the site could write down their memories (hospital staff, mothers giving birth or fathers waiting outside, but also people who were born there). The book had a very powerful emotional effect since everyone could read each other's stories and thus connect with other local residents. The 'memory evening' took place on the closing day of the exhibition and attracted approximately 70 participants. The later events were centred more on sites related to social-economic local development. The event entitled 'TOMOS in our memories' (*TOMOS v naših spominih/TOMOS nei nostri ricordi*), held in December 2012, dealt with the main factory (for making motorcycles and engines) in the region in the socialist period, which was considered the flagship site for showcasing the Yugoslav socialist self-managed economy. On a local level, the factory was important as the main employer during those years. Operating on socialist principles, it provided comprehensive care for all the employees and their families. Coincidentally, the event took place at the same time that the factory – by then privatised – was shutting down, so the event was impregnated with nostalgia and downheartedness (Image 4).

The fifth event, entitled 'Living with the port' (*Živim s pristaniščem / Vivendo con il porto*), held in April 2013, was dedicated to the Port of Koper, which is still a major part of the economy on both a local and national level. This event, too, was accompanied by a participatory exhibition; this time old photos from the port's newsletter archive, dating to the 1960s and 1970s and mainly showing the workers in action, were reprinted on simple white boards, and visitors were invited to write comments next to the images. The interaction was, however, quite limited. In contrast to the TOMOS event, the 'memory evening', participation was much more limited, with most of the participants belonging to the upper classes of employees, mainly Slovenian-speaking administra-

Image 4. Memory talk at the event titled "How we danced!", September 2013.

tors, while none of the workers, mainly Serbian/Croatian-speaking persons, participated. The last two 'memory evenings' addressed social activities in the past. One was dedicated to the dance pools in Koper (the event was entitled 'How we danced!' or *Ma smo plesali! / Come ballavamo!*) and it took place in September 2013; this event also mainly attracted participants from the older generations, but of different backgrounds. Although not as popular as some of the previous events, it did provide valuable learning opportunities, namely documentary evidence of several sites in the historic core re-discovered as social lenses into the past.

A final event, entitled 'Urban musical nodes' (*Urbana glasbena vozlišča / Nodi urbani musicali*), held in April 2014, was dedicated to local pop and rock musical productions, generally considered a principal element of current local identity. Although a topic of apparently great importance on the local level, it surprisingly did not receive as much attention as expected. The initiative addressing the broader local community had in fact concluded already earlier, with the retrospective exhibition 'We are telling the story of the town' (*Pripovedujemo zgodbo mesta/Raccontiamo la storia della città*), held in January 2014, where the choice of putting the title of the event in the plural was intentionally made ('we' instead of 'I') to underscore the identification of shared elements in the city. This concluding event again received much

Image 5. Retrospective exhibition entitled 'We are telling the story of the town' (*Pripovedujemo zgodbo mesta/Raccontiamo la storia della città*), January 2014.

attention (Image 5), and the main reaction of many of the participants was 'We want more of these events; please do not stop!'

In general, the events were welcomed with much interest and enthusiasm by the visitors/participants. Due to a lack of financial[3] and institutional support, the initiative was completely based on voluntary work by the experts involved, so it had no operative funding to continue. Nevertheless, the experience called for a critical evaluation of its aims, methods and effects, should there be opportunity in the future to continue with the initiative – which in fact occurred in 2021. A SWOT analysis, carried out after the final event, showed the multiple effects of the initiative in terms of facts and attitudes, as intended by the participatory approaches (Sanoff 2000, 14). It generated a rich data collection on certain historic sites, but also officially unrecognised vernacular sites, including numerous documented and material sources, mainly pictures. At the same time, 'urban reminders', serving as 'mnemonic aids' (Lewicka 2008, 214) or even 'sticky objects' (Ahmed 2004), were identified.

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3   The initiative received a small amount of material support from the Kopor Regional Museum in the form of an exemption from paying the rent for the venue. In 2013, it received a very small sponsor contribution through the call for grant applications, 'Living with the port' (*Živeti s pristaniščem*), offered on a yearly basis by the Port of Koper to local cultural societies.

Sites like the maternity hospital, remembered as a collective birthplace, are examples of objects that created a point reflection and consciousness, where the weaving together of personal narratives offered a collective account of the community (Yim 2022). Yet, in-line with the already then topical issue of decolonising heritage discourses, we asked ourselves, as organisers and moderators, had we really made a significant change, when accounting for the complexity of our history, or had we only 'opened a ludic perspective on a very complex matter, /and thus/ lapsed into apologism and sanitised celebration' (Edwards & Mead 2013, 20) of the 'multiculturality' of the region or of the socialist past? The self-reflective questioning was prompted namely by moments at the events that unlocked some dormant or even silenced discourses and themes. Critical reflection and analysis were of crucial importance, both for the local community as well as for the professional and scientific issues it triggered.

Critical Insights about the Initiative

The critical insights relate mainly to the methodology and the effect of the events, namely the profile of the participants, the use of historic photographs, the museum venue and the psychological effect of the events, intertwined with the role of the researcher-moderator.

Profiles of the Participants

The first critical insight has to do with the profile of those who participated in the events. The events mainly attracted older people (50 years and up), only a few of whom were from the many ethnic groups present in the city and spoke up: the vast majority of participants were Slovenian-speaking inhabitants, some from the Italian community, a few from the former Yugoslav republics and no one from the Albanian community. The demographic profile relates directly to recent ethnological research on silenced memories in the northern Istrian region and the strong role of symbolic boundaries among the inhabitants, especially newcomers, which are structured according to the moment of arrival in the region after WWII (Katja Hrobat Virloget 2021, 188–212).

The inhabitants apparently conceive their legitimacy in claiming the right to interpret the heritage values of sites and memory discourses based on the intensity of place attachment, which supposedly derives from 'historical and ancestral ties' (Lewicka 2011), or even from the moment of arrival in the region. This attitude perpetuates the misleading assumption that deep attachments only develop through time (Garrow 2021); an assumption still present in the northern Istrian region. This observation is even more critical as it points to the fact that, contrary to our aim, we contributed to what Smith calls an 'assimilative strategy' (Smith 2022, 636), that is, the reproduction of existing

social hierarchies and the 'preforming of privilege' by a politically dominant ethnic group. On the other hand, we also identified a change in the community feeling among the participants. It mainly occurred among the older generation present at the events, who through 'memory talk' re-discovered aspects of their past that they had previously considered self-evident. In this sense, the public group events proved a driving force in mutually discovering a shared sense of identity and continuity among the members of the local community.

Use of Photographic Material and 'Historic Photovoice'

Another positive effect of the gatherings can be ascribed to the use of historic photographs. The use of historic photos for exhibitions on historic places as well as for conservation purposes is a method typically employed by researchers. However, in the case of the 'memory evenings', the historic photos had multiple roles. In the first place, several of them were used in a 'photovoice' manner. Photovoice is essentially a problem-based participatory technique that combines documentary photography, ethnographic focus groups and public exhibitions to enable people to record and reflect on their community's strengths and concerns, to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through group discussion of the photographs, and to reach policymakers (Wang and Burris 1997; Dedrick 2018). However, photovoice is based on community members actively taking photos and commenting on them. In the case of 'memory talk', the 'voicing' or participatory part of the interaction began when preparing for the individual interviews. The members of the community provided their personal photos, selected important ones and commented on them. The interlocutor chose the images, in this way allowing him/her to select, interpret and thus elicit the essential value of particular photographs. Part of the activity then shifted from the private context of the home to the public context of the participatory, or 'growing', exhibition – in the case of the maternity hospital.

Furthermore, both in the individual and even more in the group setting, photographs became multi-sensory objects that triggered multi-sensory responses, shaping and enhancing people's emotional engagement with the visual traces of the past (Edwards 2010). The photos became emotional agents (Milič 2012, 173). As mnemonic devices, or 'sticky objects', the historic photos triggered the 'memory talk' and the weaving together of personal narratives. However, considering the dissonant perceptions of the recent past and the heritage of Istria, the historic images can also be regarded as part of an object-based form of storytelling, set within the framework of narrative therapy (Yim 2022, 971) to address issues of difficult heritage and difficult knowledge (Simon 2011).

Museum as a Venue for Participatory Research

Another critical insight stemmed from the venue site – the museum. In the Slovenian research context, with the study having been done more than ten years ago, museums were still perceived as canonical institutions, providing knowledgeable interpretation of heritage by experts, and therefore only conditionally serving as an adequate space for the participatory involvement of the community. Nevertheless, in Koper the engagement of the local curators contributed to the perception of the museum as a meeting place, which in turn contributed to the positive effect of the initiative. Due to the formal framework of the 'memory evenings' – the fact that they were held at an exact time and date and within a public institution like the museum – they did not match entirely the informal nature of the 'villagers' memory talk'. Yet, most of the events were carried out in a largely relaxed atmosphere of familiarity, in which the everyday topics discussed at the events had the effect of a 'memory talk' that might (or does) often take place in informal situations in the town's public spaces.

Psychological Effect of the Events: Confronting the Fractures and Dissonances

Another critical insight stemming from the initial experience relates to the unpreparedness of the organisers to confront in real-time the dissonance, or event conflict, which derived from the historic social and political context of the region. At some events, the conflicts that arose clearly pointed to collective traumas (Čebron Lipovec 2015), representing a central issue in our study. Current scholarship and practice in museology is quite aware of the psychological dimensions of museum work, especially in relation to difficult heritage and traumatic pasts (Cowan et al. 2019; Pabst 2019), since the process of dealing with affect and emotions to better understand how people develop attachments to the past can reveal fractures and tensions within a community (Wetherell et al. 2018, 2). Recent research points to the manifold intersections between narrative therapy, when studied within the framework of community psychology, and museum studies: work with a group or community, storytelling as central activity, the use of objects to facilitate storytelling, collective witnessing and, most of all, meaning-making for individuals and communities (Yim 2022). Still in 2012, but also later, this level of openness and self-reflection in the expert field was not yet present.[4]

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4   In 2017, I gave a presentation at the International symposium on 'Museums and Contested Histories, Between Memory and Oblivion', which focused on present reflections about the relationship between heritage work, particularly in museums, and psychotherapy.

The 'I'm telling the story of a town' initiative gave rise to some traumatic moments, which led the author, as organiser and moderator, to search for advice among psychotherapists.[5] When talking, we discovered that the initiative lends itself to comparison with certain aspects of group psychotherapy. We found this endeavour somewhat far-fetched and tendential, yet the result of this mental exercise provided insightful results. For this reason, I present here the key insights. Group psychotherapy (Yalom & Leszcz 2005) is a psychotherapy approach in which a small group of clients is treated together as a group. The group context and group process function as mechanisms of transformation through the development and analysis of interpersonal relations within the group. The group enables the individual to recount a personal experience with an important other. The set of basic therapeutic factors within group therapy is broad, namely interpersonal learning, catharsis, group cohesiveness, existential factors, universality, instillation of hope, altruism, corrective recapitulation of the primary family group, development of socialising techniques, imitative behaviour and imparting information.

One of the most unexpected aspects of the 'I'm telling the story of the town' initiative was that of catharsis. In psychotherapy, it concerns the releasing of emotional distress through the free and uninhibited expression of emotion, or in simpler terms 'getting things off the chest'. When members tell their story to a supportive audience, they can obtain relief from chronic feelings of shame and guilt as well as suppressed feeling of victimhood. This aspect was most evident in the first event, dedicated to 'Urban legends and anecdotes'. The catharsis took place in the confrontation between an elderly Slovene and a younger Italian when exchanging their memories and interpretations of certain events and uses of private and public spaces in the historic centre of Koper. In recollecting the significance of a certain street in the historic centre that contained the town's first radio station, an elderly former journalist of the Slovene broadcasting channel recalled the importance of the radio station as a cultural institution during the early post-war period:

> Radio Koper was the only cultural institution in the entire Primorska region at that time, and our voice even reached Trieste. It was the only cell of Slovene identity at the time, but I would say the cradle of Slovene language, because everywhere around only the local Slovene dialect was spoken, which is not bad, but that real Slovene language was only on Radio Koper. [...] Now, just one more thing, because you all spoke Italian before … I'll tell you something now, which will sound a bit chauvinistic, but it's true. You all have an idea of where Loggia [historic café on the central square] is and where

that beautiful square is, with a church on one side, and on the other side that building where the hospital or the administration of the chamber used to be, and in front there were stone seats, [which are] still there now. Once, there were two fine ladies sitting in the pharmacy, which was on Čevljarska Street [side of main square] … They always sat there in some company. On the other side, in Loggia, sat the judges of the new [Slovene] court of Koper, whom I knew all very well. So, I was walking past there /…/ and one of the fine ladies shouts after me, '*Maledetta sc'iava!*'[6] ['damn Slav']. As soon as I heard that, I turned around and slapped her so hard that I even scared myself and started to tremble. In that moment, one of the judges came over to me. He said: 'Come, sit with us.' So, I told him what had happened. He then ordered me a drink and I don't know what else, and they applauded me for having done the right thing. I apologize to everyone who is Italian or anything, because it was not intentionally done or anything, but that's how it was. (Interview 1)

The testimony provoked, on the one hand, applause by many participants at the event, which can be interpreted as a sign of support for the expressed feeling of Slovene national pride, relating to the early postwar times and the tense atmosphere. However, the story triggered a strong emotional reaction in a younger member of the Italian community, who replied, in Italian, as follows to this narration and other earlier recollections:

I don't know if you understand me in Italian, or if you prefer, I can speak Slovenian, it's the same. I apologize, it was not my intention to intervene, but in my opinion it is necessary to offer some clarifications. In the first place, the TOMOS factory is being built on land that was stolen from my grandfather, and no one has ever returned it to him. He was neither a fascist nor a communist; he was just a peasant who worked honestly, this must be said. Indeed, some people came to Capodistria, and had luck, found work and a home, but there were also many injustices done to other people who weren't involved in … not even in bad things. Then, in those 1950s, there was a lot of talk about the school. But it was not an idyllic system. There have been forced transfers of Italian children to Slovenian schools; there were different methods, either by intervention of the police or internal affairs, the municipal office. So, there were many children in Slovenian schools who did not know Slovenian because they had never spoken Slovenian at home. So … it is important to say this … that other injustices have been done to repair some damage. Then, as regards the radio station, it must be remembered that Palazzo Tarsia [in the same street as the radio station] /…/ was the seat of the Italian socialist party in the 1920s. In 1922, therefore the bad year [the

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6   The dialectal term 'sc'iavo' is a strong pejorative and insult directed at Slavic people, used by Italian nationalists in Istria and the Trieste region, as it has the same root as *schiavo*, a slave. In the reported account, the female version (*sc'iava*) of it was used.

Fascist *coup de état* in Italy], that we all know why, a socialist mayor /…/ was elected in Capodistria … this must be said … and he led the municipality until 1926 /…/ it was a total fascist regime. So, the people of Capodistria never voted for a fascist municipality. This must be remembered, because so many lies are often told about these things. /…/ Very often, just because they were Italians, everyone was called a fascist even if they were communists or of other political beliefs. […]. (Interview 2)

The statement recounts an official narrative within the Italian community, stressing historic facts to support this generally unknown interpretation of local history and providing an alternative voice. His comments were also met with strong applause among the participants of the event. The clash between the two recollections represented an explicit public expression of two opposing viewpoints and disparate feelings, linked to two different collective memories and competing victimhood narratives – one by a member of the majority Slovenian population, supported also by the authorised heritage discourse, versus the perspective of a member of the minority Italian population. In the local context, such face-to-face moments rarely, if ever, occur in public, especially away from the political realm. The cathartic therapeutic effect was evident especially in the story told by the young Italian, who felt she could express her suppressed feeling of collective victimhood and inherited transgenerational trauma by providing a different point of view, one not part of the official Slovene discourse, in front of a Slovene audience – which at least listened to her and also gave evidence of empathy.

A key element in such exercises is the breaking of 'silence', which in this context is a 'mechanism of intergenerational transfer of trauma or stronger emotional contents' (Hrobat Virloget & Logar 2020, 262), as identified in both psychotherapeutic practice as well as ethnographic research done in the Istrian region (Hrobat Virloget & Logar 2020). However, psychotherapeutic theory stresses that catharsis alone cannot be considered the ultimate outcome. Catharsis has a therapeutic effect only if, once expressed, the traumatic experience can be accepted and consequently elaborated on in a safe environment and with empathy. In the concrete case described above, the first person to steer people's reactions in the direction of empathy was the moderator of the event, who, speaking in both Slovenian and Italian, underscored that everyone bears wounds. The moderator called attention to the universality of such wounds and the fact that, if the community wants to coexist, the wounds should be treated with equal regard, 'listened to and heard' on both sides of the aisle, leading to empathy and thus cohesiveness. In this case, the double positionality of the expert in the role of moderator/facilitator, but also that of a local, turned out to be crucial since the different groups could then identify with the words, presented in an inclusive manner and expressed in both offi-

cial languages, which underscored the idea of mutual understanding but not forced consensus. However, the experience clearly showed that such a participatory event, which seeks to tackle delicate issues of collective memory and trauma, requires more than the usual ethnographic sensitivity on the part of the moderator. After this event, no other strong conflicts arose, although strong emotional reactions did occur. Our place-oriented participatory research activity became a site of direct confrontation about the contested history.

Psychological Effect: Cohesiveness and Sense of Belonging

The second overarching effect of the events, conditionally related to key factors of group therapy, is cohesiveness, generally regarded by experts as a primary therapeutic factor, one that instils a sense of belonging and acceptance. It concerns the attraction that members have for their group and for the other members of it, the extent to which the group represents a safe environment. We place it here as the second psychological effect of the events because, in our case, it can be interpreted as having resulted from the first one: since most members of the urban population do not have deep local roots, it is the group of newcomers themselves, again irrespective of ethnic or class origin, who typically represent the local community. It is this melting pot of different people that those participating in the events recognised as comprising the community to which they belong and within which their collective memory is preserved. Several persons gave accounts of the inclusive and melting-pot character of the region, such as in the case of the dance pools in the postwar years:

> Dance was what brought people together. So, there was no problem if a man from Ljubljana danced with a woman from Koper or, for example, a man from Trieste with a Slovenian woman. Sociality was created and strengthened right on the dance floor. Everyone danced in their own way. The people of Trieste knew how to dance the boogie woogie, but only the people of Trieste, because they were taught by the Americans. This social meeting helped a lot to overcome many obstacles, verbal, linguistic, and also brought new acquaintances. In Triglav [the only and new hotel in the early 1950s], the people of UDBA [Yugoslav secret service] danced with the ladies from Trieste, in fact a beautiful sociability developed precisely with the help of dance. (Interview 3)

Cohesiveness was strongly present in events that addressed topics from the region's socialist past, for example in the event dealing with the TOMOS factory. The statements that gained widespread support were those stressing collective activities, such as 'everyone had a role in the society, everyone felt useful' (Interview 4), or also

A collective, at work, that it is part of you … and you were willing to work, you didn't cause damage, you were ready to work even a day or so for free; we went on Saturdays. … Oh, I'll say this again … we had to work on Saturdays … and then there was a referendum if we want to work on Saturdays … and I said, I want to work on Saturdays. (Interview 5)

Well, these young people here, they weren't even born then, they can listen now a bit, but one day they'll have pictures to see something. … And I say, that's why I'm really sorry for you, because … this [TOMOS factory] was … our mother, this was our home, this was our bread, I feel sad for it … and when I say this, tears are coming to my eyes. (Interview 6)

However, the TOMOS factory was also discussed in the first 'memory evening', but with the negative connotation of it being a postwar site expropriated from prewar inhabitants. This fact was considered when preparing the factory event, and the event opened with an image of the site before the factory was built in combination with a quote about the expropriation. So, the dissonance inherent to the site was an integral part of the event, as also acknowledged by some of the participants; yet, the 'progressive nostalgia' (Smith & Campbell 2017) moment prevailed.

Cohesiveness was strongly highlighted also in the case of the 'Birthplace' event, dedicated to the maternity hospital and involving not only the older generations but younger people as well (everyone born between 1946 and 1996 in the northern Istrian region). Furthermore, this topic involved the whole community in the most trans-ethnic sense, since the building had the most inclusive function *per se*, and thus its importance is recognised by many members of the community. The memory book used at the exhibition about the site and at the 'memory evening' proved a useful tool for fostering cohesiveness since each person could share with others his/her personal story, which evoked strong feelings of empathy, mutuality and thus cohesiveness.

The 'memory evenings' also triggered memory talk within the community through the use of historic images. The evenings had multiple effects in terms of helping people discover not-yet-identified sites in the city that had social value and heritage value for the community, as important elements of place attachment. At the same time, thanks to the direct interaction among the participants, clear instances of dissonance also surfaced. So, the tangible aspects of memory talk helped reveal the intangible aspects of the sites, underscoring their significance. This double effect makes the approach of memory talk a relevant method for studying built heritage conservation, as it follows the principles of a people-centred approach while also accounting for critical heritage studies' critique of the limitations of AHD and conservation's exclusive focus

on the materiality of the sites. Yet, recent scholarship has highlighted a lack of equilibrium in critical heritage studies, observing that the critical heritage studies privileges a central focus on the intangible dimension of heritage at the expense of the tangible dimension (Skrede & Holleland 2018, 82). Tangible qualities are often a 'fundamental prerequisite for an emotional attachment to the older built environment' (Wells 2016, 219), as demonstrated in studies on place attachment and theories of affect.

So, 'memory talk' in a group setting has potential as a new method for overcoming this discrepancy and responding to the current needs of the conservation field. It can contribute to community identity, offer a space for mutual recognition, raise awareness about the social and societal value of heritage sites, and finally, provide new historic data about the tangible aspects of the sites (e.g. former uses, changes). With this in mind, the former experiences of the 2012–2014 participatory research initiative were revisited and the objectives updated in a current research project on the potential of employing ethnographic methods for built heritage conservation purposes, particularly at contested sites. Based on the criticalities identified during the former initiative, some adjustments were made, such as ensuring that the venue is always the research site itself; clearly stating at the beginning of an event that it is open to everyone and will particularly address different views; and making it clear that the moderators have been in constant contact with experts in psychology to be able to interact with the participants in an adequate manner in explicit instances of conflict. To direct the events towards addressing conservation needs, the structure of the event has been complemented with some interactive techniques already in use in the heritage sector (e.g. Clark 2019).

Conclusion: Towards a New Potential Method for Built Heritage Conservation?

The above discussion stems from a theoretical framework on heritage discourses, but it also addresses the challenges that the current theory and practice of built heritage conservation are facing in the need to open themselves up to people-centred approaches, particularly in contested spaces. I analysed the 'memory evenings' held as part of the 'I'm telling the story of the town' initiative in the town of Koper/Capodistria (Slovenia) between 2012 and 2014 and dedicated to participatory research on valued places by the local community. I outlined the criticalities of this experience, but also the psychological benefits of such participative research. The experience confirmed the generally established importance of multivocal ethnographic methods and highlighted especially the advantages of 'memory talk'.

Although 'memory talk' is not considered a research method, but rather an informal process that people undertake, it can provide relevant insights. When used as a research method in a group setting, it can provide factual information (tangible dimension) as well as a multivocal understanding of the meanings of a certain place (intangible dimension), while also enhancing interactions within the community. When used in a contested context, such interactions can reveal suppressed negative feelings, such as victimhood or marginalisation, but also provide a platform for confrontation and mutual recognition since they offer the possibility to give voice to the 'infrequently heard' members of the community, to their silenced memories, telling them out loud and consequently actually being *heard* by the majority, thus serving as an 'affective interpretative strategy' (Witcomb 2013). While the museological field has already been intensively working on these types of issues for more than a decade, the heritage conservation field still needs to systematically approach such challenges, namely how to integrate the results of place attachment research, especially in contested areas, into heritage conservation practice. An attempt to move in this direction is currently taking place in Slovenia by building on the experiences of the participatory research initiative conducted a decade ago.

AUTHOR

Neža Čebron Lipovec, MA in Art History, MSc in Conservation of Monuments and Sites, and PhD in History, has in the last decade been actively involved in the field of critical heritage studies research, focusing first on 20th-century architectural heritage and then on interdisciplinary approaches, ethnographic methods promoting participation in built heritage conservation in contested lands. Since 2009, she has been a research fellow and assistant professor at the University of Primorska, Faculty of Humanities, Institute of Archaeology and Heritage, in Slovenia.

SOURCES

Fieldwork material

All the fieldwork material is in the possession of the author.
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Interview 2. 26 September 2012, Slovene Istria. Female, 30–40. Interviewer Neža Čebron Lipovec.

Interview 3. 18 September 2013, Slovene Istria. Male, 60–70. Interviewer Neža Čebron Lipovec.

Interview 4. 19 December 2013, Slovene Istria. Male, 40–50. Interviewer Neža Čebron Lipovec.

Interview 5. 19 December 2013, Slovene Istria. Female, 50–60. Interviewer Neža Čebron Lipovec.

Interview 6. 19 December 2013, Slovene Istria. Male, 60–70. Interviewer Neža Čebron Lipovec.

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Marleen Metslaid

Ilmar Talve, Emigré Ethnologist from Estonia

Abstract:

The article focuses on Ilmar Talve (1919–2007) and his exile in Sweden, 1945–1959. The complex nature of an émigré position in a scholarly field is analysed from several angles. I explore how Talve adapted to the Swedish academic field while he was working at the Institute of Folklife Research, led by Sigurd Erixon. I am also interested in how his understanding of ethnology evolved in Estonia as a student of the WWII era and in Sweden after the war. Talve's efforts to pursue and develop Estonian ethnology while in exile are then examined in more detail. On the one hand, it shows the influence of the contemporary national discourse on research. In some sense, it was an unrewarding dead end, but even as such, it describes the political and societal conditionality of pursuing science at the time. On the other hand, it raises the question of the influence of Erixon's theoretical views on Talve, and therefore, on Finnish ethnology. Talve implemented his plans in Finland as a professor at the University of Turku. The article also explores the important role played by Finnish scholars for both exile ethnologists in Sweden and Estonian ethnographers in the Soviet Union, and it reflects on Talve's place in this relationship.
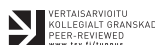
Keywords: Ilmar Talve, émigré ethnologist, Estonian ethnology, Finnish ethnology, Sigurd Erixon

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The well-known Finnish-based ethnologist Ilmar Talve (1919–2007), a long-serving professor at the University of Turku, was originally from Estonia, where he had studied ethnology. The twists and turns of the Second World War (WWII) took him to Sweden, where he managed to continue his studies and professional work at the Institute of Folklife Research (Institutet för Folklivsforskning), headed by Sigurd Erixon (1888–1968). Talve spent 14 years in Stockholm before permanently settling in Finland and enjoying a successful career as the founder of a school of thought.

As scholars, we are part of an intellectual world that could be regarded as a field with its own system of relations and terms of power (see Bourdieu 1984). As agents in the scholarly field, researchers struggle to accumulate and exchange different kinds of power resources (e.g. social, symbolic and economic capitals). The agents can be both core and peripheral players, established or emerging. Although the academic world can be seen as global, each country and each regional discipline has its own specific academic field. Ethnology can also be called a discourse with its own solid, structured system – as a form of scholarship, it has its own theoretical and methodological foundations, which transcend national borders. At the same time, the history of each country gives the discipline its specific characteristics that influence the researchers' knowledge production. What happens when an agent is forced to move from one field to another, even if the disciplinary discourse is supposedly similar? How were Talve's career opportunities and knowledge production affected by the political, social and academic context around him?

Until the 1960s, Professor Sigurd Erixon was 'the best-known and most influential scholar internationally of European ethnology or cultural history studies' (Rogan 2013, 89). He was an advocate for a unified discipline that, according to him, should deal with material, non-material and social aspects of popular culture, both historically and in the present (Rogan 2015, 115). His innovative ideas were in the long run outdated, but this does not diminish his importance in the international, and especially the Swedish, academic world in the period spanning 1930–1960. How did young Talve manage to find a place at Erixon's Institute? What did he study? Other Baltic émigré scholars worked there alongside him. How did they relate to the new academic environment, and how were they received in Sweden?

Scholars have highlighted that the years spent with Erixon had a great impact on Talve, and therefore influenced how he later developed Finnish ethnology (e.g. Ruotsala 2021). Erixon's contribution to the history of European ethnology has been extensively studied by Bjarne Rogan (2008, 2013, 2015), but his work has received attention from other historians of the discipline as well (e.g. Frykman 2012). Talve has thus far received little attention, with the main focus being on his time in Finland (Virtanen 2003; Ruotsala 2019,

2021). He has been studied as an ethnologist of both Finland (e.g. Virtanen 2003; Ruotsala 2019, 2021; Vilkuna 1979; Lehtonen 1989) and Estonia (Ränk 1969; Viires 1989, 1998), but not as part of the Swedish scholarly tradition. As the author of a number of works on Estonian history, he is also well known in his native country (e.g. Teder 1989, Tonts 2009).

The present article contributes to the historiography of European ethnology. Analysing Talve's activities provides micro-level insights into the history of the discipline, allowing us to investigate the development of the academic field. By focusing on an émigré scholar, I examine in particular the possibilities for invigorating regional ethnology in a refugee context. I am interested in Talve's advancement as a scholar and in the development of his ethnological views on culture and society, which became the starting point for his work in Turku. Initially, he sought more to develop Estonian ethnology, though. How did his understanding of the discipline evolve in Estonia and Sweden?

As an ethnology history researcher, I have been interested in questions of continuity with respect to the discipline in the midst of changing political and social systems and the changing role of individual researchers as a result. The conventional view is that Estonian ethnology split into two separate branches after a core group of researchers went into exile in Sweden in the autumn of 1944 (Viires 1991, 127). Analysis of the phenomenon at the grassroots level shows that the Iron Curtain did not necessarily mean a complete lack of reciprocal influences, nor did the scholars who went into exile renounce their background in Estonian ethnology. Estonian identity remained important to Talve until the end of his life (Ruotsala 2021, 282). This also raises the question of scholars belonging to a national scholarly tradition, even when working abroad and studying other topics.

In the late 1990s, Talve published a three-volume autobiography (Talve 1997, 1998, 1999), and several years later an abridged Finnish version (Talve 2004a). The Estonian-language autobiography provides much of the primary source material for this article. Talve wrote it as a story of personal growth and painted a portrait of himself for posterity. Talve's archive was donated to the Estonian Cultural History Archives at the Estonian Literary Museum (collection 404). It contains diverse material, of which I mainly use his correspondence with his closest colleagues and some professional manuscripts and lecture notes. Materials on Talve can also be found in Ants Viires' personal archive in the Eesti Rahva Muuseum (ERM, Estonian National Museum).[1] I also analyse his newspaper articles and research papers.

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1 Talve's materials can also be found in Sigurd Erixon's archive at the Nordiska museet, much of which I am familiar with but do not use in the present article. These materials concern his work at the institute and can shed even more light on the period under study, though.

The Talve correspondence and the publications used for this article offer an illuminating characterisation of the era under study. Applying discourse analysis to the sources sheds light on the political and societal conditionality of pursuing science from a grassroots perspective. I start by looking at Talve's Estonia period, which will allow for a better understanding of the motives behind his later activities. Thereafter, I analyse his entry into the research field of Swedish ethnology and the difficulties associated with obtaining a doctorate. The third subsection of the article deals with the question of the continuity in and reforms made to Estonian ethnology in exile. I end the article with a lengthier discussion on the points of contact between Estonian ethnology in exile, in Soviet Estonia and in Finland, and Talve's role in it.

Studies at the University of Tartu during wartime

In the following section, I provide a brief overview of the historical, ideological and disciplinary historical context of Talve's studies in Tartu. This is necessary to better understand the background to his activities during the Swedish period. What was Estonian ethnology like in the late 1930s and during WWII? What kind of researcher profile emerges from the memories and archival sources of his student years?

Talve began his studies in the still independent Republic of Estonia at the national university in Tartu in southern Estonia in 1938. He has written about how in the interwar period, when Estonia was newly independent, he received a purely national education (Talve 1946a) and how it laid the foundation for a national worldview for the next generation of educated people. Talve entered the Faculty of Humanities and began to study subjects related to Estonian national culture (Estonian, folkloristics, ethnology). Therefore, he was deeply involved in the prevailing national discourse. Yet, Talve could not realise his peacetime desire of working in academia in Estonia. The political situation soon underwent a sea change. The Soviet Union occupied Estonia (along with Latvia and Lithuania) in June 1940, and it annexed the country, known as the Estonian SSR, that August. The academic year of 1940/1941 took place under Soviet rule. In the summer and autumn of 1941, the Estonian territory was a battlefield between two opposing powers. The Nazi invasion resulted in one occupier being supplanted by another. Estonia was under German control until the autumn of 1944.

During those years, academic work took place in fits and starts and required that students be quite independent. Soviet ideological demands placed on research were more stringent[2] than those affecting researchers during the

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2   In a 1941 seminar paper, Talve could thus not avoid including the rhetoric of Soviet ideology in the introduction (Talgud Eestis, ERM Ak 36-6-1).

later German occupation (Vahtre 2005, 209). 'Red' subjects and the Russian language were compulsory, while with other subjects the degree of ideological indoctrination depended on the specific teacher and their mindset. The German occupiers did not at first seek to impose an ideology on scientific life, so Estonians were largely able to continue with their previous activities (Vahtre 2005, 209; Kalling & Tammiksaar 2021). Seminars continued to be held in the spirit of the interwar period. However, the continuation of studies was difficult and linked to regulations coming from higher up. Talve still managed to defend his master's thesis in ethnology in the summer of 1942, though, and started to think about the theme of his doctoral dissertation.

Talve made the decision to continue studying ethnology during the first Soviet occupation, when he was hired at ERM. He later described the decision in a letter to his professor, Gustav Ränk (1902–1998), as follows:

> [---]in the end, I have to thank you for the fact that I stuck with ethnography and became some sort of ethnologist. Not so much directly due to your teaching, although that, too, had a major significance. But in autumn 1940, after the coup, when I was looking for a foothold, you were the only one who replied to my letter. I sent three letters to Tartu on that occasion.[3] I was and have always been very interested in folklore and literature, and I could have just as easily ended up being a folklorist or literary scholar. Everything was still open then. [---] Your letter, in which you put me directly in touch with the Eesti Rahva Muuseum and ethnology, was the decisive event [---]
>
> (I. Talve letter to G. Ränk, 15 February 1962, EKLA, 404:1:55)

The renowned ethnologist Gustav Ränk, known in Europe for studies written later in exile in Sweden, had only just become an adjunct professor at the University of Tartu (UT) in the autumn of 1939. He continued on the path established by the Finnish scholar Ilmari Manninen (1894–1935), who had served as the first associate professor of ethnology (then called ethnography, or *rahvateadus*[4]) at UT between 1924 and 1928. According to the programme set by Manninen, ethnology studied material peasant culture relying on typological, cartographic and historical-geographical methods. The approach corresponded to the research being carried out in related disciplines in nearby countries (e.g. Finland, Russia, Sweden) (Viires 1991; Vunder 2000; see also Talve 1992). Ethnology was closely related to ERM's overarching mission, with the museum becoming a centre of excellence in such research during the interwar period, and it remained so even afterwards. The museum collections

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3   In the hope of finding work, Talve sent letters not only to ERM but also to the Estonian Folklore Archives and the Estonian Cultural History Archives.

4   Folk science in English, *kansatiede* in Finnish.

were frequently the basis for scholarly research, fieldwork materials were kept there, teaching staff worked there and seminars were often held there.

Talve was hired as a temporary employee at the museum, but he soon became a staff member and worked as an assistant and head of the correspondents' network. His studies were thus closely connected to work at the museum, and therefore, intricately interwoven with practical knowledge in the speciality. The museum determined the academic fate of many other scholars besides just Talve.[5]

In his early student papers and also in his master's thesis, which was on the subject of tar and charcoal production, Talve drew on the discourse created by Manninen. His studies at the time were mainly based on ERM's collections. Yet, the more traditional approach and topics of study did not satisfy Talve's budding research interests. He had a desire to be innovative and broaden the discipline's scope of application, and he shared this desire with a fellow student and colleague named Helmut Hagar (1914–1991).[6] Later, while corresponding in exile, they refer to their discussions on this subject in wartime Tartu. Talve took an interest in societal folk culture, which he presumably arrived at in connection with his folkloristics studies under Oskar Loorits (1900–1961)[7] and through reading Finnish religious scholar Uno Harva's works (Talve 1997, 253, 271, 301).[8] In early 1943, Talve planned a more exhaustive study of social folk culture with the aim of pursuing a PhD, and he applied for a scholarship for this purpose (letter from I. Talve to the Learned Estonian Society, 2 February 1943, ERM Ak 36:6:5) and sought to conduct fieldwork in special cultural regions in Estonia (Muhu Island, the Seto region). But the German

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5   A professorship was opened up right before the occupation, and despite the political turmoil unleashed by the WWII era, this decision paid off handsomely. A sizeable number of students formed a core group around Ränk, and four of them defended their master's theses in the summer of 1942. Besides Talve, Helmut Hagar, Ella Koern and Aita Hanko all worked at ERM.

6   Before fleeing to Sweden in the autumn of 1944, Hagar served as an acting director of ERM. During his first years in exile, Hagar worked at the Nordiska museet, mainly with the Estonian Swedes materials. He worked later at the Institute of Folklife Studies, where he helped Erixon with his village research project. He passed the licentiate exam in 1953 and planned to write a doctoral thesis on traditional transport, but this work was never completed (Viires 1998, 699–700).

7   Oskar Loorits, an Estonian folklorist and publicist, one of the founders of the Estonian Folklore Archives and its first director, and a professor of Estonian and Comparative Folklore at UT, 1939–1941. Loorits fled to Sweden in 1944 and continued his research work there.

8   Uno Harva (1882–1949) was a professor of sociology at the University of Turku, 1926–1949. Talve contacted him when he was in Finland (1943–1944) as a volunteer in the Finnish Continuation War (Talve 1997, 301). Even in such a difficult situation, he thought about improving himself professionally. It can be called Talve's first contact with Turku and sociology.

military began to mobilize and the plan came to naught. Talve used the money to escape to Finland instead in early April 1943.

Records left behind in Tartu show how seriously Talve deliberated on the topic of societal folk culture.[9] He sought to analyse 'our village life in olden days, societal relationships and strata, collective undertakings and customary law' (letter from I. Talve ...), and to further this end, he intended to collect material through his correspondents and personal fieldwork. In 1943, a museum survey that he had compiled was published, entitled '*Küsimusi ühiskondliku rahvakultuuri alalt I*' (Questions from the field of societal folk culture I), which was the first part of a much more voluminous (200 questions instead of 46) draft of considerable depth and breadth. The topics were in part inspired by Finnish ethnologist Erik Anton Virtanen's work '*Varsinais-Suomen yhteiskunnallista kansankulttuuria*' (The Social Folk Culture of Southwest Finland, 1938) (Talve 1997, 271).

Looking back at Talve's Tartu years, the diversity and breadth of his research topics and plans are astonishing. He did not limit himself just to investigating a single topic at increasing depth, but rather had a very broad grasp of folklife research even as a young researcher. In various levels of work written as a student, he dealt with drawshaves, wheeled conveyances and charcoal and tar production, and he also independently developed the study of societal folk culture. Talve was driven by a passion for work as a scholar. He hoped that every paper he penned as a student would be published. This hope was not just wishful thinking, as he did rewrite his seminar works for publication, but potential publication opportunities did not materialise due to the wartime situation.

A doctorate in Swedish ethnology

To be accepted in the specific scholarly field, one has to demonstrate a certain cultural competence 'in the shape of education, titles, offices, and commissions, and practical knowledge of dialects and local culture' (Lilja 1999, 28). Knowledge of local culture and history was particularly important in ethnology at the time, where culture was mainly studied within the boundaries of the nation-state. Talve ended up in Sweden as a refugee, as a young scholar with a master's degree in Estonian ethnology but no scientific publications to show for it. How did he convince Erixon to employ him? How did he cope with

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9   Talve's materials in the personal archive of Ants Viires at ERM include notes on the customary law of Estonian fishermen, social folk culture and village society, and leatherwork (ERM Ak 36:6:5–10). They probably ended up in Viires' hands when Talve fled to Finland. Ants Viires (1918–2015) was Talve's contemporary but began his studies at the UT a little later. Viires also worked at ERM during wartime. He became the most important ethnologist in Soviet Estonia.

entering the Swedish scholarly field? How did Swedish ethnology differ from Estonian ethnology, and how did Talve familiarise himself with it?

Towards the end of WWII, 27,000 Estonians had fled to Sweden, where they made up the largest group of refugees (Tammaru, Kumer-Haukanõmm & Anniste 2010, 1162). Half of all university-educated people in the Baltic states had fled to the West (Zadencka, Plakans & Lawaty 2015, 2). Talve arrived in Sweden a year after the highpoint of the refugee exodus via Germany and Denmark (Talve 1998). His colleagues from ERM (G. Ränk, Eerik Laid (1904–1961),[10] and H. Hagar) were already working at the Institute of Folklife Research in Stockholm when Talve started to work there on 10 December 1945 (Talve 1998, 92). The institute had also hired Kārlis Straubergs (1890–1962) and Pauls Kundziņš (1888–1983) from Latvia and Juozas Lingis (1910–1998) from Lithuania. Baltic refugees accounted for a high proportion of institute staff (Viires 1998). Erixon has been described as a humane and open-minded person (Viires 1998, 692) who had helped refugee colleagues before (e.g. from Germany; Hellspong 1993, 57). In addition, he was familiar with Estonian ethnology and had befriended several colleagues there in the 1930s.[11] Thus, when the Baltic ethnologists arrived in Sweden in 1944–1945, they immediately contacted Erixon with a request to help them find a professional job. Given the difficult economic situation during the last years of the war, they were able to start as low-paid archive workers. Yet, it was an opportunity to continue as scholars, which proved successful thanks to the existing social network.

Swedish ethnology – *folklivsforskning* in Swedish – had not been affected by the events of WWII, and scholars there continued much as they had before the war. Furthermore, Erixon, who had assumed the leadership position in 1934, continued in that role until 1955. Under his leadership, Swedish ethnology had become a discipline that investigated the country's material folk culture from a historical perspective (Frykman 2012, 576). Like in Estonia, the discipline was closely connected with museums and archives, which offered researchers the source material they needed (Rogan 2012, 613). For Erixon and his school of thought, the most important method was cartography – mapping

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10 Eerik Laid was an archaeologist and ethnologist, having received a master's degree from UT in both disciplines. He was the first inspector of antiquities in Estonia, 1936–1940, and served as acting director of ERM, 1941–1943.

11 Erixon had visited Estonia twice, in 1930 and 1934. In 1934, he was the main supervisor in a course on ethnology organised by the Baltic Institute in Stockholm. Laid and Ferdinand Linnus, the director of ERM at the time, took part in it (Viires 1998, 692). Ränk visited Stockholm and met Erixon in 1937, when he was on a study trip to countries around the Baltic Sea (Viires 1998, 692). So, Erixon at least knew Laid and Ränk quite well. Erixon had already published two articles at the time on common features in Swedish and Estonian folk culture (Erixon 1942, 1943).

the range of cultural phenomena, while focusing especially on cultural regions and boundaries. The goal was to compile an atlas of Swedish folk culture, and Erixon had given this assignment to his subordinates during the WWII years (Arnstberg 2008, 213–219). Yet, the atlas project cannot be viewed as solely an internal Swedish project. Cartography and its consistent development was one of the most central endeavours in European ethnology in general and one of the central pillars for increasing international cooperation after the war.[12] Erixon, who had good skills as an organiser, became a leading figure in cultivating relations in the field of ethnology, and thus post-war Swedish *folklivsforskning* as a whole could be called the flagship of European ethnology.

The institute that had hired the Baltic scholars was later dubbed the 'Sigurd Erixon research industry' (Löfgren 1996, 159). Talve has named it 'Sigurd Erixon's workshop' (Gustavsson 2019, 3). To implement his grand-scale project, Erixon needed collaborators with the right professional background, and émigrés from the Baltic states were perfect for this endeavour. Initially, they had limited possibilities to pursue their personal research topics, if doing so was not prohibited altogether. The émigré researchers were tasked with organising and systematising ethnographic responses received by the institute and translating ethnographic works. Their academic development from that point on depended on what they had achieved in their own country and whether they had brought research materials with them. For the most part, they first had to prove themselves in Swedish academic circles, i.e. to publish and, if necessary, obtain an academic degree. Established scholars had an easier time. Ränk was one such example – besides his tenure status and list of published papers, he had brought manuscripts with him, meaning he could start publishing as soon as possible (Viires 1998). It was trickier for Laid, Hagar and Talve. The first had not worked in academia for some years.[13] Although the other two had defended their master's theses in Tartu, Swedish scholars had no idea about the calibre of their work. Besides, they did not have any publications to their name.

The difficulty of proving their academic credentials to the Swedish professor is clearly demonstrated in a letter that Hagar wrote to Talve on 12 October 1945:[14]

> I went to see Erixon a couple of weeks ago on the matter of the examination, to agree on what I should really read. He seemed pretty harried and unfocused and didn't know

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12 Other key topics involving international cooperation included the compiling of a trans-European bibliography and an ethnological dictionary (Rogan 2013).

13 Laid managed to defend his doctoral dissertation in 1954 ('Säden torkar: sädesuppsättningar i Sverige 1850–1900: en etnologisk undersökning')

14 At the time, Talve was still in the Vråka camp in Småland, looking for a professional job in Stockholm.

how to arrange this business. [---] Erixon was interested in how much I knew about European ethnology. We discussed this and that, and then he proposed that I should write down all the books that I had read in my life. I politely declined. Then he mentioned some from his own programme but didn't get far. As we left it, he would contact Ränk and try to find out how much our type might know and how much more to lay on us. He talked to Ränk that same day and he asked me to obtain the Tartu Faculty of Philosophy's curriculum. I have made efforts to do so but haven't yet received it. Ränk also said that he had assigned additional reading outside the programme but he couldn't remember what. He told me to write it down when I remembered. If you have any good ideas, let me know.

(Letter from H. Hagar to I. Talve, 12 October 1945, EKLA 404, 3, 25, 11)

Hagar said studying for the licentiate examination[15] had to start from Erixon's materials. He then added the following point:

Emphasis is placed on Lapps (mainly Wiklund[16]), and Swedish Finns (regarding Hämäläinen's[17] last work, E. [Erixon] said in this connection that it was partly naive). The social aspect was very highly valued. And Europe had to be clear – something there wasn't much of in our programme.

(Letter from H. Hagar to I. Talve, 12 October 1945, EKLA 404, 3, 25, 11)

It took Talve years to get to the stage of defending his doctoral thesis. Problems were caused by the sheer volume of the examination and the time expended taking the multi-tiered exam, selecting a research topic and economic instability. Working in 'the research industry' meant participating in fieldwork trips organised to gather materials for Erixon's research topics and intense archival work preparing the distribution maps for the atlas.[18] The job depended on funding, though, which added uncertainty to the refugee life.

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15 In the Swedish education system at the time, the degree obtained before completing a doctoral thesis proved the researcher's competence in the field and gave some chance of finding a more secure job in the field (see Talve 1998, 161).

16 Karl Berhard Wiklund (1868–1934), a linguist and renowned researcher of the Sámi language and ethnography.

17 Albert Hämäläinen (1881–1949), a professor of ethnology at the University of Helsinki 1931–1949.

18 Most of the institute protocols written during the time when the atlas maps were being compiled (1946–1953 has been compiled by Talve. He admitted that he composed most of the maps bearing Erixon's signature, with the professor having written only texts for them (Viires 1998, 694–695). The atlas of Swedish folk culture contains 68 maps (Erixon 1957), 49 of which (including six together with someone else) were compiled by Erixon. Thirteen maps were done by Estonian researchers, three of them in cooperation with others. Therefore, Estonian researchers played a significant part in the compilation of the atlas (Erixon 1957).

Therefore, Talve actively engaged in journalism activities and writing fiction, which provided him with significant additional income.[19]

Talve and others also encountered difficulties relating to what was perceived as the closed and chauvinistic nature of the Swedish scholar community (see Klein 2017). Émigré ethnologists were forced to choose a Swedish folk culture phenomenon as their research area, but

> it was necessary to know and consider what Swedish ethnologists themselves studied or intended to study. [---] If I had wanted to continue working in a scientific area in Sweden, the topic would have had to be one that dealt with Sweden and not issues that, in the local view, were considered peripheral.
>
> (Talve 1998, 204)

At the same time, the émigrés viewed Swedish-centric aspect of research and priority given to the Swedish language as problematic. Talve had originally intended to write his doctoral thesis in German and looked for a translator for that purpose (letter from I. Talve to O. A. Webermann, 1 October 1955, EKLA 404, 2, 19, 55/57), but, probably due to financial constraints, the plan did not succeed. Paradoxically, the selection of a Swedish-centric research topic could limit later employment prospects for the émigrés if they opted to pursue a career beyond Sweden.[20]

It took him years before Talve started writing his doctoral thesis. In his memoirs, he describes a long and difficult journey to find the perfect research topic (Talve 1998, 204–205). It seems that Talve was quite self-critical in this regard, but he also ran into several external obstacles. Various topics of interest to Talve were deemed unsuitable or already claimed. In his first years at the institute, Erixon gave him the assignment of preparing a map showing the number of saunas and threshing barns in different parts of Sweden. Talve delivered the presentation, written based on the research conducted for the distribution map already in 1947, at a seminar at the institute,[21] and he was prepared to continue doing research on the topic, but Erixon kept it to himself for the time being. Only in 1953 did Erixon allow Talve to have a go at the topic (Talve 1998, 221).

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19 Talve's most important novels were published during this period (Talve 1948a, 1952a, 1959)

20 In 1959, Talve mentioned in a letter to Esko Aaltonen that Laid could not apply for a position at the University of Turku because the topic of his doctoral thesis was too Sweden-centred, and therefore, he did not qualify (letter from 26 February 1959, EKLA 404, 1, 1, 1).

21 Talve was the first Baltic refugee to give a presentation there (Talve 1998, 124–126). The text of the seminar presentation has been preserved ('Rior i Sverige' [Treshing barns in Sweden], EKLA 404, 47, 2).

Financial insecurity, dependence on various scholarships, the immense volume of research material[22] and Talve's own thoroughness prolonged work on the manuscript. He studied vernacular outbuildings used for drying grain and bathing, and he analysed their historical development over a broader geographic area, focusing on topics of construction and function. His defence of '*Bastu och Torkhus i Nordeuropa*' (Sauna and buildings for drying grain in Northern Europe, 544 pages) finally took place on 7 May 1960. His opponents were Stockholm University's Associate Professor of Ethnology Olof Hasslöf (1901–1994) and Toivo Vuorela (1909–1982), who had been serving as an associate professor in Turku until recently (Viires 1998, 703). Talve's thoroughness is underscored by the fact that while researching the topic of his thesis, he had amassed enough material for a book on north-eastern European threshing barns, published a year after his voluminous thesis (Talve 1961).

Talve's thesis was recognised by his contemporaries (Granlund 1960; Ränk 1964). Erixon's successor as professor, John Granlund (1901–1982), praised the novelty of his approach and the thoroughness and correctness of his analysis (Grandlund 1960, 90–91). Talve's study was part of the Nordiska Museet's tradition of conducting research on the vernacular architecture, which focused on geographical boundaries and typical characteristics of certain regions. But his study also fell outside the established discourse because of a certain methodological innovation – Talve was interested in the relationship between changes in form and changes in lifestyle and use (function). An important part of his study consisted of results from ethnographical questionnaires and interviews (Karlsmo & Löfgren 2016, 20).

Talve's period in Sweden came to an end after his defence. He had secured his academic degree, but his possibilities for pursuing a career in Sweden were non-existent. This was the case for other émigré ethnologists as well.[23] The Nordiska Museet would have been an ideal workplace, but its doors were barred to *émigrés*. The situation was all the stranger because Talve's and Laid's doctoral theses were the only ones defended at Erixon's institute between 1950 and 1964 (Klein 2017, 98). Talve received no response from other museums in the country. Talve and Hagar both vied for the position of assistant at the Gothenburg Museum in 1957, and although they were the only licentiate degree holders, neither was hired. Laid also tried to find a job at several museums, but to no avail (Talve 1998, 281–282). Naturally, they did have friendly

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22 Consisting mainly of extensive archival work in various archives and museums in Sweden, Finland and Norway.

23 The problem was particularly acute when compared to those refugee historians and archivists (such as R. Indreko, E. Blumfeldt, A. Soom, J. Koit and L. Kaelas) who had moved quickly from the ranks of temporary archivists to permanent professional positions (Johanson & Tõrv 2013, 50–52).

relations with quite a few Swedish colleagues, but the general attitude toward Baltic refugees was dismissive.[24] In the labour market, preference was given to Swedes for the better jobs (Kõll 2015, 429). In general, the mutual distrust between the refugees and the Swedish authorities was based on complex political issues in the post-WWII Cold War situation (Kõll 2016).

The institute was ironically called the Baltic Institute during Erixon's time due to the number of Baltic émigrés working there (Viires 1998, 692; Klein 2017, 93). Although Estonian/Baltic émigré ethnologists made a significant contribution to publishing in post-war Swedish ethnology and actively took part in the atlas project, their work has only recently been recognised in the historiography of ethnology done at the institute (Klein 2017). This oversight is partly connected to the fact that the Erixon era itself as a whole was until recently seen as something obsolete, to be forgotten (Gustavsson 2019).[25] Erixon secured Ränk an associate professor position at Stockholm University and Hagar a post in establishing the Museum of Spirits (Viires 1998). Laid died before receiving a secure position. Talve moved to Finland.

Talve had made acquaintances with Finnish colleagues through other Estonian ethnologists during the war years. Upon reaching Sweden, he renewed these relations quite quickly. One of his advantages was that he was fluent in Finnish from his upper secondary school days (Talve 1997, 149–154, 173–179). At first, Talve corresponded only with Kustaa Vilkuna (1902–1980),[26] but in later years he maintained a larger circle of contacts. As early as the end of the 1940s, Vilkuna invited Talve to Finland to engage in research on a topic relevant to Finnish scholarship, but Talve was reluctant due to his refugee passport and the fraught political situation (letter from I. Talve to K. Vilkuna, 5 March 1947, EKLA 404, 2, 23, 1). The naturalisation of Talve and his wife Liisa as Swedish citizens in 1954 (Talve 1998, 221) opened more avenues for interaction with neighbouring Finland. He obtained a scholarship through Vilkuna and frequented the archives and museums in Finland that year gathering material for his thesis.[27] The next year, Talve's summer visits to Finland

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24 The fact that the Estonians in Sweden were a large group, forming a prominent community, may also have played a part, creating a sense of alienation among the locals, and this led to a cautious attitude towards them (see Undusk 2015, 244).

25 See also Klein 2017. The title of the second part of Talve's memoirs, *Uninvited guest* (Kutsumatu külaline, 1998), suggests how refugees felt about the Swedes' attitude towards them.

26 Kustaa Vilkuna, a renown Finnish ethnologist who maintained close contacts with Estonian colleagues already during the 1930s. He was a professor of Finno-Ugrian ethnology at the University of Helsinki 1950–1959.

27 The correspondence with Vilkuna has not been fully preserved, but communication with him seems to have played an important role for Talve. In a 1956 letter to Vilkuna, he acknowledged that he has repeatedly received good advice from him, adding that he

for additional income began in earnest; inspired by Erixon's research, he led summer village surveys there. He landed the job thanks to his acquaintanceship with Niilo Valonen (1913–1983),[28] who had become director of the Finnish National Museum's Ethnology Department (Talve 1998, 244). His interactions with Finnish colleagues became closer, which proved a determining factor in Talve's life: it was what made his tenure in Turku in 1961 possible. By then, he had been publishing an increasing number of articles in Finnish academic journals.

The question of the continuity and reform of Estonian ethnology

As a young, rebellious ethnologist, Talve ended up in exile in Sweden where initially refugee scholars tried to continue the tradition of Estonian national disciplines and develop the existing discourse. His correspondence and articles allow us to take a closer look at what kinds of influences, if any, the young refugee researchers received from Swedish ethnology. How did it relate to the established discourse of Estonian ethnology of which they were still a part? In what direction would Talve have taken Estonian ethnology if possible?

Upon arriving in Sweden, Estonians self-organised quickly and started publishing their own newspapers and magazines and founding different associations, academic societies and publishing houses for Estonian literature. They made up a conspicuously large community, comprising a firm subculture where the image of inter-war Estonia was cherished (Undusk 2015; Kõll 2016). Origin, national identity and culture remained important for émigré researchers, even in the different and difficult conditions of trying to prove their worth as professionals in their new home. They had come of age and pursued a career in an independent nation-state with a strong national consciousness, and the loss of that country took a severe psychological toll. In the first years of exile, they hoped that they would be able to return to their homeland and continue their careers. They saw themselves as ambassadors of the Estonian ethnology tradition, which helped them make sense of their professional activities. This perception lasted until approximately the late 1950s. The viewpoint was justified because all ethnologists with degrees had either died or fled to the West during the war.[29] Only a few young colleagues who were still studying at the time remained in Estonia. Harri Moora (1900–1968), a pro-

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rarely saw Erixon and that Professor Granlund would only sit more behind his books and was of little help in practical matters (letter from Talve to Vilkuna, 28 December 1956, EKLA 404, 2, 23, 3).

28 Niilo Valonen became the professor of ethnology in Helsinki after Vilkuna was appointed to a position at the Academy of Finland.

29 Ränk, Talve, Hagar, Laid and Ella Koern (1905–1971) had all fled to Sweden. Ferdinand Linnus (1895–1942), the director of ERM, had been arrested in 1941 and

fessor of archaeology, and the young researcher Ants Viires became the main figures continuing to study Estonian ethnology in the occupied homeland (Viires 1991; Vunder 2000).

Upon becoming acquainted with Swedish ethnology, émigré scholars established it as a role model for developing their discipline back home and hoped to apply the new knowledge once they returned to their positions in Estonia. Personal experience with the scientific approaches in the new country and the discipline's operating mechanisms were enlightening for the younger generation in particular, while such approaches and mechanisms do not appear to have influenced the older researchers.[30]

Talve's correspondence with Hagar shows that going into exile and having contacts with Swedish ethnologists gave them the possibility to view their (national) discipline from an outside perspective. In November 1945, Hagar wrote that he was cataloguing folk costume components at the Nordiska Museet, and to make the work even more interesting, he had started reading Swedish ethnologist Sigfrid Svensson's[31] book *Skånes Folkdräkter* (Folk Costumes in Skåne). He praised Svensson for his work:

> S. is a man with a strong spirit and a very moving spirit. The concept is sociological; the distribution areas are not an aim in and of themselves but a means to analyse the structure of culture. Don`t be alarmed now by these few overflowing words, brother. After reading this [i.e. Svensson], you can wipe your a— with MM.'s [Manninen's] fancy and tedious 500 pages[32] in the methodological and ideological sense. Of course, it's damned good that something like it exists, but after Heikel,[33] it could have been better.
>
> (Letter from H. Hagar to I. Talve, 21 November 1945, EKLA 404, 3, 25, 3)

Talve responded to him in a long letter,[34] in which he critically discussed the past and future orientation of the discipline. He reminded Hagar of the

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died in a Soviet prison camp the next year. Helmi Kurrik (1883–1960), head of the Ethnographic Department at ERM, had fled to Germany and later moved to the US.

30 Ränk and Laid had been exposed to Erixon and Swedish ethnology already in the 1930s (Viires 1998, 692).

31 Sigfrid Svensson (1901–1984), a Swedish ethnologist, published his doctoral thesis, '*Skånes Folkdräkter: en dräkthistorisk undersökning 1500-1900*', in 1935. He was professor of Nordic and comparative folklife research at Lund university, 1946–1967.

32 Hagar was referring here to I. Manninen's book *Eesti rahvariiete ajalugu* (History of Estonian Folk Costumes, 1927).

33 Axel Olai Heikel, one of the founding fathers of Finnish ethnology, had written the important book *Die Volkstrachten in den Ostseeprovinzen und in Setukesien* (1909).

34 Both Hagar's and Talve's letters were written in Swedish, Estonian and Finnish. Only this one copy of Talve's letters has survived, but in his autobiography, he writes of repeated letters exchanged in Swedish (Talve 1998, 89). It was an opportunity to learn and practise a new language.

discussions held several years prior in Tartu about the need for a more socio-
logically enlightening approach in certain areas of study in the Estonian eth-
nology. Talve noted that back then, they only had a dim notion of the possi-
bilities of the new methods, but now it seems they had chosen the right path.
He proclaimed that the old guard had had their day and that now a new era
had dawned, with different viewpoints and methods. Talve recalled that the
air was stagnant at ERM in the methodological sense:

> we would both have badly needed new influences from outside, above all from Swe-
> den, if you consider the current attitude of ethnology. And I hardly believe that Ränk,
> as great a man as he is, would have had anything special to say to me and you in
> addition to those seminars.[35]
>
> (Letter from I. Talve to H. Hagar, 24 November 1945, EKLA 404, 1, 22)

Talve emphasised that while a typological viewpoint is sometimes neces-
sary, it cannot be the primary focus. Instead, the person who created the ob-
jects must be analysed as a part of society. He saw strong prospects in har-
monising the cultural-historical and sociological viewpoints, adding that such
an approach could be applied to various kinds of ethnological problems (letter
from I. Talve to H. Hagar, 24 November 1945, EKLA 404, 1, 22). It is worth
emphasising here that Talve revealed these thoughts before he started work-
ing at Erixon's institute. He had not yet been exposed to Swedish ethnology
and had only heard about it through Hagar.

The émigré Estonians had more pressing problems to resolve in the latter
half of the 1940s than pursuing a radical and systematic innovation of the dis-
cipline. Instead, they had to adapt to the language, society and work culture
of their adopted countries – in short, to get their feet firmly on the ground.
Moreover, the sources required for research, and the archives and museums
that they were accustomed to, were unavailable. They still had to create and
seek out new possibilities for presenting and publishing. The émigré research-
ers were able to pursue Estonian-themed research only if they were able to
bring materials with them (Talve was not able to do so), or if something rel-
evant was discovered in searches of the Swedish archives.[36] Development of

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35 Translated from Finnish. Compare Hagar's 1952 article praising the quality of Ränk's
seminars during wartime and their correspondence on recent trends in modern Euro-
pean ethnology (Hagar 1952, 50).
36 Talve's first article was published in 1949 in Swedish in the yearbook *Svio-Estonica*,
by the Swedish-Estonian Academic Society (Talve 1949a). The article was based
on his presentation at the Estonian Scientific Society in Sweden and was about the
correspondence between Carl Fr. W. Russwurm and Artur Hazelius. It dealt with the
problem of acquiring Estonian-Swedish collections for the Swedish museum in the
19th century.

the national discipline was inevitably limited to mere thought processes and oriented towards the future.

Talve did not publicly voice his critical thoughts about ethnology. However, in 1952 he did publish a programmatic, future-oriented article in the Swedish Estonians' popular cultural periodical *Tulimuld*, entitled 'Problems in Estonian cultural history' (Talve 1952a). The innovative nature of his approach has been emphasised later by Viires, who noted that it was not until the 1980s that such ideas were voiced in Soviet Estonian ethnology (Viires 1989, 282). Presumably, Talve sought to articulate the ideas that had accumulated over the years and lay out what he felt was the quintessential aim of his research. The aim was to empower research on the Estonia front so that ethnology in exile would be sustainable and lasting. Talve summarised his arguments in a letter to Estonian literary scholar Otto A. Webermann (1915–1971) in Germany as follows: 'As you see, my understanding of ethnology is oriented in the direction of familiarity with the cultural history milieu, which would contain all of the social classes in Estonia regardless of ethnicity' (letter from I. Talve to O. A. Webermann, 8 April 1952, EKLA 404, 2, 19, 25/27). Thus, Talve was one of the first Estonian ethnologists to take an interest in the 'cultural history milieu' of the Baltic Germans, who had subjugated Estonian commoners for centuries (letter from I. Talve to O. A. Webermann, 8 April 1952, EKLA 404, 2, 19, 25/27). Talve's cultural history perspective – broader than that of classical ethnology – distinguished him from other Estonian ethnologists of his era. Ränk's research perspective was likewise quite far-ranging but bound up with the problems concerning peasant culture that were characteristic of the ethnology of that time.

In the article, Talve develops thoughts already first conceived in Tartu, which in turn were influenced by his studies at Erixon's institute. The impetus for the article may have been his attending a conference of ethnologists and folklorists in Denmark in 1952. At that conference, the need to study different groups of professions and cities had been raised quite acutely (Talve 1958, 439; 1998, 205). Meeting colleagues from all over Europe was inspiring and helped him clarify his ideas about ethnology. Furthermore, Erixon also proposed an idea on how to reform ethnology in the early 1950s, stressing the need to study not only traditional (peasant) societies but also urban and industrial societies and modernisation processes (Rogan 2013, 96–98). Influenced by American cultural anthropology, he defined ethnology as follows: 'a comparative culture research on a regional basis, with a sociological and historical orientation and with certain psychological aspects' (Rogan 2013, 97).

Talve was quite up to date with the changes taking place in contemporary European ethnology, but he broadened his view to include general cultural his-

tory, which also encompassed the study of history, historical sociology and the history of ideas. In the Estonian context, Talve saw a possibility for collaboration between different disciplines, and consequently a way to synthesise them as well (Talve 1952b, 205). He emphasised that such cross-disciplinary work should be cognizant of the determining role of three dimensions (geographic space, historical setting and social milieu) and the need to analyse each dimension. Erixon had written about the role of the three dimensions back in 1937 and again in 1951 (Rogan 2013, 97). The impact of Erixon's theoretical views on Talve is obvious.

Talve's calls for émigré researchers to join forces for a broad-based study of Estonian cultural history did not bear fruit. He inevitably had to focus on Swedish ethnology topics and the goal of defending his doctoral thesis. Still, he found a way to present his ideas on ethnology and its scope of research in 1956, delivering a series of lectures at the Estonian Scientific Institute[37] on 'Estonian national culture at the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century' (Eesti rahvakultuur 18. sajandi lõpul ja 19. sajandi alguses, EKLA 404, 11, 3). In his opening lecture, he emphasised the spaciousness of the term *rahvakultuur* (folk culture) and underscored the need to view ethnographic examples in their historical-social-economic and geographic contexts:

> But if we wish to view peasant culture not as a static, permanent and unchanging but progressively developing culture as it truly and actually is, other demographic classes and their locations – cities and towns – come even more strongly to the forefront as intermediaries and disseminators of news (innovations). Thus, in treating the culture of a given period, it is pointless and methodologically completely erroneous to separate individual classes and speak of a peasant culture, an urban culture and so on, as separate units. The city and the countryside have always had their specific, distinct cultural appearances but there have always been contacts between them.
>
> (Eesti rahvakultuur 18. sajandi lõpul ja 19. sajandi alguses, EKLA 404, 11, 3)

The idea of doing a more thorough study of (Estonian) cultural history remained with Talve even in the most intense periods of writing his thesis. For example, on 28 April 1958, he again wrote Webermann: 'However, I would like to hope that at some point in the future, we could move from pure ethnology to larger studies of cultural history and the history of ideas – *Lärdomshistoria, Du vet!* When that time will come, I do not know' (letter from I. Talve to O. A. Webermann, 28 April 1958, EKLA 404, 2, 19, 67/70). Paradoxically,

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37 The Estonian Scientific Institute was established in 1951 as an affiliate of the Estonian Scientific Society in Sweden to provide centralised teaching of Estonian studies at the university level.

Talve had the opportunity to explore Estonian cultural history in depth only after his retirement in the 1990s.[38] The work culminated in the publication of a voluminous book, entitled '*Eesti kultuurilugu: keskaja algusest Eesti iseseisvuseni*' (The cultural history of Estonia: from the early Middle Ages to Estonian independence, 2004b).

Oddly enough, one beneficiary of the 1952 article was Finnish ethnology in general – Talve is remembered as an innovator of the discipline in his role as the long-serving professor of ethnology at the University of Turku (e.g. Ruotsala 2021). His programmatic article on Finnish ethnology, entitled '*Kansatiede ja murroskausi*' (Ethnology and the period of transition, 1958), lays out basic tenets similar to those found in his writings on the problems of Estonian cultural history from six years earlier. Soon after his arrival at the University of Turku, it became clear that Talve's teaching and methods differed from the traditional ethnology practised mainly at the University of Helsinki at the time. His chair became the leading and innovative centre of ethnology in Finland. It is important to note that Talve's programme expanded the existing Finnish discourse on nation and folk culture – in addition to the peasantry, other social strata began to be seen as worthy of study, and research previously focusing only on the past expanded in time to include the present as well (Ruotsala 2021; see also Virtanen 2003).[39] This is all that Talve would have wanted to carry out in Estonian ethnology.

Politics in ethnology and Finnish-Estonian disciplinary relations
Talve emphasised his apolitical nature in his memoirs. This facet of his personality has also been highlighted by others in connection with his academic life in Finland (e.g. Ruotsala 2021). For Talve, research must distance itself from politics. However, one can find writings from his Swedish period (both journal articles and reviews of research done in Soviet Estonia) that belong to the competing émigré discourse. In such an extreme situation, where there was the hope of an imminent return home, Talve did not remain a neutral bystander. What rhetoric did he use? Why did he not write similar articles later in Finland? What role did Talve, as a professor in Finland, play for Estonian ethnology in his homeland, both during the Soviet period and after regaining independence in the early 1990s?

Estonian cultural figures and scholars took an active part in émigré culture and research in Sweden. Their activities were closely interwoven with politics

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38 Talve had previously published several articles on various topics in Estonian cultural history, e.g. on the Young Estonian movement and its leader, the poet Gustav Suits.

39 Under his leadership, the study of towns, industrial workers and occupational groups became the core of research done in Turku.

(especially in the first decade of exile) and the need to lobby internationally for Estonian independence. Many well-known Estonian humanities scholars (such as E. Laid) made a significant contribution to the work of various Estonian refugee organisations. Talve tended to keep his distance from them, instead publishing journal articles, narratives and short stories, and thus participating in the cultural and political debate about Estonia. According to Undusk, Talve could be called a 'discerning émigré' who did not harbour doubts about returning to Estonia, one who deliberately maintained a sense of cultural continuity and called on others to do the same (Undusk 2008, 2261). Talve's sideline work as a novelist gave him a way of exploring his refugee identity.

In connection with the issue of cultural continuity, the problem of the survival of the Estonian (émigré) research discipline was a significant preoccupation for Talve in his years in Sweden. He wrote several articles that fit into the competing émigré discourse, in which he viewed research as part of national culture and its survival as profoundly important for the preservation of the nation. Talve emphasised the role of ethnology in cultural propaganda and also in shaping national ideology. Ethnology conferred and conveyed this knowledge, and thus, these branches of science have 'become an active external weapon in the Estonian people's fight to defend the right to life of their country and people' (Talve 1946b; see also Talve 1947). Talve also wrote about the role of the social sciences and humanities in serving the community, innovating and diversifying its culture, and about the need to introduce the achievements of Estonian scholars to academic circles in Sweden (Talve 1948b).

The question of the sustainability of a research discipline in exile was particularly acute in the immediate post-war years, when many doubted that colleagues behind the Iron Curtain could conduct academically credible research. At first, the fear appeared justified as political authorities began to actively enforce the Sovietisation of various academic disciplines. All previous work in every field of research had to be re-appraised in terms of the extent to which it aligned with Soviet ideology. In ethnography, as the discipline was called in the Soviet Union, the dominant ideology was based on historical materialism, which was developed from Engels and Morgan's evolutionary ideas. Scholars were additionally required to study contemporary Soviet society, the establishment of kolkhozes, and so forth. A major problem in ethnology was the dearth of research staff since most had fled to the West or faced persecution and were thus sidelined from academic life for a certain time. Ethnography-related work began to be controlled by Moscow, from the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union, which dictated the research topics and approaches (Jääts 2019). Nevertheless, as time went on, it proved possible for Estonian researchers to focus on material peasant culture; as a result,

a few remaining researchers and the newly emerging generation of scholars could essentially rely on the older academic tradition. This led to a stagnation of the discipline, though, which continued even after Stalin's death and the Khrushchev Thaw. Indeed, the 'preservative role of Sovietisation' was clearly evident in ethnology (see Saarlo 2018, 152).

Still, Soviet Estonian ethnography in the first decade after the war did not have strong prospects, with researchers desperately looking for ways to continue doing research amidst the harsh realities of Stalinism. Talve's critical reviews are from that period as well. Already in 1948, he wrote a review of ERM's yearbook, published a year before.[40] This was a yearbook planned already during the German occupation and in which Talve's article on draw-shaves was supposed to be published, but for understandable reasons had then been withheld from publication (Talve 1997, 207–208). Talve praises Viires' article on riding as the most substantive and focused of the articles. From his far-away vantage point, he writes with regret,

> There is the feeling that presses upon me that due to the lack of free contact with the outside world, such as being able to read the latest scientific literature, these articles were written in an oppressed and stagnant society, which lags behind the general development of ethnology in the Nordic countries by at least 15 years.
>
> (Talve 1948c, 179)[41]

The main emphasis of the article commenting on – often in an ironic tone – the 'edifying' articles highlighting the desired direction of Soviet ethnography. Talve had a good sense of the rhetoric and politics of the Soviet discourse, since he had personal experiences from 1940–1941, and he understood the extent to which researchers in the homeland were being forced to reappraise their earlier work. Talve took a pessimistic view of the discipline in Soviet Estonia, since fruitful contacts with researchers abroad were prohibited, and thus, 'horizons constantly are narrowing and the staff's progress in their development is stunted' (Talve 1948c, 182). He continues his critique of Soviet

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40 At the time, the museum was still called ERM, but the name was changed to the Museum of Ethnography in 1952. The title page of the yearbook was marked Series I, but the Roman numerals XV were added to indicate continuity. The museum's yearbook was first published in 1925. The next issue was not published until twelve years later, in 1959, a fact that characterises the repression of ethnology by the occupying authorities.

41 An article teaching Soviet Estonian ethnographers the correct Soviet scholarly approach, written by the renowned Soviet ethnographer S. P. Tolstov, was published in the same yearbook. After reading Tolstov's article, Talve dismissed Soviet science as being stuck in the 19th century (exemplified by the desire to achieve universal validity and establish a generalised theory) (Talve 1948c, 181).

ethnography as follows: 'And the politicisation of the science that accompanies it is one of the main axioms of Marxist ideology and means there can be no more talk of freedom of science and research (Talve 1948c, 183).

In reviewing the next Soviet Estonian collection of humanities research in 1949, Talve expressed amazement about the degree of censorship:

> There is a carping about errors in all works by everyone else, [but] it's worst in the case of Loorits; he has simply been made non-existent. None of his works are mentioned. That is one of the most curious revelations in this work, but it gives us a snapshot of how those now in Sweden and other places are now viewed.
>
> (Talve 1949b, 145)

However, Talve does make one positive observation – the scholars still in Estonia 'have possibilities to work through the existing subject matter and hopefully also to gather new material', even though they have to work in an uncertain situation when it comes to (research) policy. Talve adds: 'And thus, it's as if all the researchers have been made to walk in a swamp – you never know where your foot will sink into the mud!' (1949b, 146). He then concludes his discussion with the following comment: 'We await with interest and anxiousness the next works from the Soviet-occupied homeland, where like a tired horse, science has to pull the Marxist chariot of state and senses increasingly that it is just a facade' (1949b, 146).

Yet, no more Soviet ethnography reviews were published by Talve: others took over this role (e.g. Ränk and Ivar Paulson[42]). Nor did Talve deal with the present or future of émigré ethnology. He did, however, compile a bibliography of émigré ethnologists and folklorists (Talve 1957) and wrote individual person-centred articles (Talve 1952c, 1962a, 1962b). The reasons for Talve's passivity can be surmised. In 1962, he was elected the first professor of Finnish and comparative ethnology at the University of Turku, and he worked in that position until 1986. The work of putting his own stamp on the professorship, developing Finnish ethnology and writing up his research certainly took much time and energy. In addition, he fulfilled the duties of vice dean and dean of the Faculty of Humanities for years, which meant much additional office work. In 1970, he was elected a member of the Finnish Academy of Sciences. His work in literature was relegated to the background for years. It seems that some change did occur in his self-conception: an émigré scholar concentrating just on Estonian topics has trouble finding work, but at the same time he had finally attained a senior academic position that he had been aspiring to ever

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42 Ivar Paulson (1922–1966), an Estonian ethnologist and religious studies scholar and poet who lived and worked in Germany after the war and later in Sweden.

since his student days, albeit one that was away from his homeland. Still, it was an inevitability that had to be accepted, and he chose to focus more on his research work in Finland. He undoubtedly kept current with the research being done in Soviet Estonia but did not produce further separate writings on it.

The advancement of Talve's career and the increased distance between him and Estonian research themes is characteristic of all Estonian émigré ethnologists who had moved to Sweden. During the ten years following WWII, Erixon's institute had been the epicentre of Estonian ethnology in exile, a fact later characterized by Hagar as follows:

> The creation of poorly remunerated work and research possibilities for the Estonian ethnographer cadre in the first years of exile […] at the institute must be considered, in hindsight, looking at the closed doors of the Swedish museums, a great fortune for Estonian ethnology. The *Institutet för folklivsforskning* was back then an international forum, with a high level of research activity and many series of publications, all of which were open to Estonian researchers. The institute's major research groups […] forged deep-reaching contacts between Estonian ethnographers and Nordic themes. The same institute also hosted the first encounters in a long time with Finnish colleagues. The Finnish hinterland that had fertilised Estonian ethnological research in the past opened up again. After a few years had elapsed, Estonian refugee ethnographers found themselves in certain key position where, already masters of the Baltic and Eastern European material, now extended to Nordic folk cultures. The diversifying selection of subject matters, expanding perspective and, above all, the transformative research direction, one that observed cultural integration from the societal-functional aspect, began having an impact. The most visible outcome in those first difficult years of exile was the fact that Estonian ethnologists were remarkably prolific. […] This grouping of Estonian ethnographers in Stockholm started crumbling in the mid-1950s and ceased to exist after a few brief years.
>
> (Hagar 1962)

Since there was a lack of opportunity to work intensively in the field of national ethnology while in exile, inevitably the émigré scholars put more effort into studying Nordic ethnology. Ethnologists accepted new postings away from their temporary work in the archives of the institute, and the ties between them weakened somewhat.

Hagar emphasised the important role played by Finnish ethnologists in rebuilding the academic social network between the Estonian scholars in exile in the post-war years. Similar support has been written about in the context of ethnography in Soviet Estonia as well. Kustaa Vilkuna, Toivo Vuorela (1909–1982) and Toini-Inkeri Kaukonen (1913–1994) visited Estonia in 1956, and

Niilo Valonen (1913–1983) participated in ERM's 50th anniversary celebrations three years later: ties became closer from that point onwards and were a positive factor for Estonian scholars who were otherwise almost completely cut off from the Western world (Vunder 2000). Another factor that stimulated research done by Soviet Estonian ethnographers was their participation in Finno-Ugric studies congresses, held every five years starting in 1960. Unfortunately, due to vetting by the authorities, only a few of them passed the background check and could attend. The third congress, which was a landmark one, took place in 1970 in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia.

Talve's name did not come up in the discussion of Finnish-Estonian relations, oddly enough. He did not travel to Estonia in 1970 (like many other émigrés who declined to travel to Soviet-occupied Estonia for political reasons, even though they were invited). Five years later, the Finno-Ugric Congress was held in Turku, and there Talve met and interacted with his Estonian colleagues. In general, Talve did maintain some ties with scholars behind the Iron Curtain, but they were not very substantial. This was probably because when he fled Estonia, he was still quite young, having only just completed a master's degree, and so had not managed to build extensive contacts in the research sphere in Estonia. Moreover, it was difficult to maintain an open transnational exchange in the face of censorship and state interventions. His contacts with his homeland started becoming more frequent in the 1980s, but that was more due to his status as a writer.

The newly established independence of Estonia in the early 1990s also meant new currents in Estonian ethnography. The discipline was renamed 'ethnology', as is the norm elsewhere in Europe. The new generation of scholars began employing modern theories and methods and studying different kinds of topics. Their role models were the corresponding disciplines in Sweden, Germany and Finland. The strong influence of Finnish ethnology in modernising Estonian ethnology has been acknowledged by Elle Vunder (b. 1939), who received tenure status at UT in 1994 (interview with Elle Vunder, 2017). Arved Luts (1929–2005), who had taught at Tartu before Vunder, contacted Talve in 1991, asking him to lecture at the university (letter from A. Luts to I. Talve, 27 September 1991, EKLA 404, 4, 42). In 1994, he was contacted by Vunder, who asked him for advice on curricula and also hoped to meet Talve as a visiting lecturer (letter from E. Vunder to I. Talve, 19 September 1994, EKLA 404, 8, 4). By that time, Talve had retired and not interested in active lecturing. But he did advise Vunder that first-year students should also be offered, along with core courses, an introductory lecture series on the main concepts in the discipline (e.g. culture, folk culture, tradition, three dimensions of folk culture), research topics, sources and 'methods for obtaining them' (letter from I. Talve to E. Vunder, 6 October 1994, Vunder's private archive). Talve

visited Estonia many times after re-independence. but more in his capacity as a writer than as an ethnologist.

Similarly to Ränk, Talve had retired from active research by the time Estonia regained its independence (like Viires in Estonia). They could not innovate Estonian ethnology in the way they would have done if still professors; they were now bystanders. In 1989, Viires admitted with regret, when introducing Talve as a scholar to Estonian readers, that 'there is no doubt that had history gone differently, he [Talve] would have been Estonia's leading ethnographer and would have contributed significantly to the development of our ethnology disciplines' (Viires 1989, 283). When Viires told Talve in March of 1989 that he had written an article for his 70th birthday, Talve replied:

> There is no special need to write about you here, since you are known anyway:[43] honorary doctorate, honorary member and whatnot. But you have to of course write about me because I have not been party to such encomiums over there, nor have I expected it, and I would have probably been too modest. But now you can save what can still be saved.
>
> (Letter from I. Talve to A. Viires, 2 March 1989, ERM Ak 36, 2, 16, 9)

The correspondence reveals that it was important to Talve to be known as an ethnologist in his home country. He repeatedly expressed his desire to Viires that reviews of his works appear in Estonia. In 1991, Eesti Televisioon produced a programme on him, entitled 'Professor Ilmar Talve', which reinforced his place as a scholar in the eyes of Estonians.[44] Viires published an article on refugee ethnologists in Sweden (including Talve) in 1998, which foregrounded the importance of these researchers in the discourse of Estonian ethnology (Viires 1998).

Conclusion

The article has shed new light on the history of European ethnology by focusing on the complex nature of an émigré position in the academic world and its possible influence on the development of a (regional) discipline. Taking Ilmar Talve as an example, I examined his adaptation to the field of Swedish ethnology after WWII and the reasons why he eventually became a professor in Finland. I was also interested in the overlap and differences in the discourses of

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43 Viires had turned 70 in december 1988.
44 The authors of the show were Helle Tiisväli and Peep Puks: https://arhiiv.err.ee/video/vaata/professor-ilmar-talve (accessed 7 November 2023). In 1992, the same authors arranged a second show, this time on Talve as a writer: https://arhiiv.err.ee/video/vaata/kirjanik-ilmar-talve (accessed 7 November 2023).

Estonian and Swedish ethnology and in Talve's efforts to pursue and develop Estonian ethnology in exile. I underlined the role of transnational exchange and dialogue in advancing the discipline.

Becoming a scholar in exile meant the need to meet new expectations. Working at the Institute of Folklife Research, directed by S. Erixon, was the best possible option after the war for a young ethnologist like Talve, but finding a way to progress academically there was difficult. The Swedish scholarly field was closed, making it very difficult to obtain a solid academic position. The disdainful attitude of Swedes towards Estonian researchers was increased by the culturally strong community of Estonian refugees.

An uncertain position in the Swedish scholarly field did not prevent Talve from receiving positive influences from its ethnology practices. Erixon's theoretical views on studying culture, which expanded the existing ethnological research area in time and space, corresponded with Talve's thoughts from his student years in Estonia. Exposure to new trends in post-war European ethnology encouraged Talve to publish his research programme in 1952, which was intended for Estonian humanities in exile. He significantly broadened the field of ethnological research by focusing on a broad cultural-historical perspective in the study of culture. Ultimately, it benefited Finnish ethnology that Talve was ready to introduce innovative ideas to the discipline ten years later when he became a professor in Turku. His participation in the Swedish scholarly field prepared him for this pioneering work.

Before moving to Finland, Talve was active in the Estonian refugee community in Sweden. He criticised scholarly publications from Soviet Estonia. Like most of his peers, he stressed the importance of Estonian studies done in exile to support the cultural (and political) aspirations of Estonian émigrés and as a vehicle for the continuity of the different disciplines. Talve penned only a few research articles on Estonian topics during his years in exile. His working life required him to concentrate on other subjects. Nevertheless, Talve is included in the historiography of Estonian ethnology, and he considered it important that his work was reflected in his homeland.

During the Cold War period, contacts with Finnish colleagues were important for both Soviet Estonian and émigré Estonian researchers. For the latter group, it meant the continuation of a ruptured academic and friendly relationship in a new context, with Finns providing both material and spiritual support to help them cope with their new homeland. For Soviet Estonian researchers, communication with Finnish colleagues became possible during the second half of the 1950s and was crucial in terms of receiving academic impulses from the West. Talve's role in this communication seems to have remained modest.

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REVIEWS | Books

Affect in Online Hate Speech
Linda Huldén

One of the main subjects of debate in recent Finnish politics has been racism, namely its definition and role in society today. Around the time of the deadline for this review, in August and September of 2023, the Finnish Parliament discussed a statement written by the government on how best to promote equality and non-discrimination both within Finnish society and abroad. According to media reports, the parties found it difficult to agree on how so-called hate speech, in real life and on the internet, should be defined and addressed. The title of Karin Sandell's doctoral thesis, *Parasites and 'better people'. Affect in online hate speech directed at the Swedish in Finland,* is, in other words, highly relevant even if the Swedish-speaking minority has not been the principal focus of the debates mentioned above.

The thesis analyses online hate speech directed at the Swedish-speaking population in Finland in the web discussion forum Suomi24. Minorities of all kinds can be the target of online hate speech, and Sandell points out that she is not trying to compare the situation of different groups. As a Swedish-speaking Finn, Sandell is both an observer and the target of the forum posts and comments that she is studying.

Although online hate speech is not a new phenomenon, it has no fixed definition. Sandell examines the possibility of viewing it as a folkloristic genre by discussing the genre concept in general and its role in previous folkloristic research and theory development. She applied both an *ethic*, that is, universal and scientifically grounded, as well as an *emic*, that is, individually and culturally defined, understanding of what makes certain posts hateful when excerpting the posts for the study. The two approaches, Sandell points out, do not always correlate. The notions of intertextuality and so-called intertextual gaps are useful here: some of the posts and comments show clear influences from other genres, such as authority communication, which can make it difficult to identify them as online hate speech, even if the underlying intent was to express negative views about Swedish-speaking people. The wider the intertextual gap, the more difficult it can be to label a post as offensive. For

the reader, seeing examples of this type of post in the research material can be eye-opening.

As a context for the forum discussions, Sandell presents an overview of the history of the Swedish language in Finland, starting from Finland being a part of Sweden and Swedish being the language of education and of the elite, and continuing through the Finnish national awakening in the 19th century, which resulted in a new status for the Finnish language and conflicts between the language groups during the first half of the 20th century. Since then, the role of the Swedish language, spoken as a first language by about 5 percent of the population, in Finnish society has caused occasional controversy, and such conflicts are reflected in the forum posts.

Sandell has excerpted a total of approximately 350 posts from the period 2015–2017. The discussions have been moderated to some extent, but limited resources seem to have made it difficult for the moderators to eliminate all posts that can be considered offensive. Even though the study does not seek to quantitatively measure the number of offensive posts, it could have been helpful for some readers to obtain an approximate idea of the total quantity of the research material: how much text is contained in 350 discussion forum posts? How closely can this amount of material be examined, and how easily can it be overviewed?

Sandell examined the excerpted posts using content analysis, with particular focus on affect, performance and performativity. In her discussion of affect, Sandell has primarily leaned on the work done by Sara Ahmed (2004) and Margaret Wetherell (2012). Scholars have often viewed affect differently than emotions – for example, as a more physically driven phenomenon – but Sandell concludes that she does not make this distinction. Her use of affect is, rather, justified by the fact that it has not been commonly used in folkloristic research and therefore can be expected to open new perspectives on texts of this kind. The curious reader, who may be wondering about the outcome of this endeavour, will not find an answer, however, since the possible advantages of the concept in relation to, for example emotions, is not explicitly discussed further. Applying a performance perspective means that Sandell focuses on how the forum post writers are 'performing' on a 'stage' to prompt certain kinds of responses.

For the analysis, Sandell developed an *affective tools* model to identify how affect is mediated in the forum posts. These tools include emotive expressions, emotional words, metaphors and ortographic practices. Contrary to what might be expected, emotional words appeared quite rarely, while forum post writers often used emotive expressions and metaphors to express or awaken emotions. One detail that can be pointed out here is that Sandell

has included words and expressions written in another language – in this case, in Swedish – in the category ortographic practices. I would like to question whether using the very language that is being criticised to achieve a stylistic effect should not, rather, be seen as a pragmatic practice that extends beyond the superficial level of the text.

The analysis is presented in two main chapters. The first chapter studies hate speech as performance, with extra attention being paid to the intersectional categories of language, class and gender. Sandell shows how forum posts on a wide range of topics convey an image of the Swedish-speaking population as an enemy and a threat to the Finnish-speaking majority. The affective tools mentioned above are used to awaken negative sentiments and suspicion: Swedish-speakers are pictured as living a privileged life separate from the rest of Finnish society and not contributing by, for example, working or doing military service, while at the same time taking full advantage of society and its services. The loyalty of the Swedish-speaking people towards the Finnish state and government is questioned, as many of those posting in the forum view Swedish speakers as descendants of the former Swedish rulers. The compulsory teaching of Swedish in Finnish schools is another popular topic, as is the legal protection of the right to use Swedish in certain areas of society, for example in healthcare. The Swedish language is often described as invasive and dominant in relation to Finnish. Finally, Sandell presents three metaphors that are especially common in the research material: the pig, death and cancer. She discusses the use of them in this context, for example by showing how they have been used elsewhere to awaken negative sentiments.

The second analysis chapter focuses on the performativity of online hate speech, that is, on just what it accomplishes in a forum like Suomi24. The main conclusions are that the forum posts aim to rewrite history and introduce an image of an earlier, completely Finnish-speaking Finland. Furthermore, they aim to dehumanise the Swedish-speaking people – especially some well-known individuals, like politicians – by portraying them as animals or other non-human creatures, and finally, to convey an image of the Swedish-speaking population as a threat to the traditional and solid Finnish way of life, for example when it comes to family values and sexual orientation.

In the final discussion, Sandell emphasises the importance of studying and understanding online hate speech. Hate speech does not, as Sandell puts it, remain only on the internet. The thesis makes it clear that this kind of communication cannot be considered a marginal phenomenon. Even if the focus is on the posts as texts, one can easily speculate about the discussion participants and what motivates them to engage in performances of this kind.

Sandell suggests that it, among other things, has to do with confirming one's own identity by pointing out differences between oneself and other groups.

Throughout the thesis, Sandell ensures that the message is conveyed to the reader in a way that is easy to follow. She engages in a constant dialogue between herself, the research material and other sources, which underlines the complexity of the matter. Sandell has done impressively thorough research on the context of the discussed forum posts, which makes the analysis transparent and comprehensible for readers who are not so well informed about the linguistic circumstances and recent political discussions in Finland. She also provides background information about presumably well-known phenomena, like the caste system in India and apartheid in South Africa, which is consistent but, in some cases, raises questions about the implied reader. Since the theoretical and methodological starting points are introduced quite thoroughly at the beginning of the thesis, some concluding critical remarks on the applied perspectives and methods would have been appreciated. It is, however, clear that the affective tools model can be of help in identifying online hate speech, especially where the intertextual gap is wide and the intended message is camouflaged.

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The Old Men and the Sea: Phenomenology and Historical Archive Material
Art Leete

Ulla Kallberg's dissertation includes Acknowledgments, an Introduction, and six chapters. The first chapter discusses materials, methodologies, and theories, while the second deals with the history of Finnish shipping. Analysis of ethnographic material starts in the third chapter, titled "The Ship: Everyday Spaces and Places". This is followed by chapters dealing with the experiences of the first trip, everyday life on board and various encounters and feelings sailors experienced during their journey. These chapters are followed by conclusions (titled "Lived Seamanship") and References.

In her doctoral thesis, Kallberg analyses the self-image of sailors through their everyday practices from a historical perspective; written questionnaire answers from the 1960s are the primary basis for the empirical data. The research questions touch upon the self-understandings of the sailors in different situations and manifestations of gender in creating, experiencing, and living identities. The author also discusses human relationships, their impact on forming an individual's identity, and the social reality of the sailors' community. Furthermore, Kallberg raises the question of the relationship between sailors' self-experience, feelings, and actions and summarises the idea rather elegantly: "The identification relies on lived experiences" (12).

After reading Kallberg's overview of previous studies, it seems that the context for this research is quite rich. The author manages to choose literature that contextualises her research in one way or another. In general, the study is adequately contextualised by earlier research of related empirical and theoretical topics (16–27). Conceptually, Kallberg builds this research upon a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is a good choice as a theoretical background as it enables a discussion on place and space and embodied experience. The methodological section also extensively sketches a broader international domain of phenomenological ideas. Regarding phenomenology, the author argues: "Central to it is the idea of the embodiment of an individual acting subject and, more broadly, human existence and meaning" (5). While ground-

ing her approach, Kallberg refers to Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Paul Ricoeur, Jonas Frykman, Orvar Löfgren, and others.

Primarily, the study relies on archived material collected decades ago. The choice of material makes it complicated for the author to double-check the evidence or comprehend the discourse present in the empirical data. The reader feels a mental tension between the lack of immediate connection with the empirical data and the impressive historical reach of the whole study. However, the material is still sufficient and intriguing. Referring to Martin Heidegger, Kallberg claims that phenomenological analysis also includes the historical dimension: "Finality, factuality, and historicity are the core of the embodied subject's being" (29). The author also admits the limits of the phenomenological analysis, and asserts:

> [The phenomenological approach] reduces too much and does not consider general social and economic structures and processes. The core problem seems to be that ethnologists work at different levels of perspective, and phenomenology does not tell us how the level of the individual and society can be combined within the same analysis. In addition, phenomenological work makes it difficult to use historical sources because there has been no thorough methodological discussion. (56, the citation translations are by the author of this review)

Kallberg summarises her view on the phenomenological approach by maintaining that: "The identities of sailors manifest themselves through work and doing. They are often almost imperceptible and manifest themselves randomly in various situations. They also emerge in internal, subjective experiences and emotional states" (5). The temporarily closed social space produces a specific set of human relationships that are more clear, complete, and exposed. However, it could be tricky for sailors to communicate these feelings and practices to researchers from outside their narrative community. They might have felt that specific narrative rules obstructed this communication. Kallberg also admits that respondents may have refrained from writing down specific experiences, which provides a cognitive challenge for the researcher. It is not straightforward to claim to approach any experience directly:

> But the analysis of bodily experiences and feelings shaped into writings brings its methodological challenges. They ask how well the analysis of the material is possible to get to the actual experiences or whether it only produces a way of narrating them. How sharply these can be separated (59).

The archival data that serves as the basis of this study was collected in 1963–1964 by Professor Ilmar Talve. He created the general data collection

strategy in the early 1960s. Talve considered it essential to document the pe-
riod of the industrialisation of Finland. Among other professional communi-
ties, the sailors appeared as one of the first groups Ilmar Talve paid attention
to (after railway workers). Talve found collaboration with the Sailors' Union
during his data collection campaign very satisfying (Talve 1999, 84–85). In his
autobiography, we can also find a discussion of his overall approach:

> What are our possibilities to describe a folk culture of that period (1870–1920)?
> Nevertheless, this job must be done at some point, as according to my understanding,
> this is a duty of the ethnologists, and as a professor in this area, I felt clearly that I
> am obliged to make it possible (Talve 1999, 94).

This data appears helpful even today and, moreover, we can also see the
choice of empirical material here to pay honour to Professor Talve. Kallberg
also discusses Professor Talve's ideas about collecting this archival data (41–
42). My museum colleagues claim that researchers will never use 90% of the
data collected for ethnographic archives. If this argument, which is based on
museum ethnographers' experience, holds, then it would appear generally
meaningless to collect data for the ethnographic archives "for the future". Old
collections function as curiosities by themselves. They become objects of cri-
tique, reflection, or they embody curious ideas about treasuring something for
eternity. Considering this often-unfortunate fate of archival material, research
on this data is very much appreciated. Archives enable a relatively close look
at life realities of the past, although we need to consider the methodological
lens of the collectors.

The dissertation includes an extensive presentation of material, which is
logically structured and discussed. The results and conclusions are presented
briefly in the final part of the study enabling further reflection on the vari-
ous viewpoints presented in the discussion chapters. The discussion fluctu-
ates between the personal experiences of the sailors and their group-related
identity, which brings us back to the dispute about the phenomenological po-
tential of the data. Even though the author presents results and conclusions
logically, it appears problematic to explore the self-understanding of sailors
from a temporal distance. Kallberg analyses practices and feelings that were
experienced a long time ago, written down later but still decades ago. How is
the claim of comprehension justified?

For example, the sections "Obstacles to movement: clatter, vibration, and
roar" (pages 98–99), "Condensed maritime law: rules and norms of common
life" (101–106), "The invisible experiences of living alone" (107–112) or "Ships,
living and change" (112–117) and several others demonstrate that phenome-

nology was an excellent choice of methodology to analyse this data and aim at its comprehension. This methodology also appears adequate in the first empirical chapter ("Ship: Everyday Spaces and Places", 82–120). The third empirical chapter, "Everyday Life on a Ship" (159–199), is more descriptive, and phenomenology works adequately here. However, the second of the empirical chapters ("On the First Trip", 121–158) seems ambivalent regarding the effect of phenomenological analysis.

The phenomenological approach generally appears useful for a historical study, although it has limits. In some parts of the data, the approach starts functioning less effectively. For example, there seems to be little evidence about homosexual conduct on board (141–143), and violence has been described primarily by one respondent (143–148) despite the fact that these topics are essential, reflecting liminal aspects of the initiation of the young sailors, reaching beyond clever tricks played on newcomers. However, here the researcher is restricted by the empirical evidence. The questionnaire did not include questions about homosexuality or violence, and we need to keep in mind what the scholars in the 1960s might have deemed as 'proper' inquiries in questionnaires.

Overall, Kallberg's dissertation's structure is adequately elaborated and has a logical structure. It is based on a body of ethnographic archival material and contributes significantly to our knowledge of historical Finnish maritime culture. The dissertation brings into scholarly circulation much information about the transformation period in international maritime culture (the late phase of sailing ships and the golden era of steamboats). The employed approach provides a panoramic view of sailors' culture and traditions, thus making it possible to comprehend maritime heritage from the early and mid-20th century.

The empirical focus of the study is justified as conclusions depend on a multiplicity of evidence presented throughout the monograph. The empirical part is very prominent in this study, and without it, it would be hard to form a complete understanding of a sailor's life. The author compares experiences presented by different Finnish sailors and analyses her body of evidence against the relevant background of theoretical literature. In this way, Kallberg demonstrates her ability to assess critically and dialogically both empirical data and theory. The monograph is a valuable contribution to ethnological archival studies and demonstrates that the old ethnographic material can illuminate the past for contemporary readers.

AUTHOR

Art Leete is a Professor of Ethnology and Head of the Arctic Studies Centre, University of Tartu. He has conducted frequent ethnographic fieldwork in

Western Siberia and the Komi Republic among the Khanty, Mansi, and Forest and Tundra Nenets, as well as the Komi people, since the early 1990s. He carries out research in the history of ethnographic ideas, Siberian and Finno-Ugric ethnography, religious diversity and change in the Russian North, as well as animistic rituals and mythology in the Arctic.

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CONFERENCES

Forces and Tensions in Cultural Policy – IX Finnish Conference on Cultural Policy Research, Rovaniemi, Finland, 20-21 April 2023
Sanna Karimäki-Nuutinen

The IX Finnish Conference on Cultural Policy Research was held in Rovaniemi on 20–21 April 2023. Organised by the Society for Cultural Policy Research in Finland in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts at the University of Lapland, the conference took place on the university's main campus. During the two conference days, the participants could enjoy three inspiring keynotes and were able to attend a wide range of working groups that featured topical research in the field of cultural policy and related disciplines. For me, this conference was particularly exciting and memorable – I presented a paper of my own for the first time as a doctoral researcher in one of the parallel working groups.

The theme of the conference was the forces and tensions affecting current cultural policy. In the field of cultural policy, culture can be discussed both on the basis of art and ways of living, revealing prominent underlying tensions in the concept itself. In either case, culture is a strong force that is inseparable from our lives and society. At the same time, the position of culture as part of social policy is limited to narrow sectoral boundaries. Given the numerous possible starting points for a discussion of culture and cultural policy, the thought-provoking central theme of the conference inspired scholars from many universities and research institutes and participants from various culture organisations to discuss their research and network with one another – and to build a stronger and more sustainable field of cultural policy research and policymaking.

Tensions surrounding Arctic art

After the opening words, the programme began with a keynote lecture by Professor of Art Education Timo Jokela from the University of Lapland. Jokela is also chairperson of the Arctic Sustainable Arts and Design Network at the University of the Arctic, a cooperative network of higher education organisations in the Arctic region. Jokela's lecture provided background information on various ways of defining the concept of the Arctic, highlighting both some of the key forces at play in the conference location and the tensions related to Arctic art and cultural policy. The keynote, entitled 'Arctic art as a cultural policy statement' (originally 'Arktinen taide kulttuuripoliittisena kannanotto-

Image 1. Keynote Timo Jokela started the conference. Photo: Sanna Karimäki-Nuutinen.

na' in Finnish), stressed that Arctic art contains an inherent political tension. The Arctic can be seen as a natural resources frontier, as a wilderness to be preserved and as a laboratory for scientific endeavours and sustainable innovations. It is also as the homeland of 4 to 9 million people, depending on its geographical definition, and approximately 40 indigenous cultures. Potential understandings of the Arctic are, in any case, currently being discussed in the multinational community of the circumpolar North. From the notion that the Arctic can be defined in many possible ways arises ongoing negotiations over who is entitled to represent the Arctic – together with discussions of neocolonialism and natural resources. Jokela suggested, through reference to five relevant tensions and forces, that the Arctic as a site of multidisciplinary artistic work and research could also serve as a laboratory of sustainable policy making. Almost as proof of this argument, he ended the keynote by pointing out that the conference was being held at the University of Lapland's the Faculty of Arts, in Rovaniemi, which is in fact a culture political act in itself.

Work and politics in the working groups

I attended three working groups during the two days. In the first session, entitled 'Politics I', associate professor Maria Huhmarniemi from the University of Lapland deepened the message of Jokela's lecture by presenting concrete examples of and perspectives on how contemporary art can contribute

to cultural policy debates in the Arctic context. Huhmarniemi also contributed an interesting view to the debate on just who can represent indigenous, here Sámi, people by introducing the idea of transculturalism. Is it possible, through transcultural identity, for a Finnish person to gain agency in Sámi culture by living around members of the culture?

Another paper by researchers Vappu Renko and Olli Jakonen, from Cupore, tackled a hot topic from the parliamentary elections this past spring concerning the cultural policy programmes of the Finnish political parties. The presenters made the observation that the themes of cultural policy alignments are contingent on the ideological backgrounds of the parties. Interestingly, the majority of parties are committed to the prevailing system and only advocate making fine adjustments to it in their policy making. Indeed, Renko and Jakonen asked if the True Finns Party is the only party that 'does politics with culture'. Controversial as the idea may be that art which promotes national identity should be prioritized, the True Finns Party is the only political party to concretely promote views on artistic content or genres, whereas the other parties talk about art and culture at a more general level. In summary, the paper proposed that more research is needed on the formulation of party programmes and how cultural issues are politicised in such programmes.

Another memorable paper was given in the second, parallel session, entitled 'Artistry and work'. The presentation, by scholars Katve-Kaisa Kontturi, Katri Saarikivi and Milla Tiainen from the University of Turku, introduced the concept of artistic labour (taidetyö in Finnish), which in my opinion makes the key features in the work of an artist visible: the creating of art works, the multiplicity of roles and, through an ethnographic method, the artist's lived experience. The intra-active relations between the socio-economic boundaries and varied features of making art is also a characteristic of artistic labour. In this ongoing study, I felt the 'double duty' of cultural policy ideally fulfilled: the scholars stressed that by developing a new concept, their goal was to create new knowledge and, at the same time, to influence political decision-making and practices in the artistic field.

Let us re-politicise cultural policy and make an impact!

After a pleasant evening hosted by the hospitable City of Rovaniemi, in the Arktikum Science Centre, and a sunny morning walk from the hotel to the campus, the keynote by Nanna Kann-Rasmussen, associate professor of cultural policy at the University of Copenhagen, opened the second conference day. Focusing on New Public Governance (NPG) as a cultural policy paradigm, Kann-Rasmussen scrutinised how we can view NPG as a force for cultural policy and how it may change cultural policy. As the global population is dealing

Image 2. Keynote Nanna Kann-Rasmussen on New Public Governance in Cultural Policies. Photo: Sanna Karimäki-Nuutinen.

with 'non-linear, wicked problems', such as climate change and moving from one crisis to another, NPG encourages the promotion of trust and relational contracts for governance mechanisms. In terms of cultural policy, in addition to the supporting of artists and devising of development strategies to attract larger audiences, NPG includes collaborative, cross-sectoral efforts to 'do good'. Whether in terms of participatory decision making, diversity in voices or even activism, cultural institutions want to have an impact on society through their work. With NPG, this kind of work lends additional legitimacy to cultural agencies: not only through high-quality programming, but also through, for instance, participating in projects and other means of 'going out there and doing good'. Kann-Rasmussen concluded that no field or discipline can avoid taking action to solve societal problems.

The most thought-provoking impulse for me personally came from Nanna Kann-Rasmussen's view of cultural organizations through NPG theories. The realisation that struck me was epitomised by her mention of 'activist librarians' that she has encountered in her research (see, e.g. Kann-Rasmussen 2022). Although not a librarian, I am an art curator besides being a doctoral researcher. Like Kann-Rasmussen's librarians, I have been working in a publicly funded cultural institution and have been grappling with a desire to include social justice, climate issues or other agendas in the programming of that in-

Image 3. Keynote Justin O´Connor ended with a thought-provoking slide. Photo: Sanna Ka-rimäki-Nuutinen.

stitution. My autoethnographic study of curating an art exhibition that took a stand on such issues and caused heated discussions can be informed by the notion that a cultural institution's legitimacy may be justified by 'doing good'.

As a finale to the conference, the keynote by Professor of Creative Economy Justin O'Connor, from the University of South Australia, delivered just the right amount of provocation. Entitled 'Culture and Sustainable Development after Mondiacult 2022', the lecture began with a journey through 40 years of cultural policies and evolving ways of defining the cultural sector. O'Connor's message was that cultural policy has been depoliticised. By not clearly demarcating what culture or, later, the creative industry is, the cultural sector has limited its operational power. 'The creative industry is a mess', O'Connor stated. One unfortunate example of this fact is that culture is not on the UN's list of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). O'Connor stressed that in order to contribute to global solidarity and governance, and in order to be an operational public policy area, the culture sector needs to have more precise delimitations. Although imposing such restrictions does not necessarily mean renouncing culture's broader claims, by setting limits to the notion of 'culture-as-everything' the culture sector can create a manageable framework

Image 4. Morning walk in beautiful spring weather spurred thoughts for the second day of the conference. Photo: Sanna Karimäki-Nuutinen.

and clearer storyline to present at the (e.g. SDG) negotiation tables. There is a need to re-politicise cultural policy.

In summary, the conference offered a wide variety of topics and reviews of relevant research as well as inspiring encounters with colleagues and new acquaintances. Rovaniemi, and the Arctic as a broader context, contributed to an understanding of the forces and tensions impacting cultural policy by creating a stimulating environment and inspiring an open mind.

AUTHOR

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CONFERENCES

Living Uncertainty
16th SIEF Congress in Brno, Czech Republic, 7–10 June 2023
Päivi Leinonen

The 16th International SIEF Congress took place in Brno, Czech Republic on 7–10 June 2023. The *Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore* (SIEF) is a professional association of scholars in the fields of ethnology, folklore studies and cultural anthropology. SIEF provides platforms for critical debate and networking, and the biannual congress brings together a large number of researchers. This year, there were 998 delegates in attendance and the four days included 97 panels and 669 papers discussing different aspects of the main theme: living uncertainty.

In the first keynote, Marilyn Strathern, an emeritus professor of social anthropology at Cambridge, talked about uncertainty in relations, asking if recognising such uncertainty can help us acknowledge the role that it plays in our lives. The second keynote was given by Andre Pető, a historian and professor in the Department of Gender Studies at the Central European University in Vienna. She is concerned about the ignorance that has given rise to various subjugating structures, such as illiberalism and neo-fascism, and reminded us about the need to be awake in these uncertain times.

My conference experience revolved strongly around the theme of walking, because in my current research project walk-along interviews are a key method of acquiring material. I participated in the panel entitled 'Further steps into the unknown: Walking methodologies as experimentation, experience and exploration'. All the presentations in the three-session panel were related to walking, but they explored a huge variety of topics. The panel started with several presentations about walking in nature. Folklorist Amy Skillman, from Goucher College, shared her experiences during the Covid pandemic, when, amid all the uncertainty, daily walks in the forest brought some kind of certainty. Skillman noticed that her multisensory perceptions became more accurate during the year and that her eyes were open to noticing and recognising things that had previously seemed irrelevant.

Another speaker on the same panel was Monika Kujawska, associate professor at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Lodz. She presented her studies in the forest in indigenous Amazonian contexts. In her research, which focuses on the use of plants, she gathered information by walking in the forest together with community members. She

wanted to hear stories and meanings related to the forest and felt that they could only be revealed by joint forest walks engaging with the senses as well as experiences.

In the third session of the same panel, PhD student Mirna Tkalčić Simetić, from the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb, took us into the different atmospheres permeating the capital city of Croatia after two strong earthquakes in 2020. She presented the researcher's point of view on go-along interviews in a badly destroyed city. In her opinion, walking together produces more relevant information than just talking. Moreover, she discovered that walks can also serve as healing experiences.

I also presented my paper in this panel. I discussed my current research project, the planned, experienced and sensed socio-materiality and well-being of people in the Castle City of Turku. In this project, my research group, together with the participants, observes everyday practices and sensory experiences in an intensely developing part of town. In this presentation, I focused on the temporalities that can be revealed by using walk-along interviews.

Another perspective on urban walking and time was presented by ethnologist Professor Emerita Kerstin Gunnemark, from the University of Gothenburg. In her project, she returned to her childhood environment to observe how it felt to face the past with all its changes. We heard interesting observations, such as the fact that, after all these years, her bodily memory made her obey the left-hand traffic rules from the time when she lived in the town. Sweden moved to right-sided traffic in 1967.

Walking is not only a way of moving from one place to another but also a meditative or even spiritual activity. Several papers dealt with questions about walking as a central activity of pilgrimage, both as embodied practice and metaphor. I was intrigued by the idea of stumbling, or losing one's balance, on pilgrimage walks, which PhD student Lee Dallas, from Lund University, discussed. He brought out the meaning of unexpected turns and stumbling while on pilgrimage as well as in the work of researchers. The wide range of topics included in the walking theme reminded us of the applicability of ethnographic methods to the most diverse of research subjects.

I also participated in one of the conference workshops. In the workshop entitled 'Let's Get Lost', the focus was also on walking, with the idea being to navigate a foreign city without smartphones. The workshop deftly completed my understanding of uncertainty when walking in an unknown city and linked up quite nicely with some of the themes presented in the panel. The most obvious factors were stumbling and making mistakes, but also finding answers together. Each group was given an old postcard with an image of a place in Brno. The task was to find the place using any means except a smartphone.

My group was given an image of a statue of Gregor Mendel. We assumed it could be found in a park or a square and started walking. We did find many such places and even some statues, but not the right one. The search included much uncertainty and many missteps, but it was surprisingly enjoyable. The element of uncertainty made it an exciting game enhanced by sharing the experience with others.

The experience of getting lost also applies to the work of researchers. The unexpected dead-ends, turns and missteps help us see things from different angles. This idea also encapsulates the core of the conference: Uncertainty is part of life and part of research, no matter how hard we try to eliminate it. The possibility of stumbling or falling is something to keep in mind. We must be awake, as Andrea Petö reminded us in her lecture. Getting lost might be fun for a while, but the fun stops if you do not know how to correct the course.

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CONFERENCES

The Relations and Beyond: Biennial Conference of the Finnish Anthropological Society,
Rovaniemi, 21–23 March 2023
Alicja Staniszewska

The Relations and Beyond: Biennial Conference of the Finnish Anthropological Society 2023 was hosted by the Arctic Anthropology Research Team at the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi, Finland. The conference explored the significance of relations and kinship in anthropology, approaching the concept from diverse perspectives and acknowledging its multifaceted nature and its relevance in the face of recent developments in the field. The conference brought together anthropologists and other scholars from different methodological and theoretical schools to discuss the changing dynamics between humans, animals, spirits, and other beings in 32 panels.

The conference had an impressive group of keynote speakers, all of whom have made significant contributions to the field of anthropology. Piers Vitebsky and Marilyn Strathern, both from the University of Cambridge, and Tim Ingold from the University of Aberdeen were the distinguished keynote speakers who shared their insights and perspectives on the topic of relations during the event. During the plenary round table, a discussion from a postcolonial perspective about the choice of keynote speakers from leading Western universities was raised. It has been critically addressed by the conference organisers and keynote speakers.

Piers Vitebsky's keynote: Why Do Spirits Want Relations with Humans?

In his keynote speech, Piers Vitebsky explored the intriguing concept of how non-human entities are perceived as resembling humans and how these entities desire human-like relations. The focus was on understanding how societies regulate such unstable contacts with intangible realities and what happens to these relations when religious beliefs undergo changes. Vitebsky began by posing thought-provoking questions about the nature of these relations. They delved into the complexities of how mutual desire and neediness between humans and gods or spirits manifest through various forms of communion, such as sacrifice, prayer, and even sexual intercourse.

The impact of religious change on these relations was a significant aspect of the presentation. Vitebsky highlighted that as societies undergo religious

transformations, some relations erode, while new ones are created. Conversion to different belief systems or the imposition of atheism can lead to sudden ontological confusion and emotional derangement as established connections with the divine are disrupted.

The keynote also explored how ancient gods from traditions like ancient Greek mythology have adapted to changing religious landscapes. They have either become obsolete with the rise of new dominant belief systems like Orthodox Christianity or transformed into local folklore. Nevertheless, these gods have endured as literary and psychoanalytic archetypes beyond their original Ancient Greek context.

To conclude his charismatic speech Vitebsky examined the different styles of mutual kinship found in animistic or polytheistic cosmologies compared to monotheism. Vitebsky argued that the diversity of relations between humans and non-human entities seems to be declining globally, reflecting the loss of biodiversity in the natural world.

Marilyn Strathern's keynote: Non-Relations and Disconnections

Marilyn Strathern's keynote explored the intricate concept of relations, it was particularly focused on the boundaries and recent discussions surrounding non-relations and disconnections. Strathern, with an ethnographic twist, took the audience for an oneiric imaginary trip through the stories of Amazonian and Melanesian fieldwork. She questioned whether it is possible to imagine negative forms of relations, and if so, why social relations sometimes take on an anti-relational form.

Strathern discussed how anthropologists have also grappled with the concept of relations, sometimes experimenting with eliminating it from theories entirely or substituting it with other constructs. Strathern pondered whether her aversion to the concept is a reaction to familiarity or overuse of the term in academic discourse. Through ethnographic materials, Strathern highlighted the significance of understanding the various forms of resistance that the concept of relation encounters. The members of the audience were left with a contemplation of the complexities of human connections and attention to the challenges that arise when individuals seek to disengage or deny existing relationships.

Tim Ingold's keynote: Rethinking Intergenerational Relations

Tim Ingold began by addressing the issue of how we perceive generations and their succession. He started by emphasising that the conventional view of generations as layers, one following another, is a relatively recent development in human history. This viewpoint, though commonly accepted, influences numerous discussions on topics such as evolution, life and death, longev-
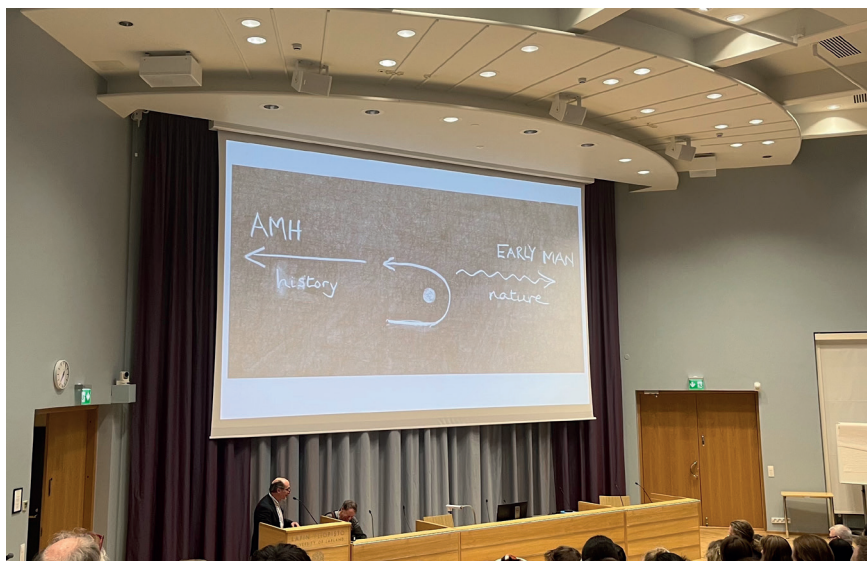
Photo 1: Tim Ingold (on the right) during the discussion following his keynote on 22.3.2023. On the slide, a graph representing the proposed alternative understanding of life as an overlap of generations. (Alicja Staniszewska, 2023)

ity, extinction, sustainability, education, climate change, and other pressing contemporary concerns.

Therefore, Ingold suggested a departure from this entrenched perspective and proposed an alternative understanding of life as an overlap of generations. By embracing the idea that life is forged through interconnected relationships between generations, he argued that it could potentially alleviate some of the anxieties people face when contemplating the future.

Ingold argued that collaboration across generations could offer some solutions for addressing challenges faced by humanity. However, adopting this perspective would require relinquishing certain deeply ingrained beliefs. Among them, Ingold listed the notion of inevitable progress and the unfaltering faith in science and technology's ability to ease environmental impacts. In his optimistic speech, Ingold suggested that while there may be no definitive end to troubles, as long as life persists, there is potential for the well-being and prosperity of future generations.

Conference panels and the cultural programme
Already before the conference, it was obvious that choosing the sessions would be hard and the schedule of the conference was tight. Right after the welcoming words from the organisers the panel "Fluid Realities of the Wild

in Human-Animal Relations" started. Florian Stammler from the University of Lapland in the presentation "Herding Hunters: Inuit animal husbandry in South Greenland" talked about the duality within the Inuit animal husbandry in South Greenland and the dichotomy of wild/domestic and hunter/farmer. During the panel "(Un)relating and (un)learning with more-than-humans during ethnographic practice" Beth A. Conklin from Vanderbilt University in the presentation "Microbiologics: On Hubris & Humbling in Amazonian Ethnography", talked about the differences between indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge. She focused particularly on how, in regards to microbes, both of those knowledge systems intersect and support each other. Later on, during the "Making "good relations" in more-than-human worlds" panel, Marzia Varutti from the University of Geneva gave the presentation "Ecological grief as a Relationship" where she discussed ecological mourning as a form of community building, emotional solace and activism on examples from glacier funerals in Switzerland. Eemi Nordström from the University of Helsinki gave an interesting presentation with a humorous twist about the social history of mosquitos in Finland entitled "The mosquito swarm: Relating to monstrous abundance in the age of insect decline". Nordström delved into the portrayal of mosquitoes, examining their representation as symbolical "Finnish demons" and their presence in travel literature as guardians of nature, acting as protectors against human intrusion. One of the biggest panels of the conference was "Pig worlds: Understanding porcine multiplicity in the Anthropocene" and was dedicated to pig-human relations. The panel discussed diverse perspectives – pigs' roles ranging from food sources to medical surrogates, companions, and even spiritual entities and their symbolical meanings, for example, im/pure, un/desirable, or domestic/wild.

Aside from the academic sessions, the cultural programme of the conference was a memorable experience. The conference dinner was held during the evening of March 22 in Lappia Hall designed by famous Finnish architect Alvar Aalto. The evening concluded with a premiere musical improvisation by the Sardinian group of throat singers, Tenores di Neonelli, in collaboration with Sámi joiker Wimme Saari. The fusion of Sardinian and Sámi musical traditions accompanied by lively anthropological discussions created a unique and unforgettable performance.

The Relations and Beyond: Biennial Conference of the Finnish Anthropological Society 2023 was an excellent opportunity for scholars of all backgrounds to explore relations and their relevance and omnipresence in contemporary anthropology. The conference facilitated a diverse range of perspectives and discussions on the multifaceted nature of relations, considering both its traditional applications and its relevance in the context of "un-relations" or

"post-relations." The contributions of the keynote speakers, Marilyn Strathern, Tim Ingold, and Piers Vitebsky, elevated the event, and their valuable insights will continue to influence the field of anthropology.

The Arctic Anthropology Research Team from the Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland successfully hosted the conference, which attracted over 300 participants. It was an excellent opportunity to network and reunite with long-no-see colleagues. The decision to stream the three keynotes and the final plenary online allowed those, who could not participate in person to be a part of the experience anyway. To conclude, the Relations and Beyond conference proved to be a major anthropological event during which researchers discussed topical questions and critically pondered the discipline's history and future.

AUTHOR

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