

Hannu Salmi

The Problem of Authorship in Finnish Fiction Film 1907-1916

The present paper discusses authorship in Finnish fiction film between 1907-1916 from three perspectives: 1) roles of the various members in the film-making process, 2) the problem of authorship with respect to the development of copyright legislation and 3) the marketing of authorship to the public through film credits, programme brochures, advertising and other advance material.

The first Finnish fiction film *Savolaanpolttajat* (The Moonshiners) was released in 1907. During its production the roles of photographer, director and scriptwriter were already distinct, but whether the field of visual designing was under the director's control is hard to find out. It appears that all through the 1910s the "director" was mainly responsible for directing actors. Film was conceived rather as a "stage" of a theatre play than an independent form of art.

Also from the copyright perspective film was related to theatre. International copyright legislation was based on the general treaty dated in 1882 in Bern and supplemented in 1896 in Paris. The treaty was further revised in Berlin in November 1908, film being then specified equal to other art products. Finland entered the Bern treaty as late as 1931, although the international trend was probably acknowledged before that. Finland followed her own copyright law from 1880. Apparently film was conceived as a presentation or adaptation of a play which – like a play production – was covered by copyright.

Traces of authorship can also be found in film credits, hand brochures, advertising and other material. Short fiction films were often totally anonymous, or, in certain cases, the production company was given, and sometimes the scriptwriter as a rare exception. In long features the scriptwriter was the most prominent author – in the spirit of the German *Autorenfilm* tradi-

tion. When a given film was based on a play, the playwright was always mentioned, sometimes even the *metteur-en-scène*. The role of the "director" was, however, secondary. Just at the end of the research period, in 1916, there was a debate going on in papers and magazines concerning a film called *Tuhlaajapoika* (The Prodigal Son) produced by *Finlandia Filmi*. In the debate Sven Bergvall, credited as "adaptor", seems to have acquired characteristics of the modern "director": besides directing actors, he assumed a central role in visual designing of the film.

Tarja Savolainen

Eva-Lisa Viljanen and the Ideal of "Film Journalism" – the National Project as the Midwife

Eva-Lisa Viljanen (1911-1981) is the first Finnish woman who is known to have made films. She started film-making in 1932, just a few months before the so called tax reduction law took effect. She directed her last film in summer 1940 after the Winter War. Viljanen completed twelve shorts, four of which have been preserved for the later generations. Typical of the age, most of her films dealt with travel or Finnish economic life.

The present article attempts to figure out how Viljanen, as a woman, managed to claim her position in the male-dominated field of cultural production. I address the problem by introducing her biography, films and by analyzing the conditions of her film-making. I assume that the construction of the Finnish nation, i.e. the so called national project, was the prominent factor to advance her efforts in negotiating her position in short film production. In this field the national project was, above all, manifested through the tax reduction law, taking effect in 1933. The state consented to this reform, advocated by film producers, foreseeing there a possibility to introduce the young Finland to her citizens through shorts. The new law radically increased short film production: while

only 24 films were submitted to the State Board of Film Censorship, as many as 254 films were submitted in 1933 – and the rate remained high all through the 1930s. I argue that Viljanen saw a possibility to realize her dreams of film-making in the age of the national project with its increasing short production and new working opportunities for film-makers.

Anneli Lehtisalo

Poet Kings, Migrating Birds and the People

The present paper discusses three Finnish 'bio pics' (=biography films) whose main character is a national great man: Runon kuningas ja muuttolintu (The King of Poets and the Bird of Passage, 1940) produced by Suomen Filmitieteellisyys depicts J.L. Runeberg's – the national poet of Finland – unhappy love affair, Ballaadi (Ballad, 1944), another bio pic by Suomen Filmitieteellisyys, tells a similar story of Fredrick Pacius, the composer of the Finnish national anthem, and Suomi-Filmi's "Minä elän" ("I Live", 1946) presents the tragic life story of Aleksis Kivi, the Finnish national author.

George Custen, who has studied American bio pics, suggests that bio pics tend to repeat the same story model of a suffering great artist or cultural personality, oppressed by the community. The same model can be discerned also in these domestic great man bio pics. In these films the suffering of the main character is, however, closely related to creating national art or culture. Consequently, these films can be conceived as

an element of the national project of the 1930s and 1940s, since they contributed, both with respect to content and as a cinematic project, to the debate concerning the national. The two production companies of the great man bio pics, SF and Suomi-Filmi, aimed at demonstrating that they produce high quality national culture. Both company competition and their status as national film companies were at stake.

The national project had, since the 19th century, made use of history in constructing the national identity. The film industry resorted to the same strategy, by exhibiting the great men of the national revival on the screen. Depicting the national past and thereby defining the national identity were, however, a site of constant negotiation and struggle of hegemony. This struggle determines who has the right to speak in the name of the nation, or to define the nation and the national.

The films depict the national great man as a suffering, exceptional individual who is obliged to renounce his desires or even his life in order to create national culture. In both Runon kuningas and Ballaadi the nation is an unproblematically unified upper class society, in admiration of the artist. Minä elän more prominently reflects the division between common people and upper crust which, however, are building Finnish culture. For women these films offer mainly two roles in the creation of national culture. Young females inspire the poet or composer as muses, whereas ordinary housewives eventually guarantee the foundation for national culture. In

the Kivi film the artist draws his inspiration on nature or common people, but the peaceful conditions for his work are again made possible by a maternal and ordinary woman's support.

Mervi Pantti

"Father State" as the Author of the National Cinema

My aim is to survey the role of Finnish film policy in constructing the national cinema after 1977. What has been the policy of the Finnish Film Foundation like with respect to domestic film production and what kinds of problems have arisen after it was entrusted almost the entire financial support of the feature film production?

Since 1977 the Finnish Film Foundation came under the parliamentary control and, partly, state budget financing. Subsequently there has been ongoing debate concerning, above all, the role of the Foundation and its share of the state resources. However, this debate on film policy and its decision-making has been overshadowed by two conflicting approaches to the national cinema: cultural approach and industrial approach.

From the economic and industrial point of view the Finnish "film industry" has been, since the late 1950s, an unstable and fragmented field, based on small entrepreneurs and handicrafts. To a great extent, it can be regarded as a creation of the state's subsidizing policy: financially, it is running mainly at a loss, and the situation is not much changed

by its successes, i.e. profits of a few "great national masterpieces". Despite all this, as an imaginary construct, as an object of interest and dreams, the Finnish cinema continuously stays great.