ERIKOISSUOMALAISET
Queer New Finns, Oral History, Affective Activism

Kate Sotejeff-Wilson

SQS
1–2/2023

69

Queer Mirror
Essay

In a relatively homogeneous Nordic context like Finland, ethnic heterogeneity is more visible than it would be in a more diverse society. This intersects with sexuality and gender. How do new Finns (citizens or residents here, born elsewhere) who identify as queer (LGBTQIA+) narrate their place in Finnish history? How do they feel about the change they have (not) experienced? Where do they see the need for activism? The essay is based on personal histories of queer new Finns – *erikoissuomalaiset* – that I collected in 2021. The aim was to bring new Finns into a queer history of Finland's last half-century, ever since 1971 when homosexuality was decriminalized.

What if you are not the only rainbow duck (*regnbågsankan*) in the pond, but the only one with a "foreign" accent, who "looks like you were not born here"? What if you have rights (e.g. to marry) where you were born, but not where you live (or vice versa)? How do sexuality and gender intersect with location and ethnicity? How do these intersections change, and who tells that story?

The narrators who responded to my qualitative questionnaire raised two issues. First, they felt they were shapers of Finnish history, but under-recognized. Second, they described being out as queer new Finns as activism, which I hope to show was also affective. Building on an emerging concept of affective activism (Juvonen et al. 2022) and the 50-year-old feminist slogan "the personal is political" (Kelly 2022), I see affect (feelings, emotions, what moves us) as fuel for activism (working for, moving to change). By telling their stories, the narrators effectively and affectively enabled community with other queer new Finns.

Erikoissuomalaiset: extraordinary Finns

Some Finns are extraordinary.

The *Perussuomalaiset* ("basic, ordinary," sometimes called "true" Finns) is an anti-immigration, anti-LGBTQIA+ party in Finland. At the time of writing (April 2023) they are the party with the second-largest number of MPs, voted in on a platform of "make Finland great again." You can translate *erikois-* as extraordinary or rare. So *erikoissuomalaiset* are extraordinary Finns. I invented this term as a form of resistance to being classified as not "basic, ordinary, or true" enough to be Finnish.

Image 1: Erikoissuomalaiset.

At Jyväskylä Pride in August 2019, at a radical stitching workshop in Vakiopaine bar (Radikaalit pistot 2019), I made this cross-stitch design for *erikoissuomalaiset* (Image 1). The lettering is in all the colours of the expanded Pride flag designed in 2018 by Daniel Quasar, including trans, nonbinary, and many skin colours. Along the bottom is a Finnish lake. Top left are two bats: *lepakko,* bat in Finnish, is slang for lesbian. On the right is a lupin, an invasive – or inventive? – species here (*vieraslaji tai vieraileva tähti?*). This was a direct response to the anti-immigration rhetoric of the Basic Finns party: MP Juha Mäenpää had just called immigrants "invasive species" (Niemistö 2019). But pink and purple lupins are beautiful – especially on roadsides at midsummer – even if they are not "indigenous."

We can turn the story around. Change the rhetoric. To do that, we have to tell our stories and weave them into the big story. Engage with how it feels to live with "Finnish first"; stitching is resisting. It can be a cross (angry) stitch! Knowledge production can be "paranoid," looking for and starting with injustice, or "reparative," beginning by imagining a possible future (Sedgwick 2003). In the radical stitching workshop, I was trying to do the latter, to acknowledge the injustice but to make a future imaginable. This can be an activist-historian's task. To paraphrase N. K. Jemisin (2018), how long 'til queer future month?

Extraordinary Finns are part of the story of queer Finland. We are born outside Finland; we are new Finns. We are LGBTQIA+, the term I used in my call for narrators. Aware it could be reduced to mean "not straight" (not unlike "non-white" for race) and create a new binary (Somerville 2020, 5), I use "queer" here for ease of reading.

What about the Finnish word *sateenkaari* (rainbow)? Queer old Finns (*kantasuomalaiset*) told their stories in a "rainbow-coloured" celebration of 100 years of Finnish independence: a collection of their blog posts was published online as *Suomi 100 – Sateenkaaren väreissä* or "Finland 100 – In Rainbow Colours" (Suomi100 2016). The rainbow on its cover is sanitized, which shows a problem with how the term *sateenkaari* may be

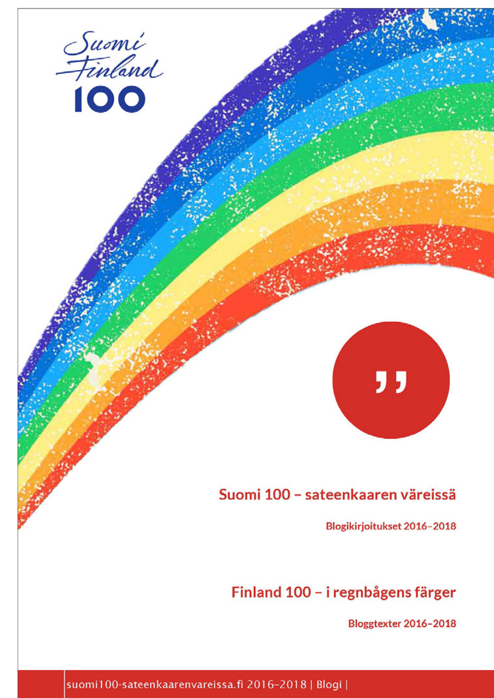

Image 2: Suomi100 cover.

used to gloss over, homogenize, and desexualize diverse queer experience (Mizielińska 2006). Looking at it, we might wonder: is this a children's bible story about Noah and the Ark, with heterosexual pairs of animals going in two by two, the unicorns missing the boat? Where are the pinks and purples, blacks and browns? Is half of the "rainbow" missing"?

In her introduction (Suomi100 2016, 5–6), Katriina Rosavaara presents more nuanced picture than the cover: "Arts and culture institutions have to actively rewrite history, to create space for silenced voices and challenge racist and stereotyped perspectives… as part of the shared story [of a] diverse Finland."[1] For a conference paper (Sotejeff-Wilson 2021), I contrasted the narrations of these old Finns with those of the new Finns. Here, I focus on the new. My motivation remains to share untold stories.

The potential for "revision of memory" (Boyd and Ramírez 2012, 273) to straighten, or to queer, the story is great. We can reformulate heteronormative histories, as Tuula Juvonen (2002, 291; 2022) has done for museums. But who does the work of integrating minority perspectives into the majority cultural heritage story: is it always the minorities themselves, or the same few museum staff (Museovirasto 2021)? When multiple minority identities intersect, it gets harder to join the conversation. As queer immigrants with overlapping minority identities, the narrators could be described as "hard-to-reach."

Storytelling as affective activism

My approach is intersectional because diversities are inseparable: it is not possible to talk about gender and sexuality without mentioning race and class. As Imogen Tyler (2021, 239–40, 252) has shown, we ignore class at our peril, not least as it intersects with race and sexuality in the "violent practice of exploitation and social control" that is stigma.

As Ghassan Moussawi and Salvador Vidal-Ortiz (2020, 13–16) state, "Race and racialization, empire, and the transnational intersect… [in a queer rethinking of] our categories of analysis, particularly around what constitutes the 'national.'" Yet this has not always been taken into account in history:

> You have gender studies, like postcolonial studies, separated from History, so that historians do not have to deal with these questions. This is how power operates. This process of excluding the thing from the institution that does not really want to deal with it (Hanna Järvinen in Gaudreau 2021, 170).

Silo thinking has affected queer history, too. For example, AIDS may be narrated separately as a gay or POC pandemic, though some work on this very intersection (Abdur-Rahman 2018). Yet race is just as constructed and unstable as sexuality (Barnard 2021). "We want to find ourselves, but also to be freed from categories, it is an interesting tension" (Fisher 2021).

Queer stories are hard to find. So much queer history is oral history. "To discover and to write the history of sexuality has long seemed to many a sufficiently radical undertaking in itself" (Halperin 1989, 273). Creating a queer migrant history can be a testimony (Boyd and Ramírez 2012, 9) or, as I suggest here, affective activism.

Storytelling is effective. Telling queer migrant stories means resisting a neoliberal narrative of "multicultural" diversity as choice: "We must do more than diversify happy object choices" (Ahmed 2010, 120, 159). The queer new Finns challenged how history is written, who writes it, and why. They described being out (being seen and heard as both queer and as new

1 All English translations are mine.

Finns) as activism that was both affective and effective. They felt that their presence fuelled change. Becoming visible and audible, taking up public space, made a community including queer new Finns possible. By writing their stories, rather than having a place made *for* them as minorities by the majority, they were co-creating a future on an equal footing *with* all Finns.

Storytelling is affective. Halberstam (1998) calls weaving scraps of evidence into a story a scavenger methodology typical of queer studies; but stories we tell about our lives do not form a seamless linear narrative (Alasuutari 2020, 49, 52, 61). This is because we know things not only in our minds, but also in our souls and bodies (Salami 2020). Even if affect is more embodied, and emotion more social (Greyser 2012, 86), both impact on our storytelling. How the narrator and listener interact shapes how the story is told (Boyd and Ramírez 2012, 3–5, 113, 141), and the worlds we make. By writing their own stories, documenting their own "archive of me," queer people can state: I exist, I happened (Riseman 2022, 69). As a text worker on the fringes of the academy, I resonate with Anne Balay's idea that queer oral history is outside academy structures, and can be, as Shirleene Robinson calls it, a "debriefing space" for activists (Balay 2022; Robinson 2022). In calling for narrators, I tried to provide this debriefing space for affect. But rather than offering an oral interview, face to face, I sent a written invitation.

In a pandemic, as was the case when this material was gathered, bodies are more wary of interacting. It might be easier to tell stories at a safe distance, in writing. Finland has a long, strong tradition of written oral history (Pöysä 2018); The Finnish Literature Society regularly calls for Finns to write about their experiences for posterity (including of Covid-19, SKS 2020). Rather than focusing on the oral alone, Finnish researchers use the term *muistitieto* (memory studies) and engaged with these written oral histories, also from a queer perspective (Savolainen and Taavetti 2022, 11; Taavetti and Juvonen 2022). In writing, respondents reflect on what is important to them at their own pace. I invited my narrators to record their experiences, to join this very Finnish memory studies tradition.

Queer new Finnish narrators

To reach my narrators, I created an anonymous bilingual questionnaire in English and Finnish, tested it with queer friends and colleagues, both old and new Finns, and shared it using the snowball method. I shared the questionnaire in conjunction with Jyväskylä Pride in 2021. I emailed personal contacts, posted on the SQS email list, and in Facebook groups including SateenkaariSuomi ("rainbow Finland"), International Working Women of Finland and Foreigners in Jyväskylä. I emailed Finnish queer and immigrant NGOs, but if I received any response, it was "try SateenkaariSuomi." That group is large, but largely Finnish-speaking; new Finns are present, not prominent (I only joined it to share the questionnaire). The most responsive were networks where I was active. This meant that respondents knew (of) me or knew someone who knew me. They were more likely to open up to me as a fellow queer new Finn, as I was more likely to understand them (on the pros and cons of researching "people like me" see Tooth Murphy 2020 and Traies 2020).

I received 15 respondents: 13 wrote in English and 2 in Finnish (translated here to preserve anonymity).[2] I have not tied quotes to people. In such a small community, this would compromise the anonymity I assured my narrators. Age-wise, 5 respondents were younger adults (aged 19–30),

2 A few new Finns cannot claim to speak for all new Finns. Larger studies can; the Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare concludes that "members of the queer community with a foreign background… experience both overt and covert forms of discrimination and experience exclusion from both queer and diaspora communities" (Czimbalmos and Rask 2022).

7 in midlife (31–50), and 3 older (51–70). By gender, four men, eight women, and three others responded. Sexualities were not asked about, but were written about.

My narrators are like me. I'm a white middle-aged middle-class migrant queer cis woman with a PhD: born in Wales to English and Polish parents, I moved from London to Mikkeli when I married a Karelian[3] in 2012, and live in Jyväskylä, Finland.

The narrators were *new* Finns – but not so new. Some had lived here for over two decades. One was born in Finland, the rest in Bangladesh, Belgium, Czechia, Estonia, Israel, the Netherlands, Scotland (2),[4] Switzerland, UK (2), US (2), and New Zealand. Most lived beyond the pale, or *susiraja* (Kehä 3, like London's M25, outside which the "wolves" run): Jyväskylä 6; Helsinki 4; Espoo 2; Turku 1; Mikkeli 1; Not stated 1.

Narrators identified differently as *Finns* (see image 3).

Some cited other feelings of Finnishness:

> I think I feel the Finnish soul.
> I am cosmopolitan. From in between.
> By now, I'm much more culturally Finnish than American, but I still don't speak very fluently.

My key question was what change the narrators saw in their queer lives: How is the LGBTQIA+ community where you were born different from the one in Finland? How has [this community, in Finland] changed over the years?

3 Karelia has a strong identity on the borderland between Finland and Russia. On its oral history see Fingerroos 2008.
4 Though Scotland is still in the UK, 2 narrators wrote it separately.

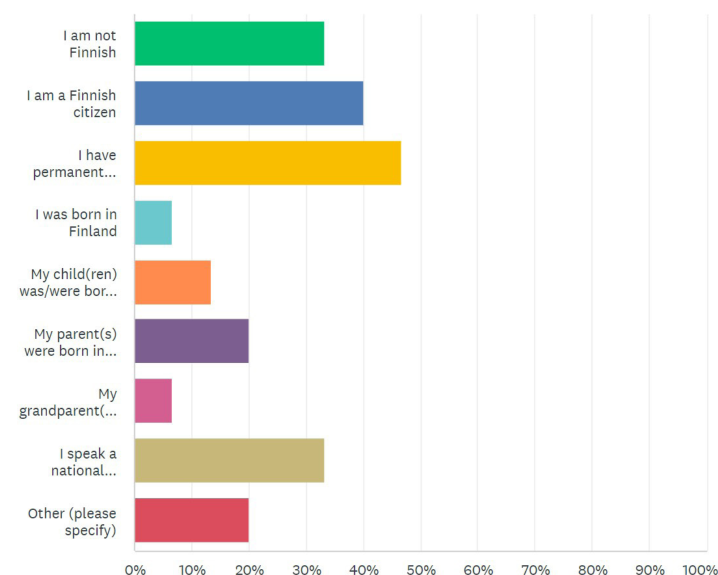

Image 3: Are you Finnish? Responses in English.

I suggested themes as prompts: Pride, rights, education, religion, politics, work, role of groups (trans, nonbinary, older people, children, men, women), their place in the queer/local/Finnish/global community. Not everybody resonated with every theme – but some wrote a lot about some, and I try to reflect this "gravitational pull" in the citations.

I gave the narrators a basic timeline of legal changes affecting queer people in Finland since 1971 and asked them to add personally important dates, to organize their stories.

> 1971 Homosexual acts stop being illegal in Finland
> 1981 Homosexuality stops being classified as an illness in Finland
> 2002 Parliament approves trans law in Finland
> 2017 Equal marriage is recognized in Finland

By close reading (Lentricchia and DuBois 2003), I first read each whole narrative, then the responses by question, several times, to pick out recurring themes. Aware of my insider–outsider status (Dwyer and Buckle 2009) – stepping out or back from inside the group of queer new Finns to research – I took a qualitative approach to how my narrators made meanings as queer new Finns.

We write history from both ends

The narrators write history in their own "trans time" (Tuomenvirta 2022) or "queer time," resisting the chrononormativity of a linear life story (e.g. birth-naming-marriage-children-death, see Tooth Murphy 2022, 163, 164). The queer new Finns experienced change in their lifetime – positive or not, fast or slow – but also "composed continuity" (Golding 2022, 84). Many narrators had lived in more states than their birth country and Finland. They freely compared, but also conflated places and times. They prioritized what to narrate and how to link it chronologically. They chose their history.

The narrators saw history is an intergenerational enterprise, not written from before to after, or from old to young, but from both ends:

> Older LGBTQIA+ people can also provide a more personal history of their experiences to younger kids, and I think programmes that fostered activities with queer youth and elderly people would be a really great way to break down some of the barriers and bring more understanding.

Unsurprisingly for the (mostly middle-aged) narrators, intergenerational "queer kinship" through oral history (Dahl et al. 2022) or "telling your story to your family" (Summerskill 2020) did not mean blood relations. Parents and children did not figure in the narratives. This generation may not have expected or wanted children, at least less so than younger queer folk. Their sense of companionship was as co-travellers, comrades, co-combatants, or growing together (Somerville 2020, 11–12) of friends as "chosen" family.

In what follows, I focus on four aspects that evoked strong emotional responses in the queer new Finns in their narrations: gender diversity, public space, religion, and racism. (Lack of) change in these fields had fuelled in them an urge to act.

Amplify trans and nonbinary voices

The narrators felt that in Finland "here, now" it is easier than "there, then" for nonbinary and trans people to speak out, but their voices are not loud enough. This could be because Finnish has no gendered personal pronouns (unlike Swedish or English), making nonbinary people linguistically less visible. To say that nonbinary people "did not exist in America in the 90s!"

(as one narrator did) would be going too far, though new Finns saw them here and now:

> I think, both at home and in Finland, NB [narrator's term for nonbinary] people are more invisible in a way. Our society is so gender-coded. I've had some acquaintances tell me if I've gotten their pronouns wrong and that they're NB, I appreciate that there's a level of comfort here that NB folks (and anyone else who's been misgendered) can speak up and say and know that they'll be respected and that the proper forms of address will be used.

New Finns expressed that trans people's voices need to be heard louder, especially when they talk about the pain of medicalization (unsurprisingly, given the care and control in Nordic welfare states) and violence from other queers:

> From what I've heard, it's especially difficult to transition in some cases, you need special permission and therapy visits for the state to help which feels incredibly archaic.
>
> I'm not sure if this has always been the case but it feels like TERFs now have a loud and mainstream presence. Lesbians have always been the vanguard for fighting for LGBTQI+ rights but to see a section of that community now working against Trans people is just so disheartening.

As I write this, the outgoing Finnish parliament has finally confirmed the new trans law (which remains inadequate as it excludes minors), meaning that trans adults no longer need a psychiatric diagnosis or sterilization [!] to obtain legal gender recognition (Amnesty 2023). So, trans and nonbinary voices are being heard, but not loudly enough.

Expand queer public space

Queer events, venues, and ceremonies had affective importance for the narrators' lives. They narrated the contraction of this public space. Being safely out in public – as queer and as a new Finn – may have become more of a challenge over time. Activism – Pride as a protest – had also been diluted. Some narrators missed the larger and more flamboyant events in their larger (and more flamboyant?) birth countries:

> I always joke that Helsinki Pride is the most straight Pride I've ever been to haha. I miss the strong and powerful scene. Big gay clubs and being comfortable with being out in public.

But in the Covid-19 pandemic, they had to mark Pride at home, online, or not at all:

> I haven't taken part in Turku Pride as I wasn't in the country for 2019 and then obviously 2020 and this year were cancelled.

The sense of change – "Pride has grown a lot in Finland in the past 10 years. Jyväskylä had its first not so long ago" – was not always positive. 2021 saw a homophobic attack at Jyväskylä Pride beach party (Jyväskylän Seta ry 2021). Bigger events felt less of a protest, more commercial, and less inclusive, than they had been in the past:

> Finnish Pride started from being a place where you acknowledged that you are part of the community, kind of like coming out publicly, instead of a protest. It has evolved over the years to be more like the American event, though.
>
> commercial [Pride events] often feel like they're aimed at the white, cis-male gay community and that can drown out a lot of other identities. As a bisexual woman I only [feel] accepted if I am …

> with someone that isn't male-identifying or presenting. The times I've been with a cis-het man I have felt uncomfortable for both of us… I have lost a community I once felt safe in.

This contraction of queer space was felt all year round. Though virtual spaces are more accessible (Mustola in Suomi100 2016, 42), queer venues had often closed long before – and after – lockdowns (Sateenkaariyhteisöt ry 2023). Some narrators felt that "Finland does better than most" – others found queer spaces here too regimented. The culture of associations could play a role:

> In Finland the most LGBT events are centralized and organized by some official authority like Seta. In Czechia there are plenty smaller independent groups.

While the narrators mourned the contraction of queer space, they could be affirmed in public as couples. Risking reading this within a neoliberal story arc, equal civil marriage (in Finland from 2017) felt like progress. Many new Finns had their relationship recognized earlier elsewhere:

> I married my ex-wife in Holland because then it was not possible in Finland, but having children was not a problem (2008)

Some used (then straight) marriage to immigrate:

> I got to Finland because I married my best friend, a gay man, to do so. We thought that marriage would never happen for same sex partners ever, so we might as well use our right to get married for good. Well, that changed!

This change is recent and rapid. But marriage in a church or another place of worship is still near impossible (Kallatsa 2022).

Make religion queerer here

Although they have two "national" and thus public churches (Lutheran and Orthodox, state-funded through tax), Finns are reluctant to discuss religion publicly (Kimanen 2019). Affective queer activism exists in both the Lutheran (Alasuutari 2021) and Orthodox (Sateenkaariseura 2008) churches, but queer-friendly religious communities were not easy for the narrators to find. "Religion (e.g. LGBTQIA+ people in churches or mosques)" was one prompt I gave them. As a queer Catholic convinced that "religion is a queer thing" (Stuart 1997) and interested in its affects, not least how queer theology is "rethinking the Western body" (Loughlin 2007), I wanted to give fellow new Finns space to express how they feel queerness and religion intersect. They found this harder to do in Finland than elsewhere:

> Judaism recognizes at least 6 gender identities in our religious texts and gender fluidity is recognized and accepted… decolonization in Judaism now … is redefining our religion by our terms… it's literally written in our texts. The youth clubs I went to had openly gay youth workers… as inclusive as 1980's Britain could be… there I started to explore my own identity. I am not part of the Jewish congregation [in Finland], the language barrier makes it too difficult [and the less accepting] community is Orthodox.

It took new Finns longer to find accepting religious communities here – the ones that evangelize are likely less queer-friendly:

> I've had a hard time being LGBTQ and also going to church. I've been thrown out of the "Free Church" (Vapaakirkko). For being gay. Seems they're not so free after all. Luckily there are now English-speaking Lutheran services in a church here where the people are welcoming.

> None of my queer friends here are part of the church or religious at all.

Thus, new Finns may struggle to find affective spaces to act in as both religious and queer. Yet, they found it even harder to reach spaces free of racism.

Call out rampant racism

The heterogenous narrators (born on at least five continents) had different experiences of racism (e.g., anti-Black, anti-Semitic, anti-Slavic). Did these queer new Finns "provincialize that Western sexual epistemology" (Baer 2020, 18) and act against it with a "queer of color critique" (Moussawi and Vidal-Ortiz 2020, 16)? How did narrators express the impact of racism on their queer lives? Most narrators felt that homophobic discrimination had not changed over their years in Finland:

> I've had a hard time in my work (as an orchestra musician) from a couple of religious people. The majority of people are OK with it. This hasn't changed since I moved here 14 years ago. I've always been "out."

> In Finland I've had people shout slurs at me in the street … it came as a shock to experience it in Tampere by young people. I would not be … as open about having a same sex relationship as in the UK but Finland has a very nice polyamory scene and people are mostly accepting of polyam relationships.

Crucially, narrators had moved into being an ethnic minority here which may make them more likely to notice racism. They raised issues of accent bias (Agarwal 2020, 78–82), exoticism in which European imperialism and sexual exploitation collide (Schaper et al. 2020), and the Finnish whiteness that fails to acknowledge its own colonial history and present racism shaped "day-to-day" by "embodied and affective practices" (Hoegaerts et al. 2022, 10).

> There is a toxic environment in white cis gay men that is very racist, I don't see that in the other sections of our community. As a white-functioning woman I haven't experienced racism but I have experienced orientalism and been exoticized and othered, both in the UK and Finland. More in cis-het men but has definitely from all gender identities.

> There is a huge huge problem with bigoted beliefs in Finland and rampant public racism. I'm a co-founder of a community for international people, there isn't a single meet up where discrimination isn't mentioned.

The new Finns saw racism in the queer community, too:

> LGBTQIA+ folks aren't immune from racism, no one is. And because Finland is so homogenous, racism definitely abounds, more than I think many Finns realize or care to admit. I've certainly seen it and experienced discrimination, and I look like I could have been born here. Especially on Finnish social media, people openly comment and use slurs against darker-skinned people, even those trying to speak Finnish and integrate. There needs to be more efforts at diversity and inclusion and more strict consequences at school and work, even for micro-aggressions. Of course, the US is also riddled with racism, but in Finland, just on a smaller scale (and without guns).

This narrator drew a direct line between their experience of racism and the need to act. I had expected some queer new Finns to feel they were

not seen as "Finnish enough." This was not true for all. As one respondent born in the US said:

> Most of my LGBTQIA+ friends are Finnish.
>
> The community is not small compared to e.g. Estonia. There are lots of people with foreign roots in Finland.

But for others, it was:

> I think they are part of the fabric that makes Finland the strongly self-identifying and proud country it is... Finnish first, then LGBTQI.

Queer new Finns who felt they came second to "Finnish first" sought "more efforts" towards inclusion. Articulating their histories was a step in that direction.

Chosen history and being out

Writing our own queer migrant histories can be self-documentation as liberation (see Rivers 2012, 64–65). The narrators chose what to document. Writing their histories, they expressed the liberation of being out, which they saw as fuelling change, or activism.

Chosen history aligns our place in time. Just as "chosen family" can be a positive alternative to biological family for many queer folks, I see (consciously or not) choosing the ancestry and heirs one aligns oneself, resisting chrononormativity, as writing a "chosen history." The narrators chose places and times to align themselves with, and combined them in new ways to write their own chosen histories.

The narrators said little about how their birth culture(s) were present in Finnish queer culture. As a Scot responded: "In the local Finnish scene? People love kilts." Some did align with queerness in their own traditions, like the Jewish writer above, or this one:

> Perhaps you've come across, in your research, *takatāpui*, homosexuals in traditional Māori culture. Interesting that that term has been around since before the colonization.

This writer may not be Māori, but was seeking roots in the same land (Sedivy 2021, 273ff.).

The narrators were aware of writing history, of taking a place in time. They parcelled up their pasts into the places in which they happened ("America in the 90s"; "youth club in the UK"). Thus, the narrators expressed an old idea that may resonate for migrants: "the past is a foreign country, they do things differently there" (L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between*, 1953).

Narrators also emphasized their place in the history of Finnish queer culture. They saw themselves as not needing activism or advocacy from others, but as activists themselves (compare Krivonos, forthcoming 2024 on Ukrainian aid, activism, and migration). They did not want to be siloed as minorities needing majority help, but recognized as leaders:

> Many very influential people in the community in Helsinki have been born abroad. The leader of HESETA, the head of the drag family Crackhouse, the leader of EGOW Helsinki for lesbians.

In this sense, being out as "born abroad" within the queer community was important, just as being out as queer was important in general.

Like I did with my cross-stitch introduced at the start of this essay, several narrators wrote to repair, to "spread positivity" for others by being out:

> I want to combat the discrimination by gay men and straight women I face. But neither compare to the stigma and attacks … gay men

> used to face, that society slowly moved away from. I use 'bisexual' as a man, to destigmatize it... to spread sex positivity and throw away toxic programming influencing masculinity and relationships.

> As in any society, [we bring] a different perspective, an addition to the culture, and just by being visible and out, change the conversation towards one of inclusion.

The queer new Finns challenged how history is written, who writes it, and why. They wrote themselves back into Finland's queer history, present, and future. In this sense, their being out can be seen as affective activism. Becoming visible and audible made a community including queer new Finns possible. This is history and future with all Finns. What other voices could "change the conversation towards one of inclusion"? Who else can weave into the big story?

Acknowledgements

Thank you above all to the narrators. Amy Tooth Murphy, Claire Summerskill, and Jane Traies, thanks for sending me your articles from OHJ 48(1). Thank you to the editors for their exceptionally constructive feedback. Thank you to the researchers I edit and translate for, whose ideas shape mine.

Bibliography

Abdur-Rahman, Aliyyah I. 2018. "The Black Ecstatic." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 24 (2–3): 343–65.

Agarwal, Pragya. 2020. *Sway: Unravelling Unconscious Bias*. Bloomsbury Sigma Series. London: Bloomsbury Sigma.

Ahmed, Sara. 2010. *The Promise of Happiness*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Alasuutari, Varpu. 2020. *Death at the End of the Rainbow: Rethinking Queer Kinship, Rituals of Remembrance.* Turku: University of Turku.

Alasuutari, Varpu. 2021. "Navigating the Affective Landscapes of Christian Queer Activism in Finland." Histories of Sexualities, Gender Diversity and Queer in the Nordic and Baltic Region Conference, October 26, 2021, University of Helsinki.

Amnesty. 2023. "Finland: New Gender Recognition Law 'a Major Step towards Protecting Trans Rights'." *Amnesty International*. Published February 1, 2023. https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/02/finland-new-gender-recognition-law-a-major-step-towards-protecting-trans-rights/.

Baer, Brian James. 2020. *Queer Theory and Translation Studies: Language, Politics, Desire. New Perspectives in Translation and Interpreting Studies*. London: Routledge.

Balay, Anne. 2022. "'I Gotta Go': Mobility as a Queer Methodology." In *New Directions in Queer Oral History: Archives of Disruption*, edited by Clare Summerskill, Amy Tooth Murphy, and Emma Vickers, 143–150. London: Routledge.

Barnard, Ian. 2021. *Queer Race*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Boyd, Nan Alamilla, and Horacio N. Roque Ramírez, eds. 2012. *Bodies of Evidence: The Practice of Queer Oral History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Czimbalmos, Mercédesz, and Shadia Rask. 2022. "Sexual and Gender Minorities Among the Foreign-Origin Populations in Finland: An Intersectional Analysis." Report, Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare. http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-343-912-2.

Dahl, Ulrika, Joanna Mizielińska, Raili Uibo, and Antu Sorainen. 2022. "Introduction." In *Queer(y)ing Kinship in the Baltic Area*, edited by Ulrika Dahl, Joanna Mizielińska, Raili Uibo, and Antu Sorainen, 11–46. Huddinge: Södertörns Högskola.

Dwyer, Sonya Corbin, and Jennifer L. Buckle. 2009. "The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8 (1): 54–63.

Fingerroos, Outi. 2008. "Karelia: A Place of Memories and Utopias." *Oral Tradition* 23 (2): 235–254.

Fisher, Kate. 2021. "'I Couldn't Find Myself in History. No One like Me Seemed to Have Ever Existed.' Who Needs the History of Sexuality?" Histories of Sexualities, Gender Diversity and Queer in the Nordic and Baltic Region Conference, October 25, 2021, University of Helsinki.

Gaudreau, Lynda. 2021. *The Almost Manual: On Asynchrony, Time Lapse, Choreography, and Extravagant Details in Life and Creative Process.* Helsinki: University of the Arts.

Golding, Victoria. 2022. "Beyond Composure and Discomposure in a Shifting Queer Identity Narrative." In *New Directions in Queer Oral History: Archives of Disruption*, edited by Clare Summerskill, Amy Tooth Murphy, and Emma Vickers, 83–91. London: Routledge.

Greyser, Naomi. 2012. "Beyond the 'Feeling Woman': Feminist Implications of Affect Studies." *Feminist Studies* 38 (1): 84–112.

Halberstam, Jack. 1998. *Female Masculinity*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Halperin, David M. 1989. "Is There a History of Sexuality?" *History and Theory* 28 (3): 257–74.

Hoegaerts, Josephine, Tuire Liimatainen, Laura Hekanaho, and Elizabeth Peterson. 2022. *Finnishness, Whiteness and Coloniality*. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.

Jemisin, N. K. 2018. *How Long 'til Black Future Month?* First edition. New York: Orbit.

Juvonen, Tuula. 2002. *Varjoelämää ja julkisia salaisuuksia*. Tampere: Vastapaino.

Juvonen, Tuula. 2022. "Temporal Tentacles? Feeling the Queer Past." Queer Tentacles Seminar, September 23, 2022, University of Jyväskylä.

Juvonen, Tuula, Varpu Alasuutari, Lotta Kähkönen, and Luca Tainio. 2022. "Syrjäytettyjen tunteet aktivismissa." *Politiikasta*. February 8, 2022. https://politiikasta.fi/syrjaytettyjen-tunteet-aktivismissa/.

Jyväskylän Seta ry. 2021. "Jyväskylän Setan Rantajuhlissa Tapahtui Viime Yönä Väkivaltainen Hyökkäys." July 4, 2021. https://www.facebook.com/297930240267718/posts/4260332454027457/?d=n.

Kallatsa, Laura. 2022. "Same-Sex Marriage, Toleration, and the Clergy of the Finnish Lutheran Church." *Religions* 13 (8): 734.

Kelly, Christopher J. 2022. "The Personal Is Political." *Encyclopedia Britanica*. Accessed June 21, 2023. https://www.britannica.com/topic/the-personal-is-political.

Kimanen, Anuleena. (2019). "Encountering religion in a secular context: How do Finnish students perceive and encounter religions and worldviews in the classroom?" In *Contextualising Dialogue, Secularisation and Pluralism: Religion in Finnish Public Education,* edited by Martin Ubani, Inkeri Rissanen, and Saila Poulter, 165–182. Münster: Waxmann Verlag GmbH.

Krivonos, Daria. Forthcoming 2024. "All Roads Lead to the Railway Station: How Young Ukrainian Refugee Volunteer Women Challenge Sexism, Racism, and Homophobia in Volunteer Refugee Support Networks." In *Feminist Perspectives on Russia's War in Ukraine*. Lexington Press.

Lentricchia, Frank, and Andrew DuBois, eds. 2003. *Close Reading: The Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Loughlin, Gerard, ed. 2007. *Queer Theology: Rethinking the Western Body*. Malden: Blackwell Pub.

Mizielińska, Joanna. 2006. "Queering Moominland: The Problems of Translating Queer Theory Into a Non-American Context." *SQS – Suomen Queer-tutkimuksen Seuran lehti* 1 (1), 87–104. https://journal.fi/sqs/article/view/53722.

Moussawi, Ghassan, and Salvador Vidal-Ortiz. 2020. "A Queer Sociology: On Power, Race, and Decentering Whiteness." *Sociological Forum* 35 (4): 1272–1289.

Museovirasto. 2021. Whose Heritage? Meanings, Experiences, and Dialogue, Seminar, November 24–25, 2021, National Museum of Finland.

Niemistö, Elina (2019). "Mäenpää ei kadu syyteharkintaan edennyttä vieraslajipuhettaan." Yle.fi, August 13, 2019. https://yle.fi/a/3-10920885.

Pöysä, Jyrki. 2018. "19th Century Field Documents in the Archives – Oral History before Oral History?". IOHA Conference, June 18–20, 2018, University of Jyväskylä.

Radikaalit pistot. 2019. Radikaalit pistot & Sijainnit-runoilta, JKL Pride 2019, August 21, 2019. https://www.facebook.com/events/s/radikaalit-pistot-sijainnit-ru/2376860869303342/.

Riseman, Noah. 2022. "Finding the 'Evidence of Me' through 'Evidence of Us': Transgender Oral Histories and Personal Archives Speak." In *New Directions in Queer Oral History: Archives of Disruption,* edited by Clare Summerskill, Amy Tooth Murphy, and Emma Vickers, 59–70. London: Routledge.

Rivers, Daniel. 2012. "Queer Family Stories: Learning from Oral Histories with Lesbian Mothers and Gay Fathers from the Pre-Stonewall Era." In *Bodies of Evidence: The Practice of Queer Oral History*, edited by Nan Alamilla Boyd, and Horacio N. Roque Ramírez, 57–72. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Robinson, Shirleene. 2022. "LGBTIQ Activism and 'Insider' Interviewing: Reflecting on Oral Histories from the Campaign for Australian Marriage Equality." In *New Directions in Queer Oral History: Archives of Disruption*, edited by Clare Summerskill, Amy Tooth Murphy, and Emma Vickers, 151–161. London: Routledge.

Salami, Minna. 2020. *Sensuous Knowledge: A Black Feminist Approach for Everyone*. London: Zed.

Sateenkaariseura. 2008. ”Ortodoksinen Sateenkaariseura.” Accessed June 22, 2023. https://sateenkaariseura.wordpress.com/.

Sateenkaariyhteisöt ry. 2023. ”Kvääristö kertoo lopettavansa.” February 6, 2023. https://ranneliike.net/uutiset/16324/kvaaristo-kertoo-lopettavansa.

Savolainen, Ulla, and Riikka Taavetti, eds. 2022. *Muistitietotutkimuksen paikka: Teoriat, käytännöt ja muutos*. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran toimituksia, nro 1478. Helsinki: Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seura.

Schaper, Ulrike, Magdalena Beljan, Pascal Eitler, Christopher Ewing, and Benno Gammerl. 2020. “Sexotic: The Interplay between Sexualization and Exoticization.” *Sexualities* 23 (1–2): 114–126.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. 2003. *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Sedivy, Julie. 2021. *Memory Speaks: On Losing and Reclaiming Language and Self.* Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

SKS. 2020. ”Koronavirus sekoittaa maailmaa – SKS kerää kokemuksia.” Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. March 12, 2020. https://www.finlit.fi/fi/ajankohtaista/uutiset/koronavirus-sekoittaa-maailmaa-sks-keraa-kokemuksia.

Somerville, Siobhan B. 2020. “Introduction.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Queer Studies*, edited by Siobhan B. Somerville, 1–14. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sotejeff-Wilson, Kate. 2021. “Erikoissuomalaiset*: Narrating Queer History with New Finns.” Histories of Sexualities, Gender Diversity and Queer in the Nordic and Baltic Region Conference, October 26, 2021, University of Helsinki.

Stuart, Elizabeth. 1997. *Religion Is a Queer Thing: A Guide to the Christian Faith for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered People*. London: Cassell.

Summerskill, Clare. 2020. “‘It’s Telling Your Story to Your Family’: Reflections by an Older Lesbian on Being Interviewed for a Verbatim Theatre Production.” *Oral History* 48 (1): 66–74.

Summerskill, Clare, Amy Tooth Murphy, and Emma Vickers, eds. 2022. *New Directions in Queer Oral History: Archives of Disruption*. London: Routledge.

Suomi100. 2016. ”Suomi100 – Sateenkaaren väreissä.” April 26, 2016. http://cultureforall.fi/doc/Suomi_100_-_Sateenkaaren_vreiss/Suomi100-sateenkaariblogit-2016-2018_KOOSTE.pdf

Taavetti, Riikka, and Tuula Juvonen. 2022. “Queernäkökulmia muistitieto-tutkimukseen.” In *Muistitietotutkimuksen paikka: Teoriat, käytännöt ja muutos*, edited by Ulla Savolainen, and Riikka Taavetti, 392–412 . Helsinki: Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seura.

Tooth Murphy, Amy. 2020. “Listening in, Listening out: Intersubjectivity and the Impact of Insider and Outsider Status in Oral History Interviews.” *Oral History* 48 (1): 35–44.

Traies, Jane. 2020. “The Perils of the Recording: Ethical Issues in Oral History with Vulnerable Populations.” *Oral History* 48 (1): 75–85.

Tuomenvirta, Kaarna. 2022. “Trans Temporalities and Camille Auer’s ‘Monument for the Excluded’.” Queer Tentacles Seminar, September 23, 2022, University of Jyväskylä.

Tyler, Imogen. 2021. *Stigma: The Machinery of Inequality*. London: Zed.